

2014 Environmental Service Award Recipients

Congratulations to these 5 recipients



Mark Briggs of Sutton, MA: Conservation Commissioner of the Year

Mark Briggs, the Chairman of the Sutton Conservation Commission, is being recognized as the 2014, MACC "Commissioner of the Year." A self-proclaimed Pennsylvania farm boy whose first interaction with nature was a walk down to a trout stream next to his house, Mark has served on the Sutton Commission for 16 years, 10 as Chairman. During his tenure, he wrote and struggled to get the Sutton Wetlands Bylaw passed in the late 90's, and then wrote numerous Rules, Regulations, Protocols and Policies. He played the pivotal role in securing the Town's premier open space property, Water's Farm, an 18th century working farm with a most beautiful view in the Blackstone Valley. He deftly maneuvered the Commission through a plan to remove a dam at a 500+ acre pond with even larger recreational values (which are protected under the Bylaw), getting the private owner to hand over ownership to the Town and Pond Association so they could have full control of their pond. He oversaw the permitting of four 319 Grants, dozens of major projects that affected the well-being of the Town's inhabitants, and reviewed and issued over 400 NOI's, RDA's, and ANRADS. But wait, there's more! He is also the current President of the Blackstone River Coalition and the Mass Congress of Lakes and Ponds, Director of the Lake Singletary Watershed Association, on which he lives, and more importantly, he fishes. Mark's boundless energy, enthusiasm, and inability to give up the fight for the protection the public's natural resources is a high benchmark, and the reason why he is the MACC *Conservation Commissioner of the Year*.



Philip Nadeau of MA DEP's Central Regional Office: Lifetime Achievement in Natural Resources Protection

Philip Nadeau is being recognized for a lifetime of achievement protecting the wetland and other natural resources of the Commonwealth. For 35 years, most recently as the Section Chief of the MassDEP Central Region's Wetlands Program, Phil has radiated a sense of calm, solid leadership. That leadership and his steady hand have helped shape the Wetlands Protection Program for more than three decades. Throughout his career, Phil's primary interest has been serving the residents of the state - anyone seeking answers about or assistance with the Wetlands Protection Act. Across the MassDEP Central Region, numerous wetland areas would not now exist but for his tireless efforts. These areas are fitting testimony to an exceptional career. Phil is retiring this year and we congratulate him for a career of outstanding commitment and service to wetlands protection in Massachusetts.



Pike Messenger of Middleton, MA: Outstanding Conservation Leadership and Education

Pike Messenger, a lifelong naturalist and teacher, served as the Conservation Agent for the Town of Middleton for 14 years, following a 30 career as a teacher of biology and other sciences for Melrose High School and Triton Regional High School. He was a founding member of the Middleton Stream Team in 1998, whose mission is to monitor, educate, advocate, and conduct projects relating to the ecological health and responsible public use of streams in the Ipswich River Watershed. Pike has also been a member of the Middleton Open Space Committee, the Essex County Greenbelt, and the Ipswich River Watershed Association. He continues to write a weekly newspaper column, "The Water Closet," on topics related to water conservation and the environment. In 2012, over 300 of his columns were compiled into a book "The Water Closet, Ipswich River Watershed and Beyond." All proceeds from the sale of Pike's book have benefitted the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the Middleton Stream Team, and the Friends of Topsfield Trails. Pike also was one of the authors of a published booklet called "Hiking for Health and History in Middleton" in 2009 (revised in 2011) that contains a compilation of hiking trails and canoe trips in Middleton, complete with the information about the history of the land, the environment, its natural resources, and public health. Pike comes highly recommended by the directors of these organizations with whom he worked, taught, hiked, and enjoyed the beauty,

history, and natural resources of the wetlands and waterways around Essex County. He is a visionary and activist who teaches leads and always inspires.



Sarah Haggerty of the MA Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program: Outstanding Public Service

Sarah Haggerty, the Information Manager for the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP), is being honored with the 2014 MACC "Outstanding Public Service Award." Sarah has worked for the NHESP for eight years, starting as an Endangered Species Review Biologist, protecting wetland resources across the state, reviewing, evaluating and providing written comments on countless proposed development projects under the regulations of the WPA, the MESA and MEPA. In 2007, she became the Program's Information Manager responsible for overseeing all of the biodiversity data management and data integrity activities and integration of all NHESP data standards - hardware, software and data quality standards. Sarah has produced many useful tools for local conservation commissions, community leaders and the public, incorporating habitat and ecological parameters into the land protection efforts at NHESP to ensure the most ecologically important lands throughout our state are protected. She led the production and publication of BioMap II and its corollary publications, which are a trusted resource of Massachusetts Conservation Commissions. Sarah recently became project manager for developing the program's new Vernal Pool and Rare Species Information system, an innovative new online interface that adds increased efficiency and transparency to the reporting of rare species observations and vernal pools. Sarah's efforts extend far from her desk, into the realms of community outreach and beyond. They exemplify her understanding not only of the science, but also how others can most productively understand and utilize the Commonwealth's natural heritage data. Sarah is articulate, enthusiastic, accessible and approachable - all characteristics of an Outstanding Public Servant.



Andrea Ristine of Acton, MA: Outstanding Municipal Service

MACC recognizes Andrea Ristine for her over 25 years of exemplary service in protecting the valuable wetland resources of the town of Acton, in which she has lived and worked. Andrea's primary position within the Town has been as Secretary to the Conservation Commission, but she has also supported Acton's Land Stewardship Committee, the Friends of the Arboretum, and more than 60 Eagle Scout projects. As a suburban town with both highway and commuter rail access to Boston, the town of Acton has seen massive residential growth in the past two decades, hence an astounding number of Notices of Intent for residential and other construction projects - her Commission says over 900 NOIs! Andrea's intricate knowledge of the Wetlands Protection Act and its changing regulations, as well as the details of Acton's local wetlands bylaw, have helped her Commission to handle that demand with a careful eye toward protection of wetlands and natural resources. She has been considered by applicants to be fair and consistent, and has helped guide them through the myriad, complex wetlands and other applicable regulations for their proposed projects. Andrea's commission credits her with single-handedly moving them into the electronic age, handling all filings on-line since 1997. Andrea has gone above and beyond the expectations for her position. Her town appreciates her dedication and tireless efforts to help the people of her town protect its natural resources. She has also received high praise from the MassDEP officials with whom she has worked for the past almost 3 decades. Although Andrea is leaving her position, it is only to move to another within the Town of Acton, as she joins the town's Municipal Properties Department, and she has generously spent time training her replacement. Andrea is an avid gardener and bird watcher and her colleagues know she will continue dedicating her time to environmental protection.