

# 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 2013 Environmental Excellence Awards were:

County Resident Award:	Alan Ford
Organization Award:	Herndon Environmental Network
Business Award:	Burgundy Farm Country Day School
Business Award:	Potomac Vegetable Farms
County Employee Award:	Sean Duffy
County Employee Award:	Randall G. Miller

The nomination for **Alan Ford** described him as “*a multi-faceted champion for Fairfax County’s Environment*” and a “*hard working ‘boots on the ground’ volunteer rescuing and propagating native plants, managing non-native invasive plants, working to monitor and improve water quality, teaching the public about our environment, and leading groups including the Virginia Native Plant Society’s Potowmack Chapter. His tremendous knowledge and passion for the environment, combined with his calm manner and great people skills, make him an outstanding ambassador for environmental resources and a model for others.*” The nomination lists over a dozen highlights of his volunteer efforts, including leadership roles with several organizations dedicated to the protection and enhancement of native habitats and service on a watershed advisory group for the preparation of a watershed management plan. This list exemplifies statements later in his nomination that “*the scope of his activities is breathtaking*” and that “*he is the epitome of environmental excellence.*”

The nonprofit **Herndon Environmental Network** has been recognized for a range of environmental initiatives, including the following activities that occurred during the period of eligibility for this year’s award:

- Invasive plant removal along a stream in downtown Herndon.
- Provision of educational information at local festivals.
- A partnership with the Herndon Community Center to screen two environmentally-oriented films.

- Participation in a trail cleanup event.
- A tour of a recycling center.
- Distribution of environmental information at a farmers market.
- Organization of a month-long recycling competition between two Herndon neighborhoods, with related educational efforts.

Efforts getting under way include the establishment of a community garden in Herndon, the filming of environmental videos for airing on a local cable television system (and online) and a second community recycling competition.

HEN's nomination identified the organization's mission as follows: *"to establish a presence in the community and have an impact on vitally important issues affecting the world around us. We believe a cleaner, healthier Earth starts at home through local initiatives, education and advocacy."* The organization was founded less than two years prior to its selection for this award, and the enthusiasm and dedication of what the nomination described as *"just ordinary people seeking to do our part to negate the harmful effects humans are having on the planet"* is clear.

The nomination for the **Burgundy Farm Country Day School** noted that the school has been committed to environmental sustainability since its founding in 1946. In 2009-2010, the school began work on a master plan for renewal of its 25-acre campus in the Alexandria area of Fairfax County. An ecological assessment that was prepared in advance of this effort recommended improved stormwater management, preservation and creation of wildlife habitat and development of a long-term plan for deer exclusion. Efforts pursued toward these ends over the past year included:

- Re-landscaping of a long, sloping hillside to create terraced rain gardens and outdoor play areas incorporating natural structures, thereby reducing erosion and improving the control of stormwater runoff; the play structures were carefully build into the topography (e.g. a 35-foot slide build into a hillside) rather than on top of it.
- Addition of a large cistern to reduce stormwater runoff.
- Expansion of native plantings around a pond on the site.

The environmentally-sensitive site improvements support both the school's curriculum and its ongoing sustainability efforts. The nomination noted the following:

- All classes participate in composting and recycling.
- All buildings have rain barrels.
- All classes have a plot in the school's community garden and take care of barnyard animals.
- All students are encouraged to bring waste-free lunches to school.
- Kindergarten classes maintain a butterfly and pollinator garden.

**Potomac Vegetable Farms** operates two farms, including one on Leesburg Pike in Fairfax County. The award nomination cited PVF's environmentally-sensitive farming approaches, including:

- The maintenance of soil rich in organic matter and beneficial microbes.
- Avoidance of use of commercial synthetic fertilizers or pesticides.
- Sustainable soil management and crop cultivation methods that PVF refers to as "Ecoganic."

The nomination also highlighted PVF's "Community Supported Agriculture" initiative to provide for community support for locally-grown food and the farmers who grow it.

The nomination stated: *"For 51 years the water falls softly on the fields of PVF. Even if it doesn't fall softly, the crops and trees filter and soak up the rains. The land could have been sold many times over as the location close to Tysons Corner is ideal for a large housing development. As a matter of fact, the PVF farm is the last farm standing, now surrounded by development."*

In addition, the nomination highlighted PVF's outreach and education efforts, including the establishment of a three-week "introductory farm school" training session and the training of high school and college interns.

The award nomination cited PVF as representing "urban agriculture in action" and stated: *"The manner in which PVF operates their business, the number of Fairfax County resident's [sic] lives and health that benefit from their business, their educational outreach and the benefit that their open land brings to the County is unparalleled."*

**Sean Duffy** is described in his nomination as *"the energy and creativity behind the Waples Mill Elementary School Science Program."* In his 12 years as a science teacher at the school, he has transformed the school's campus into an environmental laboratory that provides students with a hands-on learning experience and that serves as a model that can be replicated elsewhere in the county. His nomination cites efforts including the following:

- The planting of milkweed on a hillside that he has converted from grass to native plants, with a goal of growing enough to supply other schools as well as the yards of his students.
- The planting, with grant funding from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, of water-loving plants in an area conveying stormwater runoff, thereby providing water quality and wildlife habitat benefits.
- Establishment of a purple martin colony and creation of a bluebird trail on the school campus, along with engagement of bird experts to educate (and inspire) his students.

Mr. Duffy's nomination stressed his broader outlook and his care in establishing demonstration programs that can be replicated elsewhere. He has trained teachers from other schools, has

pursued environmental improvement efforts at other schools, has reached out to the local business community to support his program and has been active with the Living Classrooms Foundation, the Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries and the Chesapeake Bay Foundation. The conclusion of his nomination provides an apt summary: *“His enthusiasm for the environment, his creativity for teaching science, his commitment to doing real science that helps the community and his excellence in execution of his ideas make Sean Duffy, 5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher extraordinaire, an example of Environmental Excellence in Fairfax County . . .”*

**Randall G. Miller** has been teaching science at Glasgow Middle School since the 2009-2010 school year. He made a commitment upon his arrival at the school to the development of a school-wide environmental awareness program and has accomplished much toward this end. The nomination highlighted the following efforts:

- Establishment of partnerships with the local Lions Club and garden club on tree planting and vegetable and herb gardening on school grounds, and leadership in obtaining a grant for expansion of the gardens.
- Establishment of a Recycling Club at the school, with recycling bins in each classroom.
- Integration of these environmental initiatives into school curricula.

The nomination notes that the passion, energy and enthusiasm that Mr. Miller has brought to these efforts have spread both within and outside the school, with the local PTA having begun a composting project. The local garden club has expressed similar interest and is pursuing a number of other efforts, including collection of rain water for use in the gardens, and establishing plans for a butterfly garden. Posters about the environment are displayed in the halls of the school and announcements are made about activities supporting environmental awareness.

EQAC congratulates each of these award recipients and is honored to have participated in this effort to recognize their accomplishments.

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

2012

County Resident Award:	Elaine Tholen
County Resident Award:	Betsy Washington
Organization Award:	ServiceSource
Business Award:	Walker’s Grille
County Employee Award:	Ron Tuttle



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 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.