

# APPENDIX C

## FAIRFAX COUNTY ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

The Fairfax County Environmental Excellence Awards have been established to recognize county residents, organizations, businesses and county employees who unselfishly dedicate time, energy and expertise for the betterment of the environment in support of countywide environmental goals and initiatives. Award recipients are selected by the Environmental Quality Advisory Council, and the awards are presented each fall during a meeting of the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors.

The recipients of the 2007 Environmental Excellence Awards were:

County Resident Awards:	Scott Birdwell Eleanor Quigley and Penelope Firth
Organization Awards:	Great Falls Citizens Association Invasive Management Area Volunteers
County Employee Award:	Judy Fincham

Scott Birdwell has been recognized for his efforts in support of the Hidden Oaks Nature Center and for his efforts, as president of the 145-member Friends of Hidden Oaks Nature Center, to establish the greater Mason District area as an official community Backyard Habitat as sanctioned by the National Wildlife Federation. This effort promotes the use of native plants and organic, environmentally-friendly gardening practices. Through his efforts to enlist support from political, organizational and business leaders and through a variety of public outreach efforts, over 250 homes or businesses have been certified as official sanctuaries for wildlife, providing food, water, shelter and places to raise young. He has worked with managers of three Home Depot stores in the Annandale area for backyard habitat displays within each store to promote the program; this effort has resulted in the production of a CD that has been sent to each Home Depot store throughout the country to promote creation of backyard habitats at each store and to promote wildlife-friendly practices to the public. Home Depot plans to challenge other “big box” retailers to undertake similar efforts.

Eleanor Quigley and Penelope Firth were co-chairs of the county’s Tree Action Plan Work Group that was asked by the Board of Supervisors to produce a Tree Action Plan. As noted in the Tree Action Plan, the task of the group was quite ambitious: “. . . *The vision put trees at the center of comprehensive planning; set clear and measurable milestones to track progress; institute simple but effective communication capabilities to inform and educate the public, the private sector and government officials about the value of trees and efforts to preserve and restore them.*” The work group was convened in April 2006 and included a mix of county

staff, members of the county's Tree Commission, and representatives from the Virginia Department of Forestry, Virginia Department of Transportation, Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, EQAC, Fairfax ReLeaf and the development community. Through their leadership skills, technical knowledge and passion for trees, Ms. Firth and Ms. Quigley deftly led this group through a complex and sometimes difficult consensus-building process that resulted in a comprehensive, long-range plan to protect and restore tree cover in Fairfax County. As noted in the Ecological Resources chapter of this report, the Tree Action Plan was endorsed by the Board of Supervisors in January 2007.

The Great Falls Citizens Association has been recognized for varied and continuing environmental stewardship efforts. The award nomination characterizes this association as "a model organization for environmental stewardship," and the activities outlined in the nomination attest to this characterization. Through the association's efforts, Great Falls has been designated as the 23<sup>rd</sup> Community Wildlife Habitat in the United States as certified by the National Wildlife Federation. Between April 2006 and April 2007, 175 individual homeowners, seven common areas/work places and four schools improved the habitat values of their properties by providing for food, water, shelter and safe places to raise young. The association has also undertaken a *Heritage Tree Census* to identify the largest trees in the Great Falls area, including those on park land. A primary goal of this effort was to engage and educate area residents and youth groups about the value of forest preservation, thereby inspiring environmental activism and understanding. The effort has been received enthusiastically and is inspiring additional tree projects. The association's Trail Blazers Committee works tirelessly to secure trail easements from developers and residents and is an advocate of environmentally-sensitive trail design.

The Invasive Management Area Volunteers are 21 individuals who served as team leaders in 2006 at 21 Fairfax County Park Authority properties throughout the county to remove invasive species. In all, these individuals coordinated the efforts of 875 people through over 1,300 hours of volunteer time, resulting in the removal of plants that damage wildlife habitat, in turn resulting in improved habitats, improved water quality by allowing native plants to perform their natural water quality improvement functions and improved accessibility to parks for all to enjoy. The effort, funded through a \$100,000 appropriation by the Board of Supervisors as part of a broader set of efforts to support the board's Environmental Agenda, has generated both short-term benefits in the removal of invasive species and longer-term benefits through increased education, awareness and interest in stewardship among county residents. These volunteers sometimes worked in adverse weather conditions and also dealt with realities such as poison ivy and ticks. Through their dedication and energy, they have inspired growth in the program, as the number of volunteer leaders more than doubled between 2006 and 2007.

Judy Fincham, a fourteen-year employee with the Environmental Monitoring Branch of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, is being recognized for her implementation of the Water Environment Federation's "Sewer Science" program in all 25 Fairfax County public high schools. The Sewer Science program is a multi-day water education program that introduces students to wastewater treatment processes and technologies via course books, a mobile mini wastewater treatment plant and several hands-on treatment and water quality exercises that challenge students to treat water to the same standards expected of

municipalities; it fosters understanding and appreciation of relationships in the water cycle and the environment and engages tomorrow's leaders about the importance of water in the environment and their roles in pollution prevention and minimization. Ms. Fincham has been responsible for the implementation and success of this program in all county public high schools. She has coordinated teacher training, recruited a team of county mentors for assistance in the classroom as needed and provided additional training and logistical support to ensure the success of the program. She also developed, coordinated and conducted a field workshop to provide additional education to teachers. She did all this in addition to her duties as an Environmental Technologist I, and her outreach efforts to schools has opened the door for introduction of related environmental topics, such as stormwater and solid waste management, to the schools.

EQAC congratulates all award recipients.

In past years, Environmental Excellence Awards have been awarded to the following people and organizations:

2006

County Resident Award:	Ken Andrews
Organization Award:	Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District
Business Award:	Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc.

2005

County Employee Award:	Janet Rahman
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2004

County Resident Award:	Ned Foster
Organization Award:	Reston Association

2003

County Resident Award:	Joseph Chudzik
Organization Award:	Students Against Global Abuse
County Employee Award:	Noel Kaplan

2002

County Resident Award:	Charlie Creighton
Organization Award:	Hickory Farms Community Association

2001

County Resident Award:	Chris Koerner
Organization Award:	Bailey's Beautification Alliance

2000

County Resident Award:	Norma Hoffman
Organization Award:	Friends of Sugarland Run
County Government Employee Award:	Gary Roisum

The nomination period for the Environmental Excellence Awards occurs during the spring of each year. EQAC encourages interested individuals, organizations, county employees and businesses to submit nominations.

