



2017

## ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE AWARDS

**Jennifer Hughes**

***Conservation Commissioner and Administrator of the Year***



*Jennifer Hughes (left) with  
MACC Awards Committee Chair  
Kate Connolly*

Jennifer Hughes was awarded as Conservation Commissioner and Administrator of the Year for her longstanding and dedicated work as the Town of North Andover conservation administrator and as a Town of Ipswich conservation commissioner.

Jennifer has served on the Ipswich Conservation Commission since 1998 (Chair since 2012), and as the Conservation Administrator in North Andover since 2008. For both those positions, people describe her as “always willing to go above and beyond her normal duties when necessary.” One of her many admirers wrote to us, “First and foremost, Jen is absolutely sincere and passionate about wetlands protection and applying/ interpreting fair and balanced regulations in her duties as conservation administrator and commissioner. She is completely dedicated to her craft.”

In her role on the Ipswich Conservation Commission, Jennifer is described as focused, a dedicated leader, fair, unbiased and consistent in her decision making, pragmatic, knowledgeable, cool under fire, and a passionate and talented professional. One of the Ipswich Commissioners wrote, “As chair of the commission, Jen has provided firm leadership of and guidance to the commission in all matters procedural, technical and scientific, has managed our meetings and the attendant public firmly, sympathetically, politely and with the utmost respect for all participants.” She has worked with the commission on a number of challenging development projects, and on management plans for the town’s open space. As members of the Ipswich Conservation Commission wrote, “Jen Hughes is the type of person anyone would want for the chair of a conservation commission.”

Her co-workers and commissioners in North Andover likewise describe her in superlative terms including bright, witty, with strong interpersonal skills and an abundance of energy. “Jen is not only an extremely competent and knowledgeable professional, but an outstanding person as well.” Further, “We know that our wetlands are well protected with her as our administrator.” In addition, she has reorganized the conservation office so that it runs smoothly and effectively, a benefit to the commission and the public.

Jennifer has assisted both Ipswich and North Andover on open space acquisition projects and in updating their wetlands bylaws. She participates in activities to improve her profession and the resources available to conservation commissions. She is a member of the Association of MA Wetland

Scientists, a board member on the MA Society of Municipal Conservation Professionals, and a member of MACC. She is currently assisting MACC as a committee member developing our new commissioner orientation program.

MACC was delighted to honor Jennifer for her long and ongoing service and dedication to the environment, conservation, open space, participation in the civic life of two communities, and for her many successes working on and with her conservation commissions.

## **Al Goetz** ***Conservation Commissioner and Administrator of the Year***



*Al Goetz (left) with MACC Awards Committee Chair Kate Connolly*

Al Goetz was awarded as Conservation Commissioner and Administrator of the Year for his longstanding and dedicated work as the Town of Norwood conservation agent and as a Town of Walpole conservation commissioner.

Al was nominated by the town manager and conservation commission members in the town in which he is employed, Norwood, as well as by state environmental officials, conservation agents in neighboring towns, some of whom called him their most valuable mentor, and by his colleagues in the town in which he lives, Walpole. In addition to working for more than twenty years as conservation agent in Norwood, Al was appointed to the conservation commission in Walpole at its inception in 1964, has held the positions of chair and vice chair of the commission, and

has been instrumental in helping that commission grow and mature into the effective and knowledgeable board it is today.

It is widely agreed Al is honest, dependable, intelligent, and incredibly hard-working. He has an impressive knowledge of wetland regulations and conservation guidelines. He has a thorough understanding of climate change and an impressive knowledge of wetland plants and systems, is a champion of rivers in the riverfront area, and is always looking for ways to improve riverfront area and storm water management. He has a strong, historic memory for details and has been an invaluable resource for the Norwood and Walpole Conservation Commissions.

Al is respected by developers, engineers, consultants and lawyers who come before his commissions. As one of his nominators stated, Al is often one of the last to comment on a proposed project and does not fail to come up with some helpful insights or anecdotes to place things into greater historic perspective. Another commented that Al has an uncanny way of disarming a situation by listening to frustrated individuals and applicants. Al says sometimes people just need to vent; when he explains the situation and the wetlands issues, people understand and change their attitude and projects either go forward or don't and compliance is met.

Al's conservation efforts go beyond wetlands permitting and enforcement. His environmental efforts include developing and implementing the trails committee for the Bay Circuit Trail in Walpole and working to improve the Neponset River and waterways. He is currently working with the new owner of an abandoned mill site on Morse Street in Norwood to clean up the area around the channelized river

flowing through the site. Since the 1970s with Al's assistance, the town of Walpole has protected approximately 2,000 acres of land with conservation restrictions.

