



guiding our province  
to a greener future

June 5, 2015

## Recognizing Sustainable Programs for Families and Communities

### Awards Celebrate Newfoundland and Labrador's Environmental Leaders

As part of Environment Week, the Honourable Dan Crummell, Minister of Environment and Conservation, announced the winners of the 26<sup>th</sup> annual Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards at a ceremony today at Admiral's Green Clubhouse, Pippy Park Golf Course in St. John's.

In partnership with the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB) and the Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institute, the Environmental Awards recognize outstanding achievements and contributions in sustaining, protecting and enhancing the environment.

**"These individuals, groups and businesses are environmental ambassadors for our province and they have demonstrated tremendous ingenuity and determination, along with an impressive passion for our environment. On behalf of the Provincial Government, congratulations to all award recipients for the outstanding contributions they are making to strengthening our environment and natural heritage."**

*- The Honourable Dan Crummell, Minister of Environment and Conservation*

The Environmental Awards comprise the following categories: Individual; Organization; School; Youth; Municipality; Business; and Lifetime Achievement. Each recipient receives a plaque and \$1,000 honorarium from the MMSB to either further their own environmental projects or donate to an environmental cause of their choice.

**"MMSB is honoured to recognize this year's Environmental Award recipients for their exemplary environmental leadership and dedication towards creating healthier, cleaner communities across Newfoundland and Labrador. We are pleased to provide each winner with a \$1,000 honorarium to further their environmental initiatives or donate in their name to an environmental organization or cause."**

*- Mike Samson, Chief Executive Officer, Multi-Materials Stewardship Board*

Details on the 2015 recipients are included in the attached backgrounder.

The Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institute continues to be a proud supporter of the initiative to recognize environmental ambassadors in the province.

**"The Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes are proud of the partnership with MMSB and the Provincial Government. The Environmental Awards Program is a positive**

**force in the community. Congratulations to all the nominees and this year's winners for their outstanding contribution to the environment."**

*- Jane Laite, President, Newfoundland and Labrador's Women's Institutes*

Also, Minister Crummell today took the opportunity to present the 2014 Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award to Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program (NAACAP). NAACAP is actively involved in public outreach activities and scientific studies, acting as a community advisor and partnering with various organizations to protect aquatic environments.

The annual award recognizes businesses, institutions and community groups in each Canadian jurisdiction for their commitment, achievement, innovation, practice and leadership in water stewardship in their community.

#### QUICK FACTS

- The Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards recognize outstanding conservation efforts and contributions to sustaining, protecting, and enhancing Newfoundland and Labrador's environment.
- Each year during Environment Week, the presentation of awards formally thanks and recognizes individuals, community groups and businesses for their outstanding efforts and dedication to the environment.
- The Awards Program is a joint initiative sponsored by the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board and the Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes.
- The Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award publicly recognizes leaders in the field of water stewardship and rewards remarkable achievement.
- NACAAP is an environmental citizens' organization that works with all sectors of the community and government to protect and enhance the aquatic environmental quality of watersheds and coastlines.

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## **BACKGROUNDER**

### **2015 Environmental Awards Recipients**

Following are the 2015 Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Award winners:

#### **Bethany Downer: Individual**

Bethany Downer, the founder and president of One Step Shoe Recycling, is taking great strides towards protecting the environment and helping others in the community. Inspired to make a positive difference in the world, Bethany founded the non-profit organization in September 2014 with a goal to collect 100 pairs of shoes and distribute them to those less fortunate within her community. Word quickly spread about Bethany and her amazing cause and One Step soon began receiving donation requests from organizations across the country. Seizing this opportunity to not only collect shoes but also increase awareness about sustainable consumerism, Bethany quickly expanded the organization's reach and began sending shoes across Canada and around the world.

Over the past 10 months, Bethany has worked tirelessly to turn her combined passion for social justice and environmental sustainability into reality. As a result, she and her team of foot soldiers have collected over 13,000 pairs of shoes and diverted over 10,000 pounds of waste from landfills.

Bethany has also been named to Canada's Top 25 Under 25 Environmentalists. She demonstrates true environmental leadership and we should all be encouraged to follow in her footsteps.

#### **Brendan Kelly: Youth**

Brendan Kelly is an 18-year-old conservationist as well as an aspiring wildlife photographer located in Paradise. He has shown tremendous initiative in undertaking conservation activities that enhance and protect Newfoundland and Labrador's environment.

