

# 19<sup>th</sup> Annual *Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards*



Monday, December 10, 2018

Co-sponsored by

State of New Jersey

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

New Jersey Infrastructure Bank

New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology



## **About the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards Program**

Established in 2000 by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards Program recognizes outstanding environmental performance, programs and projects in the state.

Since the program's inception, 170 New Jersey businesses and corporations, municipalities, educational institutions, organizations and individuals have been recognized for environmental excellence.

This afternoon we are presenting awards to nine recipients in the following categories:

*Clean Air*  
*Water Resources*  
*Healthy Ecosystems & Habitats*  
*Innovative Technology*  
*Land Conservation*  
*Healthy & Sustainable Businesses*  
*Healthy & Sustainable Communities*  
*Environmental Education: Educator-led*  
*Environmental Education: Student-led*

The DEP is proud to co-sponsor this awards program for the 19th consecutive year, along with the New Jersey Infrastructure Bank and the New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology.

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities and the DEP's Environmental Stewardship Initiative provided promotional support.

Before presenting the Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards, one Certificate of Recognition will be given to this year's top performer in the New Jersey Charging Challenge: Electrify Your Workplace.

As the finale of the awards ceremony, the DEP will present New Jersey's first Richard J. Sullivan Award to a New Jersey resident who demonstrates exceptional leadership and outstanding accomplishment in environmental protection.

To view photos and information about today's award recipients or to review information about past winners or the program itself, visit the program's website.

**The Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards Program**

[www.nj.gov/dep/eeawards](http://www.nj.gov/dep/eeawards)

## The 2018 Richard J. Sullivan Award

*The Richard J. Sullivan Award honors a New Jersey resident who demonstrates exceptional leadership and outstanding accomplishment in safeguarding public health, protecting and enhancing New Jersey's diverse natural resources and creating vibrant, sustainable communities that provide economic opportunity for all.*

### Recipient: Candace McKee Ashmun



In 2010 when several organizations gathered to dedicate the Candace McKee Ashmun Preserve at Forked River Mountain in the Pinelands, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation described Candace McKee Ashmun as a “single person whose catalytic energy to protect our natural world is nearly as strong as Mother Nature herself.”

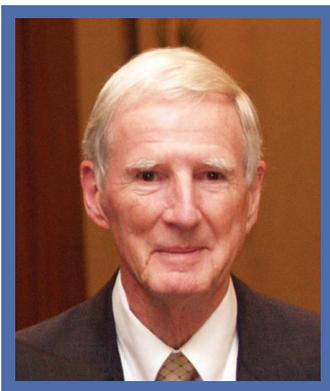
Environmental and conservation organizations regard Ms. Ashmun as a steadfast environmentalist who devoted more than six decades to environmental protection and conservation throughout New Jersey. She is known for being an active voice at public meetings, a promoter at public events, an influencer over business lunches and a relationship builder who cultivates collaborations.

Her substantial accomplishments include the following:

- Founding member of the Pinelands Commission since its creation in 1979;
- Executive Director and three-term president of the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions, which she helped to establish;
- Former member of the State Planning Commission;
- Trustee on the Highlands Coalition; and
- Vice Chair of the Board of the Fund for New Jersey.

At the local level, Ms. Ashmun has served on the Bedminster’s Board of Education, Board of Adjustment and Environmental Commission, and served as Vice Chair of the Far Hills Planning Board. A private consultant to nonprofit organizations, Ms. Ashmun has received numerous awards, including the American Planning Association Distinguished Leadership Award. She earned a degree in physics from Smith College.

### About Richard J. Sullivan:



On Earth Day April 22, 1970, Governor William T. Cahill created the Department of Environmental Protection, a new agency within state government, and appointed Richard J. Sullivan as its first Commissioner. He spearheaded environmental protections that established New Jersey as a national leader in coastal protection, land preservation and pollution control. As Commissioner, Mr. Sullivan helped establish Liberty State Park, which features a 36-acre salt marsh named the Richard J. Sullivan Natural Area. The Pineland Commission’s Richard J. Sullivan Center for Environmental Policy and Education also honors his significant contributions. He is one of New Jersey’s most respected conservationists and public leaders, dedicating his life to protecting our natural resources.

