

Governor Carney joins DNREC Secretary Garvin in presenting DNREC Awards at Delaware State Fair ceremony

HARRINGTON – Today at the Delaware State Fair, Governor John Carney and Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control Secretary Shawn M. Garvin honored 31 Delawareans and groups of all ages for their environmental leadership, innovation and dedication.



“This afternoon, we recognized a broad cross section of Delawareans who contribute to the conservation of our natural resources and the stewardship of our environment,” said Secretary Garvin. “We congratulate these volunteers, organizers, photographers, and anglers – conservationists and environmentalists all – for their work that brought us here today, and look forward to their future contributions.”

Awards presented were: four individual and two group Young Environmentalists of the Year, nine Outstanding Volunteers, three Youth Fishing Tournament winners, winners of this year’s Hunting and Fishing Photo Contests, and three winners of the new Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest.

“These awards underscore how every Delawarean can have an impact in protecting and conserving our natural resources, while also raising awareness for environmental stewardship,” Governor Carney said. “I’m also inspired by the award winners’ dedication to making the state a better place to live by their

time and talents, and proud to recognize them for their environmental leadership and innovation.”

The complete list of the 2018 DNREC Awards recipients:

Young Environmentalists of the Year

Elementary School: As a third grader at Dover’s Holy Cross School, Grace Coyle, 8, founded a nature club during recess, with different environmental activities each day, such as observation day on Mondays, trash cleanup day Tuesdays, and “free choice day” on Fridays. The group of about 13 also began getting together with their families outside school. Their pledge includes: “I pledge to the Nature Club that I will not damage nature, litter, stomp on bugs or kill animals. I will keep the environment clean.”

Middle School: Shay Wilson, 13, a 7th grader at Saint Anne’s Episcopal School in Middletown, started a research project to assist Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge with studying the monarch butterfly population at the refuge. Shay worked with refuge biologists to survey populations and improve monarch habitat. She presented her results and conclusions at the Delaware Environmental Education Association Conference and the Saint Anne’s Science Fair. Shay also volunteers in the annual horseshoe crab surveys at Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge.

High School: As a junior at MOT Charter School, Caroline Dowd of Townsend has a lengthy resume of Girl Scout conservation projects with Smyrna’s Troop 975, including a large community tree-planting project in 2015. In 2017, Caroline began work on her Gold Award project: planning, organizing, and planting a riparian buffer on 14 acres along Cypress Branch, a new addition to Blackbird State Forest. She devoted 118 hours over 10 months to the project, which culminated in 476 volunteers planting 8,700 oak and 100 persimmon seedlings at the site over two days in March.

Special Recognition: At age 5, Charli Evans of Laurel already understands that what we put into the earth is what we get out of it. A “lover of all living things,” she grows sunflowers, avidly participates in recycling and composting, and raises chicks and ducklings. Last summer, she planted sunflowers, tended them, and harvested the seeds to feed the squirrels and birds over the winter.

Special Recognition Group: Strawless RES, Rehoboth Elementary School. Fifth graders Savannah Montgomery, Alexandra DeEmedio, Melanie McKean, and Sawyer Brockstedt founded a movement at their school to “go strawless” and make a positive impact on Delaware waterways – and soon expanded their drive into the community and businesses. Following a presentation by the group, Rehoboth Beach Commissioners are considering ways to encourage the whole city to go straw-free.

Special Recognition Group: FLL Aqua Dories, comprised of Magnus Culley, Kaitlyn Dunphee, Elaine Ko, Benjamin Wootten, Grace Wootten, and Jessica Wu, grades 5-9, HB duPont Middle School/Caravel Academy/A.I. DuPont High School/Charter School of Wilmington. The Aqua Dories participated in Delaware’s FIRST Lego League (FLL) regional and state tournaments in 2017-2018 under the theme “Hydrodynamics.” (FLL is a STEM program that challenges teams to both design and program a robot to complete a series of complex problems, and to research and present a real-world scientific problem.) After extensive research and visits with area experts to determine problems involving the human water cycle, the Aqua Dories designed the Direct Observation, Remote Information – or DORI – meter. The team wanted to create a device that promotes awareness about what goes into people’s drinking water. They built a working prototype, which can be installed in a stream or pond to measure water qualities such as temperature, pH and electrical conductivity. The DORI meter monitors these characteristics and transmits data using the cellular network at a fraction of the cost of existing water monitoring

systems.

The Young Environmentalist of the Year Awards are presented annually to Delaware students who have worked to protect, restore or enhance our state's natural resources. For more information, contact Joanna Wilson, DNREC Public Affairs, 302-739-9902, or email joanna.wilson@delaware.gov.

DNREC's Outstanding Volunteers of the Year

Youth Conservation/Restoration: For his Eagle Scout project, Jonathan Ray designed and supervised construction of two new deer stands using volunteer labor and donated material at White Clay Creek State Park. The stands were specifically built for hunters who have permanent physical disabilities that limit their mobility.

Youth Group: Middle schoolers from Campus Community School's First State Club in Dover contributed a total of 1,216.5 hours to First State Heritage Park this school year. They volunteered at events including First Saturdays and 18th Century Market Fair, which drew more than 3,500 visitors. In May, the club presented programs to more than 1,200 fourth graders; the students also spend time on training, research, and preparing presentations. The club also recently received a Governor's Youth Service Award for their excellent work.