Since 2005, Brendan has built and installed wooden nest boxes and platform houses for ducks, boreal owls, tree swallows, northern flickers, goldeneyes and various other species. These boxes provide nesting habitat for wildlife when suitable habitat is scarce. Brendan has placed more than 80 of these structures around the province. Recently, he partnered with the Department of Natural Resources to place boxes throughout Labrador. Brendan has also helped with wetland clean ups in collaboration with Newfoundland Waterfowlers, known as Totally Outdoors NL. Brendan has been recognized by Ducks Unlimited both nationally as a "Newalta Wetland Hero" and locally as "Rookie Volunteer of the Year."

Not only does Brendan work to enhance the habitat for wildlife in the province, he is also committed to protecting wildlife. Brendan has been working with the Town of Paradise to move ahead with the signing of a Municipal Wetland Stewardship Agreement with the province to protect wetland habitat in the community.

Brendan creates public awareness about his activities on his website [newfoundlandnatureprojects.blogspot.ca](http://newfoundlandnatureprojects.blogspot.ca). This site shows the projects he has been working on and the wildlife he has encountered. His passion for environmental conservation will

continue as he starts the Fish and Wildlife Technician program at College of the North Atlantic in Corner Brook this fall. Brendan Kelly's enthusiasm and dedication to conservation help sustain Newfoundland and Labrador's environment.

### **Macdonald Drive Junior High: School**

The Macdonald Drive Junior High Green Team is transforming their school into an eco-friendly learning environment through projects such as a Halloween eco-scary costume contest; creating art made from recycled materials; placing "switch off labels" on light switches; encouraging waste-free lunch; promoting a climate change poster contest; and recycling bottles, binders, paper, cell phones and newspaper. The team met their goal of 100 "green" activities in the 2014-15 school year.

Two Grade 9 students in particular, Maura Balch and Jamil Kabir, continue to give much of their free time to environmentally-friendly activities. Maura is working closely with her environmental lead teacher, Rose Drover, on an outdoor classroom seating area. The project involves the planting of fall, spring and summer bulbs plus the building of benches to place outside to create seating for students. This will enhance the school landscape and create a peaceful environment for teachers to use for instruction outside the classroom. Students can also enjoy the natural setting during outdoor activities.

In keeping with the green theme, the beverage recycling program continues with a great effort from Jamil Kabir, a Grade 9 challenging needs student. In collaboration with teacher Chris Devine, Jamil works diligently preparing the school's beverage containers for recycling. Beverage containers are collected from the school cafeteria, hallways and classrooms on a daily basis and recycling containers are collected from the school drop-off. Environmental projects are ongoing as the students continue to enhance the beauty of Macdonald Drive Junior High.

### **Restoration of Labrador Exploration Sites (ROLES) Project: Organization**

The ROLES Project is a non-profit organization that was established in 2012 to help restore legacy abandoned mineral exploration sites throughout Labrador. The project has taken action on an ongoing basis through innovative initiatives to enhance the environment, while creating public education, awareness and involvement.

The project has brought together communities, industry and government to take on environmental restoration in Labrador. The ROLES project has conducted inspections at 134 previous mineral exploration sites. In 2014, 24 propane cylinders, 260 fuel drums, and over 10,000 litres of diesel fuel were removed from remote abandoned sites in northern Labrador. The project also provided training and work opportunities to those living within the region.

Through radio interviews, online postings, presentations and meetings, the project has been promoted to industry, government and stakeholders. Project update brochures have been produced in English, French, Inuktitut, three Innu dialects, and Naskapi. Through its awareness-raising initiatives, the project increased public understanding of the issue of legacy abandoned mineral exploration sites in Labrador.

The ROLES Project is also collaborating with researchers at Memorial University of Newfoundland on a pilot project testing new methods of soil remediation at one of the ROLES Project sites in northern Labrador.

### **The Town of Carmanville Habitat Committee: Municipality**

The Town of Carmanville is a community of 727 people located on the northeast coast of Newfoundland. In 1995, council and staff signed a municipal habitat stewardship agreement with the Provincial Government in which they agreed to work together to conserve valuable wetland and wildlife habitat found on Crown land within their planning boundaries.

This agreement has been formally expanded twice since that time to include additional habitat in 1996 and 2007. The habitat committee was formed to oversee the implementation of the agreement and an associated Habitat Conservation Plan. An updated version of this plan was drafted and approved by council in the fall of 2013. The habitat committee has been involved in ongoing wildlife conservation and community engagement projects. This past year, the committee engaged in a project with Ducks Unlimited Canada to place nesting shelters on the offshore Penguin Islands. The wooden shelters provide time to allow the chicks to become more mature before they take to the water thus giving them a greater chance for survival. The technique has been demonstrated to be highly successful in reducing chick mortality.

