

SPECIAL SERIES



BREAKING GROUND

A Spotlight on Six Women in Canada's Environmental Industry

LINDA EASTCOTT

TRANSLATING DATA INTO DECISIVE ACTION

Linda is known for her critical thinking, careful analysis, and ability to make sound decisions when information is limited.



While studying at the University of Toronto, a bit of serendipity happened that changed Linda's career path. After listening to an interview on CBC radio with Professor Donald Mackay, Linda decided to pursue a master's degree in environmental engineering instead of immediately seeking a job after graduating with her bachelor's degree in engineering. The work opened a window into the world of environmental practice – protecting human health and the environment while dealing with the real-world decision making of industrial clients.

Career Path

After graduating, Linda began her career as a technical researcher with Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, where she worked with stakeholders from industry, government, and academia. While the experience was valuable, she quickly realized that the pace of regulatory work and shifting political priorities were not a good fit for her. That insight led her to a storied career in the

environmental industry.

She joined McLaren Engineers, later acquired by SNC Lavalin, where she focused on writing technical proposals, continuing to build her foundation. Having a diminutive stature, Linda also encountered early gender bias that limited her opportunities in the field and to lead projects. Seeking different working opportunities, Linda moved to Vancouver to join the small consulting firm Envirochem Services Inc., where she was entrusted with various tasks in a very hands-on working environment, gaining comprehensive, practical experience across multiple projects. After several years, she moved to Gartner Lee for broader global opportunities before eventually joining Imperial Oil's environmental services division.

At Imperial Oil, Linda found the technical depth and hands-on leadership role she was seeking. Her work focused on directing and advancing projects, mentoring and training teams, and aligning with consultants and vendors to ensure collaborative unity on the projects she led. She became

deeply involved in advocacy and in developing sustainable practices that protect human health and the environment. Linda thrives in the multidisciplinary nature of the work and prefers the technical challenges of problem-solving over purely managerial tasks.



Persistence, Confidence, and Leadership

Linda has solid convictions, can speak bluntly, and is not afraid to stand up for her opinions. “I learned not to take things personally and have always been confident in my knowledge and abilities.” Rather than taking offense, she relied on persistence, confidence, and demonstrated competence to earn respect. Linda later learned to balance that strength with active listening and strategic judgment, understanding when to challenge decisions and when to move forward. She often credits Professor MacKay for shaping her approach to listening carefully and speaking thoughtfully.

“In a perfect world, you’d have all the data... but in the real world you use what’s available, **ALONG WITH EXPERIENCE AND JUDGMENT.**”

A natural-born puzzle solver, she is recognized for her critical thinking, ability to analyze data, and decisive problem-solving, even when information is limited. “In a perfect world, you’d have all the data,” she says, “but in the real world you use what’s available, along with experience and judgment.”

“Keep your head down, lean into the tasks at hand, and **DO YOUR BEST BY PERSEVERING. GOOD THINGS WILL FOLLOW.**”

Continuous Learning and Looking Ahead

Although Linda once considered an academic career and pursuing a PhD, she found lasting fulfillment in applied environmental work. She remains a strong advocate for continuous learning and believes that, even with advancements like AI, human judgment and experience remain essential. Even though she contemplates retirement, she will not stop learning. “The more I learn, the more I realize I don’t know!” asserted Linda. As her career winds down, Linda plans to continue consulting part-time, viewing retirement as a transition rather than an end.

“It is the building of strong fundamentals, commitment through challenges, and **FOLLOWING THE PATH THAT ALIGNS WITH ONE’S INTERESTS** — technical, regulatory, or leadership-focused, that leads the way forward.”

Over the last decade of her career, Linda has witnessed increasing representation of women in the environmental field and encourages them to use their voices to claim space in technical discussions and to trust their expertise. Her advice? “Keep your head down, lean into the tasks at hand, and do your best by persevering. Good things will follow.” It is the building of strong fundamentals, commitment through challenges, and following the path that aligns with one’s interests — technical, regulatory, or leadership-focused, that leads the way forward. 🌱



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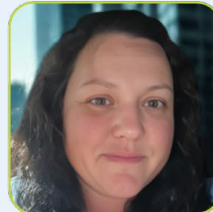
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