Administration & Coordination: Ernie Felici, former president of the Delaware Seashore Preservation Foundation, has organized an annual run that raised \$20,000 this year for the Tower 3 restoration project. He also coordinates a run with all proceeds going to Children in Nature, and helped found the Friends of Holts Landing.

Conservation: Since December 2017, dedicated Brandywine Zoo apprentice Kelsey Deneen has truly stepped up, performing animal husbandry duties, preparing animal diets, engaging visitors with keeper talks, and assisting with maintaining exhibits and grounds, all with a smile, plenty of team spirit,

and a “can do” attitude five days a week.

Conservation Group: The Delaware Mobile Surf Fishermen support DNREC on various efforts such as beach driving classes, beach grass planting, and special events such as the Children’s Fishing Derby on the Cape Henlopen Pier and a Special Olympics day at the beach. They recently worked with Delaware state parks to address overcrowding of vehicles on multi-use beaches and encouraged local legislators to support additional Ranger positions for Delaware Seashore, Fenwick Island and Cape Henlopen state parks.

Environmental Education: Described as “incredibly reliable and a great interpreter,” volunteer educator Bill Cook leads evening programs several nights each week during the summer at Delaware Seashore State Park, including Wild Crab Chase and the Amphitheatre nature programs.

Research: Outreach volunteer Kim DeLeon assists the Brandywine Zoo in several Traveling Zoo programs each month, especially with the A.I. duPont Nemours Children’s Hospital program, and is phenomenal with young children. She also works with staff on fieldwork for the Urban Wildlife and Kestrel Nestbox Monitoring community programs.

Friends Group: Trap Pond Partners are a dedicated group that supports Trap Pond State Park with special events such as Healthy Kids Day, Halloween Howl, and the Summer Concert series. They also organize their own events to raise money for the Park, such as the Bike Rally, Jeep Jamboree, and the increasingly popular Beer and Wine Festival. Recently, their contributions have helped to build a new playground at Trap’s campground.

Business Partner: The Little Creek Volunteer Fire Company has provided excellent decontamination service to support DNREC’s Emergency Response Team and law enforcement partners for approximately 15 years. They respond to all incidents, mostly

meth labs, in Kent County, providing copious amounts of manpower, a rescue team, and performing decontamination of responders and those being detained by law enforcement, as well as providing stand-by decontamination services at NASCAR races and Firefly.

DNREC offers a wide range of year-round volunteer opportunities for all ages. To learn about how you or your group can volunteer, visit www.dnrec.delaware.gov/volunteer/.

Youth Fishing Tournament

First place: Elise Britton, 14, of Middletown, statewide winner and New Castle County winner for the second year in a row, caught the most fish, including a 7.94-pound carp, on June 3 at Lums Pond.

Second place: Adrianna Gott, 11, of Viola, Kent County winner, caught 7.01 pounds of fish in the Akridge Scout Reservation pond near Wyoming.

Third place: Luke Hitchens, 11, of Dagsboro, Sussex County winner, caught 4.54 pounds of fish in Ingrams Pond near Millsboro.

Held annually on the first Saturday in June, the Fish & Wildlife Natural Resources Police Youth Fishing Tournament was established in 1986 to introduce young people to the sport of fishing and to teach the catch-and-release approach to conservation.

Hunting and Fishing Photo Contests

Angela Garcia of Smyrna won the Hunting Photo Contest for “At the End of the Day,” featuring her husband Paul and son Dominic on their boat during a hunting trip in Little Creek. Angela’s photo appears on the cover of the 2018-2019 Delaware Hunting and Trapping Guide.

Chad Betts of Milton won the Fishing Photo Contest for his

photo titled "Small Boat-Big Fish," featuring his son Cohen holding his striped bass catch on Delaware's Inland Bays. His photo appears on the cover of the 2018 Delaware Fishing Guide.

For information on the upcoming 2018/19 contests, click [Fish & Wildlife photo contest](#).

Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest

Native Plants:

First place: Earl Blansfield of Milford, for his photo of thistle weed at Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge.

Second and third place: Michelle Walfred of Lewes.

Native Wildlife:

First place: Earl Blansfield of Milford, for his photo of a short-eared owl in flight at Fowler Beach, Prime Hook National Wildlife Refuge; also second place for his photo of a great egret.

Third place: Stacey Steinberg of Port Penn.

Landscapes and Waterscapes:

First place: Tammy Kearney of Seaford, for her photo of a sunset over the Nanticoke River in Seaford.

Second place: Eric Carter of Milton.

Third place: Earl Blansfield

New this year, DNREC's Delaware Watersheds Photo Contest portrays the beauty of Delaware's diverse environment while acting as a vivid reminder that everything happening on land within the state's watersheds also directly affects what happens in our waterways and to our wildlife. The contest was open to all photographers, with images from any of Delaware's watersheds accepted as entries. Judges were looking for striking photographic images of Delaware's landscapes, waterscapes, native plants, and native wildlife. To see the photographic work of the winners and finalists, visit www.delawarewatersheds.org.

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-30-