



NEWS RELEASE

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19th Annual Environmental Awards Presented Dr. Gibson Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

Two individuals and three groups received accolades today for their demonstrated commitment to protecting the province's environment. The Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards were presented today by the Honourable Charlene Johnson, Minister of Environment and Conservation, John Scott, Chair and Chief Executive Officer, Multi-Materials Stewardship Board (MMSB), and Barbara Taylor, President, Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes. The ceremony took place at the Battery Hotel in St. John's.

"Thank you and congratulations to this year's winners for their outstanding efforts," said Minister Johnson. "The initiative, dedication and hard work that these individuals, communities, schools and organizations have put into caring for our environment is a reason to celebrate and encourage others to participate in their community environmental initiatives."

The environmental awards recognize individuals, groups and organizations who are making an exceptional effort to protect and enhance the environment and quality of life in the province.

This year's winners are:

- Individual: Mike Manning
- Youth, Youth Group or School: Holy Spirit High School, Conception Bay South
- Community Group/Organization: The Kelligrews Ecological Enhancement Program (KEEP)
- Lifetime Achievement Award: Dr. John Gibson, PhD
- Municipality/Regional Waste Management Committee: The Town of Appleton
- Honourable Mention: Town of Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook

"Newfoundlanders and Labradorians should be proud of the environmental accomplishments spearheaded in this province by the organizations, schools, individuals and community groups we are acknowledging today," said Mr. Scott. "MMSB is honoured to be involved in recognizing our province's environmental leaders and we are pleased to provide a \$1,000 honorarium to the winners to further their environmental project or donate in their name to an environmental organization or cause."

"The Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes are delighted to congratulate this year's Newfoundland and Labrador's Environmental Award winners and to lead a round of applause for the many other organizations and individuals who were nominated for their contributions to the protection and enhancement of the environment," said Ms. Taylor. "Each and every one illustrated the high levels of stewardship in their activities and we hope that their efforts will encourage others to become involved in their communities."

Minister Johnson also recognized Dr. John Gibson, in particular, on receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award. The award is given for significant lifetime environmental contribution. "Dr. Gibson's work with the protection and promotion of this province's watersheds, his knowledge and active role in promoting the need for watershed preservation and restoration is to be commended," said Minister Johnson. "I extend congratulations to Dr. Gibson for his lifetime dedication to the environment."

The environmental awards are a joint venture of the Department of Environment and Conservation, MMSB, and the Women's Institutes.

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BACKGROUND

Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Award Winners

Awards were given in five categories: Individual, Youth/Youth Group or School, Community Group, Municipality or Regional Waste Management Committee and lastly, Lifetime Achievement. One Honourable Mention was given in the Municipality Category. All winners went above and beyond the call of duty through excellence in environmental protection and conservation.

Individual
Mike Manning

Mr. Manning came to the province in the early 1960s to oversee the construction of the then named Confederation Park for the Provincial Government.

The park grew into 3,400 acres and became the C.A. Pippy Park with institutional, recreational and open spaces right in the heart of the city of St. John's.

Throughout the years, Mr. Manning has been a dedicated and stalwart supporter of the park. On several occasions he has served as the chairman and a director of the Friends of Pippy Park, a non-government organization, and he currently volunteers as their secretary.

He has always been active in environmental stewardship and is well-known amongst the protected areas community as a clear-minded sounding board for new initiatives and strategies to protect our environment.

His contributions to our environment are numerous.

An innovative administrator and planner, his expertise has resulted in the establishment of a Provincial Capital Commission similar to the ones in Ottawa and Regina. He has participated in a number of committees formed by all levels of government to manage natural features and to establish policies for their protection. He has also shown himself to be a selfless volunteer, involved in many groups and organizations, dedicated to the conservation and protection of nature. His keen interest and expertise in the identification of botanical plants have lead to the identification of rare vegetation species.

Mr. Manning, through his dedication, has acted as a mentor to several generations of environmentalists and park specialists.

Youth, Youth Group or School

Holy Spirit High School

The Holy Spirit High School in Conception Bay South, has taken a leadership role in environmental stewardship, within the school, within the community and within the province.

The school's leadership role began in September 2001 with an organized campaign to restore the wetland habitat on the school grounds. It is known as "The Frog Pond Ecological Restoration Project" and has taken five years to complete at a cost of \$130,000. The school raised all the funds from multiple partners in the community and the official opening occurred in October 2007.

The school has now embarked on a new initiative called "The Crocker Challenge" which has three targeted goals: a 50 per cent increase in recycling, a 50 per cent decrease in garbage going to the landfill, and a litter free school and grounds. Concurrent goals are the elimination of styrofoam and plastic packaging from their cafeteria and also the use of green cleaning products in these areas.

