

2001 SUMMIT OF EXCELLENCE AWARD

BOB SANDFORD

HISTORIAN - AUTHOR - INTERPRETER

Originally from Calgary, Bob Sandford made his first professional foray into the Rocky Mountains in 1970 when he worked as a seasonal park naturalist in Banff National Park. That year Bob had an adventure that changed his life - for good. It's a well-known, often disbelieved, but true story: Bob, in his smooth-soled cowboy boots, slipped into a crevasse on the Saskatchewan Glacier and travelled for approximately half a kilometre through the sub-glacial drainage pipes, only to emerge relatively unscathed at the toe of the glacier. Bob's glacial rebirth has informed his life's work, his passion for story-telling and, probably, his sense of humour for which he is also famous!

Bob's work has always been about communicating a sense of mountain place and that has taken him into many areas in which he has excelled. His early audio-visual programs were well ahead of their time, he has authored 15 books on the natural and human heritage of Western Canada, he has been involved in several films, and has curated exhibitions on themes as diverse as "The Faces of Field" to "A Terrible Beauty: The Great Bear in Jasper".

He helped create the heritage tourism concept which aims to connect every visitor to the National Parks with the area's unique mountain heritage. This successful program has been embraced by businesses, Parks Canada, and the public. His vision of re-aligning the direction of tourism with National Park goals has resulted in programs that have connected mountain communities from Golden, British Columbia, to the Japanese Alpine Club of Tokyo, Japan.

Bob is vice-president of publications for the Alpine Club of Canada, is historian-in-residence for Fairmont Hotels and is on the International Advisory Committee for Mountain Culture at The Banff Centre.