The Carmanville Habitat Committee is also known for promoting environmental awareness at its Interpretation Centre while promoting its walking trail located on Route 330. With a total of four kilometres bordering the beautiful Carmanville Pond, it makes for a true paradise for hikers, birdwatchers and photographers alike.

### **Newfoundland Power Inc.: Business**

Newfoundland Power Inc. operates an integrated generation, transmission and distribution system throughout the island portion of Newfoundland and Labrador. The company serves approximately 259,000 customers, 87 per cent of all electricity consumers in the province, and operates their day-to-day activities in an environmentally responsible manner.

Newfoundland Power plays a leadership role in supporting projects that enhance green spaces in communities and in creating public awareness about the importance of preserving the environment for future generations. A key focus of Newfoundland Power's investment in the community centres on minimizing its environmental footprint. This has been accomplished through the company's Environmental Commitment Program, primarily through its EnviroFest initiative. Over its 18-year history, the employee-driven EnviroFest annually offers hands-on support for initiatives that encourage positive environmental action. The company has partnered with more than 300 community groups and schools, completed approximately 85 environmental projects, planted nearly 700 trees, and inspired thousands of participants each year to take better care of our environment. In 2014, Newfoundland Power redesigned its EnviroFest initiative and invited community groups to submit proposals for grants towards environmentally-friendly projects. Six community environmental improvement projects totalling \$25,000 have been selected for 2015.

In addition to promoting general environmental awareness, Newfoundland Power employees support environmental enhancement through corporate-sponsored programs such as the Atlantic Salmon Federation's Fish Friends program being delivered by the Suncor Energy Fluvarium and the Tree Canada partnership focusing on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Newfoundland Power also recognizes a strong connection between the environment and energy efficiency. Since 2009, total energy savings has been approximately 144 GWhs – enough savings to power a town the size of Deer Lake for three years.

### **Robert Schmiedendorf: Lifetime Achievement**

Robert Schmiedendorf is well known in the Town of Flatrock for his environmental commitment and dedication to the community. Bob has a Bachelor of Science in Forestry and Environmental Management and a Minor in Parks and Wilderness.

Mr. Schmiedendorf currently sits on the Town of Flatrock Council and is the go to member when it comes to environmental issues. He is always available to meet with concerned residents and government officials regarding the environmental sustainability of Flatrock. He is responsible for establishing an environmental committee within the town. He also chairs monthly meetings about environmental protection of valuable wetlands, conservation of species and how the town can promote environmental awareness and get residents involved in the protection of the environment.

Mr. Schmiedendorf played an important role in the signing of the Municipal Habitat Stewardship Agreement between the Town of Flatrock and the Provincial Government which focuses on the importance of protecting wetlands, their habitat, and conservation of species.

He organizes hikes throughout the scenic community while promoting the different vegetation, water bodies and land formations. Over the years, locally relevant trails have been expanded, widened and improved with commitment from Conservation Corp, Bob and committee members.

Last month, the Stewardship Association of Municipalities Conference was held in Flatrock. Mr. Schmiedendorf was responsible for the planning of environmental activities and provided input into the Community Sustainability Plan. The plan identifies the importance of striking a balance between development and environmental sustainability within the community.

With his hard work, dedication and environmental commitment to the community, the town has preserved bodies of water, marsh areas, and is able to showcase its natural beauty more effectively. A big thank you to Mr. Schmiedendorf for his involvement over the last 10 years. Flatrock is cleaner, healthier, and environmentally more sustainable as a result of his commitment.

**2014 Council of the Federation Excellence in Water Stewardship Award for Newfoundland and Labrador: Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program (NAACAP)**

The Northeast Avalon Atlantic Coastal Action Program is an environmental citizens' non-government organization on the Northeast Avalon which works with all sectors of the community, including government, to protect and enhance the aquatic environmental quality of the watersheds and coastline within the program project area.

NAACAP has a long history of environmental stewardship from its origins in 1993 when it focused on the issue of raw sewage in St. John's Harbour. Today, it plays a major role in water quality monitoring throughout the Northeast Avalon, and is actively involved in public outreach activities and scientific studies, acting as a community advisor on watershed related matters, while partnering with various organizations to protect the aquatic environments of the Northeast Avalon.