



Carroll County

Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)

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2016 ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS AWARDS RECIPIENTS

On a biennial basis, the Carroll County Commissioners and the Carroll County Environmental Advisory Council recognize the people and businesses in our community who have made a difference in instituting or forwarding positive environmental thought and action. Recognition this year was given through the Environmental Awareness Awards in the following categories: Individual, Institution, Student, Agriculture, and Business.

THE INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Gina Felter

As an educator and administrator in Carroll County Public Schools, Ms. Felter embodies environmental awareness and ignites the spark of environmental stewardship in the students and schools with which she works. Ms. Felter wrote and implemented an aquatic ecology unit, which continues to be part of the high school ecology curriculum. During this unit, students use proven scientific research methodology to identify how healthy a stream is and are encouraged to subsequently take action in their watershed to improve water quality. She has engaged students through the Outdoor School and other programs to participate in planting of over 1,000 trees through the watershed. She is now the principal of the Outdoor School.

Ms. Felter has fostered a culture of environmental awareness by reforming practices within the schools in which she has worked, from incorporating recycling practices to native plantings and rain gardens. Under her leadership, North Carroll High School was awarded the Green Ribbon Award from the U.S. Department of Education in 2014. Manchester Valley High School is awaiting the results of their application.

Ms. Felter's passion for making an impact is further demonstrated through her membership on the Board of the Maryland Association of Environmental and Outdoor Educators. She was the chair for the annual four-day conference in 2016, overseeing this powerful professional development of over 500 educators.

Ms. Felter's passion and actions continue to result in a far-reaching, long-term environmental impact, as her students go on to demonstrate environmental stewardship and leadership in projects even after leaving high school.

THE INSTITUTION AWARD

Waste Not! Carroll

Since 2012, Waste Not! Carroll has spearheaded the Green Business Network of Carroll County, a program designed to recognize those businesses and institutions that have adopted practices that reduce their environmental impact, improve efficiency, and support a sustainable community. Businesses fill out a scorecard that helps evaluate their commitment in four areas of environmental and community stewardship: solid waste management, environmentally responsible purchasing, energy efficiency and renewable energy, and water conservation and quality. Businesses are certified based on their score and specific best practices they've implemented. Participating businesses are awarded a designation of Green Excellence based on those scores. Businesses receive a decal sticker for their shop window, an award certificate, listing on the Planet Carroll website (www.planetcarroll.org) and a photograph, and press release to local media.

The Network allows businesses to assess their efforts to reduce waste and energy use and recognize areas where improvements can be made to meet the business' environmental goals. It encourages businesses to improve efficiency, reduce consumption, and learn other practices that can reduce their environmental footprint. Waste Not! Carroll produced the Network's scorecard, solicited businesses to join, and promoted the Network on its website, through the community, and in the press.

THE STUDENT AWARD

Evan McCarthy

Evan McCarthy grew up spending much of his free time fishing at his neighborhood pond located in the Quail Meadow development in Eldersburg. In 2011, the pond was retrofitted to improve local water quality and the health of the Chesapeake Bay. For his Eagle Scout project, Evan helped restore the area around this pond. Planning for his project started in November 2014 and was completed in May 2015. Evan's planning for this project involved meeting with officials from Carroll County Bureau of Resource Management, board members of the homeowners association, his Boy Scouts of America (BSA) Troop 224 committee, BSA leaders from his troop, and the BSA Carroll District Project Representative.

Volunteers from his BSA troop and the neighborhood assisted Evan in restoring parts of the lawn around the pond by planting grass seed and shrubs to control erosion, planting plants around a Gazebo, and planting trees and shrubs near the pond. Evan organized a fundraiser to purchase trees, shrubs, perennials, grass seed, and wood for the bench, raising over \$1,500. He also organized the project day in May, where fellow scouts and people from the community came to assist in the Quail Meadow Restoration Project. Evan continued to water all the plantings for several weeks to ensure proper growth.

Honorable Mention: Ryan Rippeon

Ryan completed a wetlands rehabilitation and restoration project at Carroll Lutheran School. He tore out dead and invasive plants in a wetland area at the school and planted new native shrubs and perennials. Benches, birdhouses, and signage were also placed in the area.