## Winners of the 2018 Governor's Environmental Excellence Awards

### Category: Clean Air

#### Winner: Greenspot

*This award is presented to a nominee that demonstrates a commitment to, and experience in, one or more of the following areas and activities:*

- *Reducing air pollution emissions and/or reducing outdoor exposure to toxic air contaminants;*
- *Reducing greenhouse gas emissions or equivalents through energy efficiency projects, clean energy vehicles and infrastructure, or green power purchases to reduce climate change; and*
- *Reducing air deposition loading to land and water.*

Recognizing that 42 percent of New Jersey's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector, the Greenspot Smart Mobility Program installs electric vehicle charging stations and marries the infrastructure needed for the charging stations with an electric carshare program. Greenspot strives to increase electric vehicle adoption by providing those who own electric vehicles with an additional location to charge their vehicles. Through this program Greenspot also provides an alternative to personal vehicle ownership through the shared mobility program; those who do not have access to a personal electric vehicle now have the opportunity to use one. Every car share vehicle has the potential to replace 10-15 personal vehicles, thus giving multiple households the opportunity to save money associated with personal car ownership. In addition, the electric vehicle infrastructure offered by Greenspot, coupled with shared mobility, decreases traffic and parking congestion, greenhouse gas emissions and asthma rates and helps New Jersey to stay on track to achieve its goals with climate change and sustainability.

### Category: Water Resources

#### Winner: American Littoral Society

*This award is presented to a nominee that demonstrates a positive influence in one or more of the following areas and activities:*

- *Improving surface or ground water quality through stormwater and wastewater management strategies;*
- *Reducing children's exposure to lead in homes/schools or addressing emerging drinking water contaminants;*
- *Ensuring sufficient quantities of water through reuse and conservation techniques; and*
- *Promoting or developing land use policies, watershed management approaches and green infrastructure projects to improve the protection of water sources or to reduce the impacts of flooding and sea level rise.*

The American Littoral Society designed and constructed a series of nonpoint source pollution reduction and green infrastructure projects within the Long Swamp Creek and Lower Toms River sub-watersheds of the Barnegat Bay region. These **Clean Water, Beautiful Bay** projects were implemented to manage stormwater in order to protect and restore water quality and reduce flooding in highly developed areas of the Barnegat Bay watershed. The projects were successful in reducing flooding in a private residential homeowner community, improving a stormwater basin and public open space area at a hospital, introducing golf course staff and golfers to environmentally friendly golf course management practices, and engaging high school students in planting projects on school property. The **Clean Water, Beautiful Bay** projects demonstrated that green infrastructure construction projects can reduce flooding and water pollution at business, community, school and public recreation locations, and can be publicly accepted and valued for the environmentally protective and restorative benefits they provide to Barnegat Bay.

**Category: Healthy Ecosystems & Habitats****Winner: American Littoral Society**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates a commitment to and experience in programs or techniques that have resulted in the restoration, protection and enhancement of the State's ecological resources. These resources include wetlands, estuaries and coastal areas, as well as habitats (land and water-based) for non-game and/or threatened and endangered species.*

The American Littoral Society, in collaboration with numerous partners, managed and led a multi-year, multi-million-dollar aquatic connectivity and fish passage restoration project at Wreck Pond, which is in Spring Lake in Monmouth County. The construction of a 600-foot box culvert, completed in 2016, was designed to improve fish passage from the Atlantic Ocean to Wreck Pond. It reopened and improved aquatic connectivity of 1.8 miles of spawning habitat for alewife and blueback herring. The design incorporated light tubes to address alewife and blueback herring sensitivity to light and used stop logs and baffles to address current velocity. The fish passage restoration project also provided improved aquatic connectivity and fish passage for the American eel. A post-restoration monitoring program continues as well as an outreach program that involves four nearby schools and a citizen science program that has more than 54 participants. Monitoring of fish, birds, water quality, tide elevation and riparian habitat will continue through 2021 to document success of the restoration. Data shows improvements in biodiversity and fish migration.