MACC was delighted to honor Al for his lifelong service and dedication to the environment, conservation, open space, participation in the civic life of two communities, and for his many achievements.

## **Everose Schluter** ***Outstanding Public Service***



*Ever Schluter (right) with MACC Awards Committee Chair Kate Connolly*

Everose Schluter was awarded for Outstanding Public Service for her work in the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program.

Everose (Eve) has served with distinction as Review Biologist at the Natural Heritage and Endangered Species Program (NHESP) in the Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Division of Fisheries and Wildlife for nearly 10 years. She is currently its Chief of Environmental Review and is very highly regarded within government and by those outside of government with whom she interacts.

Eve was hired as an endangered species review biologist in 2007 and has protected varied wetland resources while conducting numerous reviews of development projects across the state. She has evaluated and provided detailed written comments on hundreds of proposed projects under the Wetlands Protection Act, the Massachusetts Endangered Species Act (MESA), and the Massachusetts Environmental Policy Act. She has worked closely with the Commonwealth's major utilities on managing utility right-of-way corridors to protect wetlands and other endangered species habitats, including initiating an annual rare turtle identification and survey training for utility workers. She has worked with foresters across the state to help bridge the divide between the regulated and regulating communities. She has collaborated with MassDEP on changes in environmental regulations, is the liaison between MassDEP and NHESP, and her expertise is regularly relied upon by MassDEP in its protection of rare and endangered species under the Wetlands Protection Act.

For her excellent work and effective management skills, Eve was named as NHESP's Chief of Environmental Review in 2015 and now supervises the entire NHESP environmental review staff. Leading the program's regulatory efforts, she has worked tirelessly for proposed regulatory changes to the list of species protected under MESA.

Eve was nominated for an Environmental Service Award by state officials and private environmental consulting firms. Engineers and wetland scientists with whom Eve works admire and appreciate her straightforward pragmatic approach to implementing MESA and its regulations. One of those who recommended Eve for an MACC award noted that as NHESP has come under increasingly intense scrutiny from the regulated public, Eve has demonstrated her skill of working with project proponents to accomplish the mission of her agency using a practical and sensible approach.

Eve has offered her time and experience conducting MACC training sessions and has provided outreach and advocacy to conservation commissions and other environmental groups across the state to help explain the important role of NHESP and how its mission works together with the mission of MACC. Eve's colleagues note that, while passionate about the mission and goals of NHESP, she exhibits excellent judgment and is not afraid to "think outside the box" in problem-solving. Her approach has been described as fair and reasonable. Eve is a conscientious state employee who is respected by those both inside and outside of government.

For her exemplary work protecting endangered species and habitats, MACC was delighted to honor Everose Schluter with its Environmental Service Award for Outstanding Public Service.

## **Massachusetts Keystone Project** ***Outstanding Environmental Education***



*Paul Catanzaro (right) of MA Keystone Project with MACC Awards Committee Chair Kate Connolly*

The Massachusetts Keystone Project was awarded for Outstanding Environmental Education.

Conservation is local. The Keystone Project (originally Coverts) was started in 1998 by UMass Extension as a means to provide private woodland owners with conservation information. With one Extension Forester, and thousands of private woodland owners, the model was designed to invest in peer owners and inform community leaders, and have them make connections and disseminate information in their respective towns. Training involves three days at the Harvard Forest with field trips and classroom talks by a variety of conservation professionals. Early on, it was recognized that in addition to forest owners, conservation commissioners and others could be excellent

conduits of information. Since 1988, 26 classes have been held, with over 500 people participating as Keystone Cooperators. They collectively own over 36,000 acres, and through their community or organization are involved with over 500,000 acres.

Acres and people are only part of the Keystone Story. Cooperators are expected to volunteer a minimum of 30 hours to advance conservation at the local level. Recent evaluation results indicate that in a one-year period Keystone Cooperators made contact with 15,033 people about forest conservation, and 1,742 referrals to conservation information resources. Keystone Cooperators contributed 44,636 hours to conservation-related activities, 63% of which were volunteer hours. This is equivalent to more than 22 full-time conservation positions, of which nearly 14 positions were volunteer.

Over the years Keystone has received invaluable financial support from a number of generous organizations, without which the training would not occur, including: Massachusetts TNC, Massachusetts DCR, Mass Wildlife, and Harvard Forest.

For its exemplary work with land owners, conservation commissioners, and many others to protect woodlands, MACC was delighted to honor the MA Keystone Project with its Environmental Service Award for Outstanding Environmental Education.