



The Cook-Rees Memorial Fund for Water Search and Safety

F A C T S H E E T

The Cook-Rees Memorial Fund for Water Search and Safety (CRMF) was founded in 1998 by Canadian singer/composer Loreena McKennitt after a tragic boating incident claimed the lives of her partner, his brother, and a friend. Determined to help prevent similar tragedies, McKennitt established a fund to promote education, research, training, and equipment purchases to benefit water safety initiatives. Today, the Cook-Rees Memorial Fund has succeeded in raising over \$3 million for water search and safety.

- July 1998 - Ronald Rees, Richard Rees, and Gregory Cook embark on a sunset sail on Georgian Bay but do not return; an exhaustive search by the Canadian Coast Guard turns up only one of the men's bodies.
- September 1998 - Ronald Rees's partner, Canadian singer/composer Loreena McKennitt, founds the Cook-Rees Memorial Fund for Water Search and Safety. Loreena pledges proceeds from sales of her forthcoming double album, Live In Paris And Toronto, to the fund.
- 1998 - The Cook-Rees Fund presents a side scan sonar and underwater remote operated vehicle to the Ontario Provincial Police (OPP). Two additional sonar units are donated in 2002.
- 2000 - An Advisory Committee of Canadian water safety experts is set up to oversee the fund.
- 2001 - Sales of Live In Paris And Toronto top 300,000 raising \$3 million for the fund.
- 2002 - The Cook-Rees Fund sponsors "Will it Float ?" a groundbreaking research report about the mandatory use of personal flotation devices, prepared for the Canadian Safe Boating Council by SMARTRISK.
- 2003 - The OPP presents Loreena McKennitt with an award recognizing The Cook-Rees Fund's significant contributions of search and rescue equipment.
- 2004 - The Cook-Rees Memorial Fund receives official charitable status.

Since its inception, the Fund has given financial support to the following organizations:

- Canadian Coast Guard Auxiliary (2004)
- The Canadian Red Cross (2003)
- The Canadian Safe Boating Council (2001 onward)
- Dalhousie University (2003)
- Golden & District Search & Rescue Association (2003)
- Kimberley Search and Rescue (2004)
- Knowledge Network (2004)
- The Lifesaving Society (2000, 2001)
- Maitland Valley and Upper Thames River Conservation Authorities (2002 onward)
- Municipality of Kincardine (2003)
- Ontario Organized Snowmobilers (2003)
- Ontario Provincial Police (OPP) (1999 onward)
- Ottawa-Carleton Police (2001)
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) (2002)
- Search and Rescue Dog Association of Alberta (2001)
- Saskatchewan Council for Water Safety (SCWS) (2003)
- The Office of Safe Boating, Canadian Coast Guard (2004)
- The Shaolin Monks (dragon boat team) (2002)
- Toronto Police Services (2001)
- Water Incident Research Alliance (WIRA) (2000, 2001, 2004, 2005)
- Yellowhead Search & Rescue (2001)

Additionally, the Fund has undertaken the following initiatives:

- Sponsorship of a Reader's Digest Safe Boating insert (2001)
- Development and dissemination of a public service announcement regarding changes to boating regulations (2000)

The Fund has also sponsored Water and Boating Safety Events such as:

- Canadian Safe Boating Council Symposium and Annual Safe Boating Awards (2002, 2003, 2004)
- The Launch of Safe Boating Week (2003)