**Category: Innovative Technology****Winner: New Jersey American Water**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates the use or deployment of a new or alternative method, procedure, process, system or facility which results in greater environmental protection than other technologies in current practice or comparable results at lower costs in terms of energy, natural resources or environmental impacts.*

New Jersey American Water developed a new water pipe monitoring technology to reduce water leakage. This innovative leak monitoring system includes a network of acoustic sensors integrated into fire hydrants that listen to a pipe network every day. The hydrant-mounted leak monitoring sensors identify leak noises and compare them to noises received at two or more hydrants to determine the location of the leak. These mounted sensors communicate over cellular and other communication networks to an internet-based system that informs water operations staff when leaks form and where the leaks are located. Instead of spending time looking for leaks, New Jersey American Water staff focus on managing leaks as they emerge. Since its installation in March 2016, the leak monitoring system has saved more than 1.1 billion gallons of water from being treated, pumped and then leaked out into the environment. New Jersey American Water is also an active participant in the water community. In addition to supporting new product development they invest significant resources to share product experience with other water utilities and the public. Specifically, they have shared their experience with leak monitoring systems through participation in the Water Loss Control Committee of the American Water Works Association (the largest water management industry group), presentations at industry conferences, and participation in one on one meetings with engineers and managers from other water utilities to share experiences.

**Category: Land Conservation****Winner: Sandy Urgo**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates a commitment to, and experience in, the preservation of open space that protects land from future development and/or improves the resiliency of a municipality.*

Sandy Urgo's passion for New Jersey open spaces is exemplified in her professional and personal endeavors. Her decade of volunteer experience serving as Mayor in Roxbury Township on its Council, Planning Board, Open Space Committee, and Environmental Commission, resulted in thousands of acres preserved in Roxbury and the establishment of one of the first open space committees in the State of New Jersey. Sandy has also been the catalyst for change in many New Jersey communities. For more than 15 years, she has led the land preservation program at The Land Conservancy of New Jersey. Under her leadership more than 22,000 acres of land has been preserved throughout the State. Sandy has permanently protected land to ensure safe and clean drinking water for residents, protect people from dangerous floods, create walking trails, and provide open fields for our children to play in. Sandy Urgo is truly a dedicated municipal leader, land conservationist, photographer and naturalist.

**Category: Healthy and Sustainable Businesses****Winner: Pioneers, Chapter 99 and Ericsson**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates a commitment to, and experience in, one or more of the following activities:*

- *Any activity that addresses pollution or waste reduction, recycling, land use, local purchasing, sustainability and resiliency, resource conservation, green infrastructure, habitat restoration and product stewardship;*
- *Innovative practices or technologies that have resulted in the private or public sector clean up and redevelopment of contaminated/brownfields sites; and*
- *Creation of community-based initiatives that foster involvement, action and effective solutions to the adverse effects of industrial pollution in overburdened and low-income communities.*

Lari O'Donnell is a member of an association for volunteers, Pioneers, Chapter 99 and is a retired Ericsson employee. In 2013 she and several other representatives from Pioneers, Chapter 99 and Ericsson gave birth to the "Huge Furniture Giveaway," a reuse and waste reduction effort involving office furniture and equipment. It began in 2013 when Ericsson initiated a new workplace design at its Piscataway facility that created a paperless environment with open office space. Volunteers cleaned out 2,650 offices on 14 floors that contained office furniture and equipment so that reusable items could be organized and donated. This initial "Big Sweep" prevented more than 290 tons of reusable office waste from being reprocessed or landfilled. More recently, Ericsson is selling two buildings that have been unoccupied but are full of office equipment and furniture that must be removed. Ericsson and the Pioneers sponsored a furniture fundraiser with employees and a giveaway to nonprofits and schools. Volunteers scoured 12 stories of the buildings to tag furniture for 125 orders. As of September, 3,365 pieces of furniture were donated to 55 nonprofits, totaling 110 tons. In addition, an Ericsson subsidiary (iconectiv) that moved its offices donated art work and computer equipment toward this effort. The artwork was sold to raise funds for the project and more than 180 desktop and laptop computers were donated to 274 nonprofits, including schools in New Jersey, Haiti and Puerto Rico.