Student contests were sponsored to increase awareness levels and a student scholarship award programme was instituted.

Other noteworthy events included field trips, guest speakers, clean-up days, jumble sales, radio and television spots, placement of recycling bins throughout the school and the display of artwork in the school and projects promoting a healthy environment.

Partners in the community are actively being sought to assist with the purchase of a dishwasher for the cafeteria, complete with reusable melamine dishware. Composting has been started in the staff room and plans are underway to begin outside composting close to the cafeteria. The plan is to use compost to enhance the flower and shrub beds surrounding the pond.

The school has truly set an example that could be followed throughout the province.

Community Group or Organization

The Kelligrews Ecological Enhancement Program (KEEP)

The members of the Kelligrews Ecological Enhancement Program (KEEP) have worked tirelessly since they were formed in 1999, to develop and implement a long term

Stewardship Plan for the rivers and wetlands of Kelligrews and the surrounding communities.

Their conservation initiatives are varied ranging from the hands on work in the river to the planned high-tech computer modelling of the river system.

One project worthy of note is the silt fencing built by a green team organized by KEEP, to control the high level of siltation in the river. They have also been responsible for bank stabilization and the removal of concrete barriers from the river to ensure good river flow and to provide suitable access for fish. Grass and tree planting have been undertaken and more than three hundred trees were planted in an attempt to stabilize the soil layers.

KEEP is currently embarking on one of its biggest projects to date and, with the help of the geography department at Memorial University, they are organizing the GPS mapping of the Kelligrews River Watershed.

Through important watchdog and lobbying initiatives and informal presentations to youth groups, they have provided a much needed service and example to the public at large.

Municipality or Regional Waste Management Committee **Town of Appleton**

The Town of Appleton in Central Newfoundland has shown through a variety of projects what can be achieved in communities throughout the province.

One such project is the introduction of a new wetland system that uses plants to purify the municipal waters. This system has been used on a smaller scale in a few other communities in the province but Appleton has taken a lead in its decision to implement the programme on a larger scale.

The advantages to the community over the coming years should prove to be very beneficial with the reduction of waste water, the elimination of odours and the use of the treated water for irrigation.

The town has been involved in many other initiatives to instil a sense of pride in the community and its citizens are eager participants in projects to improve their town.

Dedication and commitment to their community have put Appleton on the map in a municipal leadership role.

Honourable Mention

The Town of Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook (GBS)

The Town of Glenburnie-Birchy Head-Shoal Brook (GBS) is situated within the boundaries of Gros Morne National Park on the west coast of the Province.

The town has a population of 400 permanent residents which is augmented in the summer by many visitors.

The town recognizes the importance of sustainable communities based on sound environmental practices and to ensure these practices, the following committees have been

set in place: an Advisory Committee on Sustainable Community; the Bonne Bay South Waste Disposable Committee; and the Birchy Head Recreation Committee

They have adopted founding elements in order to support the environmental initiatives including the David Suzuki Nature Challenge and the need to live within the earth's limits without compromising the next generation's ability to do the same, based on the principles of respect for the environment and stewardship of the land. Their definition is supported by the following four pillars: Sustainable Community Ecological Integrity; Economic Security; Empowerment; and Responsibility and Social Well-Being.

The council members recognize that true long-term prosperity and well-being are ultimately dependent on the protection and strengthening of their social and environmental assets and a number of initiatives have recently been initiated including: compost bins; reusable shopping bags; planting of seedlings; shoreline cleanups; and the removal of car wrecks.

Lifetime Achievement

Dr. John Gibson

Dr. John Gibson has been a leading and inspirational advocate for the protection and promotion of this province's watersheds since his arrival in the province almost 30 years ago.

His professional career as a Research Scientist in Limnology has included private consulting, a career with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) and an Adjunct Associate Professor with the Department of Biology at Memorial University. While officially retired, he is a Scientist Emeritus with DFO. Much of his professional career has been committed to fisheries research on the life cycle of salmonoids, the province's freshwater environments, stream ecology, behaviour ecology and conservation biology.

In his personal life, Dr. Gibson has been involved in numerous organizations that focus on ecology and conservation issues including:

- Executive member and Honourary member of the Quidi Vidi Rennie's River Development Foundation;
- Designed the original concept for the Fluvarium at the Freshwater Resource Centre;
- Standing member of the Natural History Society; and,
- Chairman of the Newfoundland and Labrador Chapter of the Canadian Society of Environmental Biologists in 1997.

For three decades of his residence in the province, Dr. Gibson has been an invaluable source of knowledge and he has continued to take an active role in promoting the need for watershed preservation and restoration. He is a willing volunteer when clean-up, campaigns and field surveys are organized. Dr. Gibson has provided guidance to organizations in the campaigns to have ecologically sensitive areas preserved.