

Environmental Service Awards 1997

Congratulations to the Following Recipients

Russ Cohen

River Advocacy and Public Education

Russ Cohen has performed extraordinary service as public educator and advocate for the Commonwealth's rivers. His 10 years of service, first protecting riparian corridors within the Blackstone River Watershed, and later as the Riverways Program's chief advocate for protecting rivers across the state as rivers advocate within the Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Environmental Law Enforcement, culminated with the passage of the Rivers Protection Act. Russ' education of landowners, developers, the press, decision makers and environmental groups alike greatly contributed to the Rivers Act enactment. Throughout his seven years work toward passage of this act, Russ gathered extensive literature on rivers, including those highlighting the scientific basis for protecting riparian corridors. A Wetlands Protection Act that incorporates the protection of riparian corridors is a testimony to how these corridors promote the Act's eight interests. Now, to help fully implement the Rivers Act, Russ is preparing fact sheets that will inform Commissions on authoritative and reliable science and policy for use in hearings and decisions.

Robert A. Durand

Legislative Environmental Advocacy

Senator Bob Durand successfully championed the Rivers Protection Act within the Massachusetts Legislature during its seven year campaign, culminating in its recent enactment. As an avid outdoors man, environmentalist, hunter and fisherman, Bob was able to bring together and rally the various conservation-minded constituencies to focus on a Rivers Protection Act that could be supported by all. Currently Majority Whip and twice Senate Chair of the Natural Resources Committee, he crafted his legislative skill to negotiate an Act that will strongly enhance the environmental quality of the Commonwealth. The enactment of the Rivers Protection Act and the recent state funding under the Open Space Bond Bill are testimonies to Bob's perseverance and passion for the environment.

David Koonce*Open Space Protection and Collaborative Efforts*

David Koonce, Boxborough Conservation Commissioner, is known in his hometown as "Mr. Conservation." His indefatigable and effective, yet low-profile, efforts are responsible for protecting many significant parcels of open space. Beyond preserving local lands and acquiring state Self-Help funding in his own area, Dave has collaborated to assist others within his watershed. Most recently, Dave helped found the Friends of Open Space organization in Littleton. He also worked extensively over two years to acquire a 113-acre geologically and archaeologically significant land parcel. During this period he mentored and guided the group through politically difficult and emotional times, resulting in successful acquisition of the property. Additionally, Dave convinced Mass. Fish and Wildlife to acquire wetlands and a major blue heron rookery along Route 2 from control of the Mass. Highway. David is also designated as steward of the Nature Conservancy's Boxborough Esker, which is New England's premier esker.

Douglas B. Wells*Environmental Protection and Leadership*

Douglas Wells, 16-year veteran of the Chatham Conservation Commission, played the lead role when a stormy sea breached North Beach at Chatham. He maneuvered in waters as uncharted as those created when the protective barrier beach was breached, rendering destruction of natural and man-made structures alike. Douglas prevailed with confidence and calm during these highly emotional and politically charged times. His protection of natural resources in the face of less than clear directives was commendable. He successfully steered the Commission and continues to volunteer his service today to both the Conservation Commission and the planning board. Additionally, Douglas is credited with being instrumental in the development of the Chatham Wetlands Bylaw and serving as a representative from the local Commission to regional groups prior to the creation of the Cape Cod Commission.

Shepley Evans*Environmental Protection and Business Community Education*

Shep Evans, long-term Conservation Commissioner from Stockbridge and realtor, successfully combines his interests in protecting open space with his knowledge of the real estate industry to teach others in the business sector of the significant value in protecting rivers and wetlands. He has been instrumental in protecting the environment in a variety of ways, from creating regulations under the Scenic Mountains Act to certifying critical

vernal pools. Always willing to assist others, Shep has played a pivotal role in promoting environmentally compatible use of the outdoors including helping to acquire lands, creating canoe launches and arranging educational seminars.

Jean Lidstone

Conservation Administrator of the Year

Jean Lidstone, volunteer Environmental Administrator for the town of Lancaster, deserves credit as the coordinator and prime mover for creating the Central Nashua River Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern. The Central Nashua River Valley ACEC is the state's largest ACEC, consisting of 12,900-acres spanning the towns of Harvard, Bolton, Leominster and Lancaster as well as the remaining active portion of Fort Devens. Initially mentored by late Lancaster Conservation Commissioner Bill Farnsworth, Jean's own efforts and environmental-advocacy skills matured and blossomed, combining with her own strength in business management. Through extensive public education and three concerted years of effort she overcame the objections of local land owners, developers and the U.S. Army. This ACEC protects some of the state's most significant wetlands and wildlife habitat areas.

Francis L. Walleston

Conservation Commissioner of the Year

Francis Walleston's work as a Conservation Commissioner has been astounding! Currently celebrating his 25th year on the Upton Conservation Commission, he previously founded the Milford Conservation Commission where he served for eight years. Francis has reviewed numerous Notices of Intent, has written and signed over 300 Orders of Conditions and monitored subsequent project progress. Throughout his lengthy and extensive career as a Conservation Commissioner, he was involved in a vast array of environmental acts including: preserving open space, improving forest stands, protecting wildlife habitat and water supply, promoting environmentally compatible outdoor recreation, and limiting impacts from development. Francis is well respected within his community and has earned the confidence and respect of his town's departments and boards.