

Profiles of Environmental Award Recipients

Environmental Award for Lifetime Achievement – Dan Bouwman, Niagara Falls

This year's recipient of the Region's Lifetime Achievement award is Dan Bouwman, who is recognized for his leadership in creating Heartland Forest in Niagara Falls. Heartland Forest is one of the largest woodlands in Niagara. It is located just north of the Welland River, a short distance west of the QEW. Mr. Bouwman acquired the land in 1999 in order to protect this special natural area. The site is situated within the Niagara Falls Urban Area and had been designated and zoned for industrial development for many years. The 93 acre woodland is a prime example of a slough forest, containing large numbers of rare plants such as black gum and pin oak, and provides important habitat for deer and other wildlife.

Mr. Bouwman has focussed on making Heartland Forest a nature experience accessible to everyone. A wheelchair accessible trail system 4 kilometres long has been constructed through the forest. Learning stations and signs along the trail provide information about the flora and fauna. An educational program has been developed, equipped with a classroom. Staff conducts tours through the property and provides instruction for elementary and high school groups. College and university students use the forest to study the natural environment. Through his efforts Mr. Bouwman has protected an important part of Niagara's legacy.



Mr. Bouwman, second from left, holding his Environmental Award. Also pictured, from left to right Niagara Falls, Mayor Ted Salci, Regional Chair Peter Partington and John Lundrigan, EEAC Chair.

Environmental Award, Volunteer Category – Adam Shoalts, Pelham

Adam Shoalts is actively involved in raising environmental awareness in Niagara. He is a volunteer columnist covering environmental, nature and conservation issues for the *Welland Tribune* and *The Voice of Pelham*. Mr. Shoalts sits on the *Tribune's* Youth Editorial Board ensuring that the paper has a "green" voice. He also speaks on environmental issues to a wide variety of audiences across Niagara, ranging from kindergarten students to retirement groups.

As the founder and chair of the Friends of Coyle Creek, Adam Shoalts has been directly involved in conservation efforts. The Friends is a volunteer community group dedicated to cleaning up and preserving Coyle Creek, a tributary of the Welland River that flows south through Pelham and Welland. As a Brock University student, Adam also is active on campus as a member of the Brock Environmental Club.



Adam Shoalts, thanking Regional Council and guests.

Environmental Award for Young People – Elementary Age Category – St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School, Port Colborne

The Green Team is made up of over 40 students from grades 1 through 8. It created "We're Going Green Buttons" to let everyone know that the Green Team had arrived and participated in the Port Colborne Environmental Committee logo contest. The Team hosts Litter less Lunches in the school every Wednesday. It also created Green Team Bags which were distributed free to each family. Each bag was filled with items such as eco-friendly cleaning supplies and water-saving

shower heads and faucets to assist the community in becoming more “eco-friendly”. It created “Did You Know” messages read on the announcements each day to raise environmental awareness and teach strategies to make a difference. These messages became the focal point for a video that was the finale for the Green Team Assembly held in March.



Students from St. Patrick Elementary Catholic School with Port Colborne Mayor Vance Badawey (left), EEAC Chair, John Lundrigan (top) and Regional Chair Peter Partington (right).

Environmental Award for Young People—Secondary Age Category – The Green Team & Garden Club at Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School, Fort Erie

The Green Team and Garden Club have an impressive list of accomplishments:

- In waste management – promoting Waste Reduction Week; encouraging the school administration to provide more blue boxes and recycling bins; collecting used cell phones and ink cartridges;
- In combating litter –cleaning up litter on the school grounds and in the neighbourhood during Pitch In Week; participating in cleanups along the Friendship Trail and on Fort Erie’s beaches; discouraging littering at the Friendship Festival and the Ridgeway Festival;
- In tree planting and naturalization – participating in the development of the ECO School Garden Project at Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School; planting trees and bulbs around the school yard; planting along the Friendship Trail;
- Promoting environmental education and awareness – through bulletin

boards, displays, newsletter articles and guest speakers; through participation in environmental conferences, workshops and tours; and by making a presentation about environmental sustainability to each class in 2005-6.



Students from Ridgeway-Crystal Beach High School's Green Team and Garden Club (centre), Fort Erie Mayor, Doug Martin, (far left), Regional Chair Peter Partington (right) and EEAC Chair, John Lundrigan (far right)