THE AGRICULTURE AWARD**Persimmon Tree Farm**

Carolyn and Morris Krome's passion for the environment has spurred them to implement a host of conservation practices on their thriving 132-acre horse farm. The long list of projects completed with the Carroll Soil Conservation District (CSCD) includes a waste storage structure, stream side fencing for livestock exclusion, pollinator habitat plantings, conservation cover, Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) acreage of warm season grasses, riparian forest buffers, nutrient management planning, prescribed grazing, pest management, wastewater treatment strip, upland wildlife habitat management, and prescribed burning. The farm also is FASCAP Certified through the Maryland Association of Soil Conservation Districts. This award recognizes that Persimmon Tree Farm has implemented and maintained conservation practices that address resource concerns on the farm and that they have gone above and beyond to continue to look for ways to make improvements to the land.

Working with the Maryland Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the CSCD, the Maryland Department of Environment, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Carolyn and Morris completed a wetland restoration project on their farm in fall 2014 as part of the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). The project not only helps to improve water quality, but provides flood control benefits and wildlife and aquatic habitat.

In addition to the on-site environmental benefits, the project serves as a model for other farms and property owners, as well as an educational tool during farm tours and training clinics.

THE BUSINESS AWARD**Carroll Scrap LLC**

Carroll Scrap LLC partnered with the Carroll County Bureau of Resource Management to retrofit a stormwater facility on an adjacent property. The company allowed grading onto their property to convey drainage to the facility in a non-erosive manner. Through the construction of this facility, old tires and scrap metal previously buried are being loaded into containers supplied by Carroll Scrap and being removed from the site. The installation of a drainage swale, inlets, storm drain, and manholes on their property will improve local water quality in the adjacent stream and ultimately the Liberty Reservoir. Prior to Carroll Scrap acquiring this property, it was full of old cars and other scrap, which was scattered over the property. Since this property was acquired by Carroll Scrap, they cleaned up the site, converting to grass open ground that was not stabilized. Their partnership and willingness to step up and dispose of any old tires and scrap metal found on the adjacent hillside speaks volumes of a business looking to improve the environment and the aesthetics of the Finksburg Corridor.

THE PROJECT OF THE YEAR AWARD... *a special category just for this year to recognize the collective effort of a number of nominees on aspects of the same project*

Living Reef Action Campaign

Institution Category: Rick Elyar and Mike Wissel on behalf of Central Region Chapter of the Coastal Conservation Association (CCA) of Maryland

Student Category: Summer Miles and Brett Hackett

Business Category: Salerno's Restaurant & Catering

In January 2015, the Chesapeake Bay Foundation gave a presentation on the decline of the oyster population in the Chesapeake Bay at a monthly meeting of the CCA. Two teenage members in the audience—**Summer Miles** (Westminster High School) and **Brett Hackett** (North Carroll High School)—were inspired and began to champion the cause. The group began developing a community awareness and educational campaign surrounding the need for oyster reef restoration and a campaign to recycle oyster shells locally and engage our community through awareness, education, and a multilevel effort to build artificial three-dimensional reef structures to house the new oysters. The entire group quickly followed, and the Living Reef Action Campaign was born. The leadership of the CCA Central Region Chapter, **Rick Elyar** and **Mike Wissel**, gave the students the guidance necessary to make this project a huge success.

The campaign is an oyster restoration project and recycling program. In partnership with local restaurants, CCA volunteers collect oyster shells and store them at the County Resource Recovery Park, where the County located a large shell recycling dumpster for the group. Once full, the shells are delivered to the Oyster Recovery Partnership. These shells are then transported to the University of Maryland Horn Point Oyster Lab Hatchery and the Maryland Department of Natural Resources to be re-used as incubators for new oyster larvae. The shells are stored in various locations until the muscle deteriorates from the shell. The shells are then submerged in tanks where larvae are injected into the water. The larvae settle and attach to these shells. At this point, the larvae begin to grow. Each recycled shell can generate up to 10 new oysters. These new oysters are then taken to an approved location in the Bay, where they can be introduced to bolster wild oyster populations. Since the program's inception, the group has reached out to and partnered with more than 19 local restaurants, including **Salerno's Restaurant & Catering**, to collect 350 bushels of oyster shells.