

# Environmental awards nominations now open

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FINCH

EMC Events - Do you know somebody who has been making a difference for the environment in your local area? Whether a teacher, an organization, individual or even a girl guide leader?

The Tri-Valley Conservation Awards is accepting nominations for awards acknowledging environmental excellence in the Mississippi, Rideau and South Nation watersheds. Candidate's contributions can be in tree planting, water quality protection, shoreline stewardship, conservation education and advocacy, natural beautification and other activities that benefit the health of the watersheds.

"They are recognition of stewardship initiatives in the three watersheds," said Suzanne McFarlane from the Mississippi Conservation Authority. "In 2008 Mis-



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issippi Conservation, Rideau Conservation and South Nation Conservation started the awards program. We

thought by combining the three watersheds we could work together as authorities and recognize a larger

area and show people how we do work together as conservation authorities, even though we are in different watersheds."

This year the awards will be hosted at the South Nation Conservation Authority at their new conference facility in Finch. The gala event on October 20 will allow SNC to show off their facility.

Gord Shaver, media specialist for South Nation Conservation said the gala event begins with the award presentation right away, with social mingling to follow. Detailed plans are still in the works, he said.

"We will be looking at 100 mile diet foods," he said. "We would like to get some schools involved as much as possible. The winners are announced that evening and they are presented with a trophy, so to speak, which is a canoe paddle that is inscribed for the winners.

There are also runners up who are awarded for each category."

Ms. McFarlane said nominations fall into eight categories: primary school (JK-grade 6); intermediate and high school (grades seven to 12); college and university; agriculture; community groups; individuals; businesses and municipalities.

Ms. McFarlane said that when nominations are filed, a judging committee narrows down the list to identify two finalists. She said handing out these awards inspire individuals and groups to make a difference locally.

She added that the awards recognize the efforts that are made in the watershed areas. They are privately initiated by individuals, community groups or organizations and do not stem from the conservation authorities. She called these efforts, "activities that instill an environmental ethic."

Mr. Shaver said that there is a certain amount of prestige from winning these awards. It calls attention to the importance of conservation.

"It definitely gets people involved," he said. "It recognizes the leaders amongst the public who are really spearheading conservation initiatives. That is what it is all about; to recognize the effort that are already out there, which in turn encourages the other people to get involved with conservation. We all win when people get involved."

"Last year it got a little bigger," Ms. McFarlane said. "Hopefully it will get bigger again. People feel good about winning the awards and making connections with other groups that are likeminded as well." Go to [www.nation.on.ca](http://www.nation.on.ca) for nomination forms. The deadline for applications is Sept. 8 at 4:30 p.m.