**Category: Healthy and Sustainable Communities****Winner: Surfrider Foundation, South Jersey Chapter and Sustainable Downbeach**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates a commitment to, and experience in, one or more of the following activities:*

- *Any activity that addresses pollution or waste reduction, recycling, land use, local purchasing, sustainability and resiliency, resource conservation, green infrastructure, habitat restoration and product stewardship;*
- *Innovative practices or technologies that have resulted in the private or public sector clean up and redevelopment of contaminated/brownfields sites; and*
- *Creation of community-based initiatives that foster involvement, action and effective solutions to the adverse effects of industrial pollution in overburdened and low-income communities.*

The South Jersey Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation and Sustainable Downbeach, along with the cities of Atlantic City, Longport, Margate and Ventnor, have worked collaboratively to ensure long-term protection of the coastline and marine life by focusing on the reduction of single-use plastic items found in the state's waterways. These two organizations were instrumental in the passage of a fee on single-use bags in Ventnor and a ban on single-use plastic bags in Atlantic County Parks. The groups are also responsible for the first bag fee legislation passed in the state by Longport in 2015. In addition, the Surfrider Foundation and Sustainable Downbeach worked on the passage of legislation that bans intentional balloon releases in towns along the shore. To date, these two groups have worked with coastal communities to pass the balloon ordinance in more than 16 New Jersey municipalities. In addition to taking measures to prevent plastic bag and balloon pollution, the groups hold litter cleanups in their communities. For example, in just two cleanups of their adopted highway section the groups retrieved 1,089 plastic bags and through their Annual Absecon Island Cleanup they removed 13,700 pounds of debris, much of which was plastic.

**Category: Environmental Education: Educator-led****Winner: New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates implementation of a program or project that has measurable positive impacts in environmental protection and education. One award will be given to an adult educator(s).*

The New Jersey Climate Adaptation Alliance is a diverse network of cross-sector thought leaders who self-organized in 2011 to advance shared goals for addressing climate change. With former Governors Thomas H. Kean and James J. Florio as Honorary co-chairs, the Alliance includes more than 45 organizations representing public, private, non-governmental and academic sectors that have a key nexus to climate change impacts including public health, natural and water resources, transportation, utilities, environmental justice, insurance, real estate, community planning, and emergency management. It has offered recommendations for evidence-based climate change and resilience policies, convened stakeholders to build consensus-based models, developed decision support tools in use by New Jersey communities and produced an extensive amount of outreach and educational material. Additionally, the Alliance has undertaken research and policy analysis to assess climate impacts in New Jersey as well as outline policy and other actions that can be taken to address sector-based impacts. Its work has served as an educational fulcrum on issues related to climate change in New Jersey for decision makers in government, nonprofit organizations, educational institutions, the media, and business community.

**Category: Environmental Education: Student-led**  
**Winner: Puja Vengadasalam**

*This award is presented to a nominee who demonstrates implementation of a program or project that has measurable positive impacts in environmental protection and education. One award will be given to students/youth in grades K-12 (student involvement must be emphasized).*

Puja Vengadasalam is a 15-year-old eleventh grade student and Girl Scout who wanted to pursue a Girl Scout Ambassador Gold passion project. Her passion for the environment inspired her to come up with "EcoCamp," a project that eventually required 250-volunteer hours of her time to coordinate and implement. The name "EcoCamp" incorporates "Eco" and "Camp" elements, whereby "Eco" comes from "Ecology" and the "advocacy or protection of natural resources from pollution," and "Camp" is an acronym for "Crafts, Arts, Movies and Making Pledges." After one year of planning and marketing (which included the creation of a website and several media articles), two simultaneous week-long EcoCamps were held at the South Plainsfield Public Library between June 25 to 31, 2018. The morning (3-hour) workshops were held for older students (ages 11 – 12) and the afternoon workshops were designed for younger students (ages 5 – 10). Using STEAM methods (science, technology, engineering, art and mathematics) to turn youth participants into environment specialists for life, EcoCamp workshops focused on various natural resources, pollution and other human impacts on them, and how students could bring about change through reformed behaviors. The EcoCamp program also gave youth a platform to exhibit their advocacy, art and communication skills while meeting local decision makers like the mayor, the town's environmental specialist, and members of the town's Green Team.

