News Releases from Region 01

Maine Citizens Recognized by EPA for Environmental Achievements

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Contact Information:
David Deegan (deegan.dave@epa.gov)
(617) 918-1017

BOSTON – Three Maine individuals were recognized today at the 2018 Environmental Merit Awards ceremony of the US Environmental Protection Agency's New England regional office. These environmental leaders were among 28 recipients across New England honored for their work to protect New England's environment.

George McDonald of Belgrade was recognized with a lifetime award for his many years of service to the health and environment of the state. And Maggie Shannon of Belgrade Lakes and Dale Mitchell of Perry were recognized with individual awards for their work on the environment.

"New England is rich with individuals, businesses, and organizations that exhibit their strong commitment to local communities and to a clean and healthful environment. EPA is very proud to recognize these meaningful accomplishments," said EPA New England Regional Administrator Alexandra Dunn.
EPA New England each year recognizes individuals and groups in the six New England states whose are distinguished by their work to protect or improve the region's environment. The merit awards, given since 1970, honor individuals and groups who have shown ingenuity and commitment. The Environmental Merit Awards, given for work or actions done in the prior year, are awarded in the categories of individual; business (including professional organizations); local, state or federal government; and environmental, community, academia or nonprofit organization. Also, each year EPA presents lifetime achievement awards for individuals.

The 2018 Merit Award Winners from Maine were:

**Lifetime Achievement Award**

**George MacDonald, Belgrade**

George MacDonald, who recently retired from the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, has had a remarkable 40-year career in environmental protection, sustainability, recycling, and solid waste management. A resident of Maine, MacDonald’s career included 10 years with the federal Soil Conservation Service, working with agricultural producers to conserve and improve soil and water resources, as well as time as municipal solid waste director and deputy public works director. MacDonald also directed the Office of Waste Reduction and Recycling, managed solid waste programs at the State Planning Office, and managed special projects in the office of the DEP commissioner. From 2012 until his recent retirement, he served as director of DEP’s Division of Sustainability.

MacDonald’s knowledge and insights regarding waste management, recycling and sustainability made him a “go to” person on these issues in Maine and the region. He was instrumental in the creation of the Northeast Recycling Council and the Maine Compost School, then worked with both organizations for years. He served on the Council’s board for 21 years and he joined the faculty of the Compost School in 1999, where he remains committed to its programs. His activities at the Compost School have helped more than 800 students from across the United States and from 45 countries.

During his career, MacDonald has been involved in both technical and policy related to a wide range of waste, materials management and sustainability issues. His leadership and significant contributions have resulted in a healthier environment and in sustainable materials management practices. He has left his mark on Maine’s materials management landscape and on composting throughout the region and made an outstanding contribution to protect New England, and particularly Maine’s environment. He has been an inspiration to individuals and companies regionwide, not only for his dedication, but also as a leader in advancing materials management.
Individuals

Margaret Shannon, Maine Lake Society, Belgrade Lakes
In 1999, Maggie Shannon moved to Maine to be near the lake where her family has vacationed for three generations. Thoughts of a relaxing retirement were dispelled as she took on roles as Belgrade Lake Association president, Invasive Plant Patroller, and founder of a 7-lake Courtesy Boat Inspection Program. In 2003, Shannon became executive director of the Maine Congress of Lake Associations, now Maine Lake Society, representing over 120 lake associations. She also is a board member of the Belgrade Regional Conservation Alliance and chairs its Lake Trust, while she continues as executive director, LakeSmart program director and lake policy director of the Maine Lake Society. The state LakeSmart Program reached about 30 lakes when it started to derail under budget constraints in 2011. Under Shannon's leadership, the Maine Lake Society took over the program in 2012 and since has spread to over 50 lakes. Shannon also has worked promoting legislation and policies to benefit Maine lakes. Recently, she worked with environmental organizations to promote a bond referendum that would provide $5 million dollars for tackling runoff pollution. Shannon advocated recently for a measure to require septic system inspections in shoreland zones when real estate is transferred, for funding for local Youth Conservation Corps, and for measures to improve camp roads in lake watersheds. Shannon connects with residents and legislators, and effectively communicates the values of and threats to Maine's lakes.

Dale Mitchell, Passamaquoddy Tribe – Sipayik, Perry
Dale Mitchell’s membership in the Passamaquoddy Tribe - Sipayik describes not only his heritage, but his priorities, values and world view. In 2007, Mitchell established the Passamaquoddy Tribal Brownfields Program and immediately incorporated it into the fabric of the tribe’s Environmental Department and its mission “to preserve, protect, restore, and enhance all tribal lands, water, air and human health and to develop means to monitor and enforce tribal environmental policies.” Since then, Mitchell has managed 13 Superfund grants and established a Brownfields program that has done site assessments, inspections, and cleanups and has become the tribe's primary resource for addressing a range of environmental issues. The program enforces environmental regulations and works for new environmental policies. It also has heightened tribal awareness of environmental concerns. Mitchell's has met with Brownfields coordinators from tribes; presented at national conferences and tribal forums; participated in emergency responses; secured funding for a household hazardous waste day; and worked with businesses to improve their environmental footprints. Mitchell's has been a tireless advocate for the Tribe and is committed to protecting its natural resources. Mitchell embodies the tribe's Seventh Generation Principle mandating that every decision, be it personal, governmental or corporate, be considered with respect to its impact on descendants seven generations into the future.

In addition to the winners from Maine, Nancy Siedman of Cambridge, Mass., was given the Ira
Leighton "In Service to States" annual award for environmental achievement that has had an outsized impact in the state, the region, and nationally.

More information on EPA’s Environmental Merit Awards, including photographs from the award ceremony: https://www.epa.gov/environmental-merit-awards-new-england

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