



MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

NVCA Recognizes Watershed "Conservation Champions"

UTOPIA, Ontario, April 28, 2017 – Volunteers and community supporters were the stars at the Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority's Evening of Thanks on April 27.

The event, held during National Volunteer Week, celebrated the contributions of individuals, organizations and businesses that provide their time and talent to protect and enhance the environment of the Nottawasaga Valley watershed.

"Without the support of our volunteers and community partners, NVCA would not be able to undertake the stewardship work and offer the recreational programming we do," said Innisfil Councillor Doug Lougheed, chair of the NVCA board of directors. "Our supporters' actions – be they helping out at an event, planting trees on their property, or offering their financial support and technical expertise – benefit everyone in our watershed."

NVCA also announced the recipients of the Conservation Champion Awards at the event. Conservation champions are individuals, community groups, businesses, partners or agencies who have contributed to an environmental improvement project in one of the NVCA's 18 member municipalities, spanning across Simcoe, Dufferin and Grey counties.

Tom Hodgson received the Conservation Champion, Individual, award for his volunteer work with the South Simcoe Streams Network. Mr. Hodgson has been a tireless leader of "boots on the ground" efforts to improve water quality and aquatic habitat along Beeton Creek. He has also lead volunteer tree planting crews at sites across the watershed.

The **Blue Mountain Watershed Trust Foundation** received the Conservation Champion, Group, award for their work to conserve and protect the watershed ecosystems in Collingwood and the Blue Mountains. The Foundation's recent efforts to manage invasive *Phragmites* along the Georgian Bay shoreline in Collingwood and to study and protect the Silver Creek watershed were highlighted among their many accomplishments.

Both the **Township of Adjala-Tosorontio** and the **Township of Clearview** were recognized with Conservation Champion, Municipal, awards for their efforts to protect local waterways. Adjala-Tosorontio was commended for their efforts to enhance fisheries on the Pine River, while Clearview was recognized for their support of restoration work along the Mad River near the Minesing Wetlands. Both of these projects contribute to improved aquatic habitat and water quality.

The Young Conservation Champion award went to the **Barrie District Hunters and Anglers Conservation Club Youth Program**. Based in Springwater Township, this group has been very

active in conservation efforts, making and install bird and duck boxes, planting vegetable gardens and sharing the fresh produce with local shelters, conducting roadside and streamside clean-ups, and planting flowers to support declining bee and monarch butterfly species, among other initiatives.

NVCA's Agricultural Advisory Committee recognized two projects with Agricultural Stewardship Awards. Both projects illustrate the ecological benefits that happen when farmers, the community, and the environmental sector work together:

- The **South Simcoe Streams Network** received a stewardship award for their Trees for Streams Community Tree Planting Program. Partnering with local producers Tim Sturgeon, Ross Reynolds and Fred Somerville, volunteers planted more than 1,000 native trees and shrubs along 1 kilometre of streams in the Innisfil Creek watershed.
- Also recognized by the committee was the Isiaragui Project: Restoring the Wye River, coordinated by the **Elmvale Foundation**. This project saw nearly a hundred volunteers plant more than 2,000 native trees and shrubs along 4.5 kilometres of stream in the Wye River. Local farmers Bruce Roberts, David Graham, William Shotyk, and Anne and John Nahuis were key project partners, offering the streamside land for restoration and countless other supports.

Finally, NVCA recognized the **Ontario Geological Survey** with the Conservation Partner Award. For more than a decade, the OGS has worked with NVCA to map the geology of the watershed. This data is helping NVCA and its member municipalities make better informed decisions about land use and groundwater resources.

- 30 -

About the NVCA: The Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority is a public agency dedicated to the preservation of a healthy environment through specialized programs to protect, conserve and enhance our water, wetlands, forests and lands. www.nvca.on.ca

Media contacts: Heather Kepran, NVCA Communications Coordinator, 705-424-1479, ext. 254, hkepran@nvca.on.ca

Photos of individual groups available upon request.