## **The 2018 New Jersey Charging Challenge: Electrify Your Workplace**

The DEP recognizes employers who are striving to make their workplaces “electric vehicle-ready.” By providing workplace charging for electric vehicles, these facilities are helping to reduce air pollutants from cars, thereby addressing climate change and its effect on human health, environmental quality and the state’s natural resources.

### **Certificate of Recognition: Raritan Valley Community College**

Raritan Valley Community College installed two dual-port Level 2 charging stations in their primary parking lot. College staff also conducted outreach activities related to the new charging stations, including the circulation of emails about the stations to all students and employees and the posting of information about electric vehicles at the college’s website for campus transportation services. Raritan Valley Community College has been an environmental leader since 2007. It was the first community college in the country to sign an environmental stewardship agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2009. It was also the first community college in the country to operate an energy-saving cogeneration plant which has contributed to the college’s 51 percent emissions reduction since 2005. Among its many awards received for sustainability practices, Raritan Valley Community College received a Governor’s Environmental Excellence Award for Clean Air in 2013. The college also received the DEP’s Environmental Stewardship Award in 2012, for voluntary and proactive measures in fifteen categories that went beyond compliance in an effort to improve the environment and ensure a sustainable future.

To learn more about the New Jersey Charging Challenge visit the program’s website:

**New Jersey Charging Challenge: Electrify Your Workplace**

[www.drivegreen.nj.gov/programs.html#nj1](http://www.drivegreen.nj.gov/programs.html#nj1)

## About the Co-sponsors and Partners

### **Co-sponsor: New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**

As a national leader in environmental protection, New Jersey uses the best science available to protect public health, support its diverse natural resources and create vibrant and sustainable communities that provide economic opportunity for all. For more information about the DEP, visit: [www.nj.gov/dep](http://www.nj.gov/dep).

### **Co-sponsor: The New Jersey Infrastructure Bank**

The New Jersey Infrastructure Bank is an independent state financing authority that partners with peer state agencies to provide low interest rate financing of infrastructure projects throughout the state. The I-Bank has partnered with the DEP for over three decades to administer the New Jersey Water Bank and make low interest rate loans to governmental and public water systems for wastewater, stormwater and drinking water infrastructure projects to preserve and protect water quality and public health. In State Fiscal Year 2018, the I-Bank began to partner with the New Jersey Department of Transportation to administer financing for local transportation infrastructure projects. For more information, visit: [www.njib.gov](http://www.njib.gov).

### **Co-sponsor: The New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology**

The New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology is a private/public partnership that pools the best talents and diverse resources of business and industry, entrepreneurs, university research centers, utilities and government to promote the development and commercialization of exciting new energy and environmental technologies. For more information, visit: [www.njcat.org](http://www.njcat.org).

### **Partner: The New Jersey State League of Municipalities**

The New Jersey State League of Municipalities is a voluntary association that helps communities do a better job of self-government by sharing knowledge and experience. Authorized by state statute, since 1915 the organization has been serving local officials statewide. New Jersey mayors and 13,000 elected and appointed officials of 564-member municipalities are entitled to all League services and privileges. For more information about the League, visit: [www.njslom.org](http://www.njslom.org).

### **Partner: The DEP's Environmental Stewardship Initiative**

The Environmental Stewardship Initiative is a recognition program developed by the DEP's Division of Compliance & Enforcement for use by DEP programs that conduct compliance assurance inspections. The goal of this initiative is to encourage regulated entities to improve their environmental performance beyond the minimum requirements of existing rules and regulations, recognize environmentally proactive businesses for their efforts, showcase their achievements to others in the regulated community, and provide guidance and encouragement for others to follow. For more information, visit: [www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/stewardship](http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/stewardship).

# *Special Thanks*

## **Co-sponsors:**

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection  
New Jersey Infrastructure Bank  
New Jersey Corporation for Advanced Technology

## **Partners:**

New Jersey State League of Municipalities  
New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Stewardship Initiative

## **Agencies and Companies:**

New Jersey State Museum

Leonardo II Catering  
Lawrenceville, New Jersey

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