



Since 1976, the Ecology Action Centre has been giving out awards at our Annual General Meeting to formally recognize some of the best, the worst and the most dedicated of the environmental movement in the past year.

We know that none of our work would be possible without the countless groups and individuals who have dedicated themselves to the vision of a sustainable, equitable future here in Mi'kma'ki and beyond. The Annual Awards are an opportunity for us to show our gratitude and appreciation to some of the people making important contributions to environmental progress in our communities. Our staff, board of directors and volunteers submit their nominations, which are voted on by staff and board members. The top three from each of the four categories are announced at our AGM each year. Here are 2023's winners!

DANIELLE MOORE SUNSHINE AWARD:

FIRST PLACE: Save West Mabou Beach Provincial Park - For initiating the campaign to prevent private enterprise from developing a golf course on a beautiful natural space. They kept the momentum going and engaged all the right people, until they were successful in protecting West Mabou Beach.

SECOND PLACE: Amalgamated Transit Union Local 508 - for working to improve conditions for Transit Operators in the area for over 100 years. Their ongoing efforts are foundational to cutting transportation sector emissions by making public transit a viable option for more people.

ATU Local 508 finalized a new Collective Agreement in April of 2023, after waiting over 500 days since their contract expired for HRM to begin negotiating. In May, Halifax Transit began sharing recruitment and retention data in its Performance Measures Reports; the first month of the new Collective Agreement was the first month on record with 0 resignations.

THIRD PLACE: Vanessa Burchill and Family - for tangibly helping the endangered Monarch butterfly by giving away thousands of Swamp Milkweed seeds and plants. Milkweed is desperately needed as the host plant for Monarchs while they are in Canada, and the Burchill family makes it easy for people in Dartmouth and area to add this plant to their gardens. Their supportive Facebook page allows people to ask questions and share in the delight of helping this imperiled species. The Burchills are directly helping to counteract the biodiversity crisis but restoring the lost habitat that contributed to the Monarch butterfly's decline.

TARRED DUCK AWARD:

FIRST PLACE: Kameron Coal, owner of the Donkin Mine - #1. For re-opening the Donkin Mine after "permanently closing" in 2020, now with the province's stamp of approval until Dec 31, 2029! **#2.** For incurring 14 warnings, 19 compliance orders, and 8 administrative penalties or fines between September 2022, and January 2023 **#3.** For producing noise pollution which has degraded Port Morien residents' quality of life, particularly in regard to sleep deprivation. **#4.** For being the only underground coal mine still active in Nova Scotia and Canada. Fun fact: The Donkin Mine can now apparently self-report their emissions and will not need to report when over the cap threshold, in the past they have gone as much as 8 times over the GHG emission limit.

TIED FOR FIRST PLACE: Premier Tim Houston - For repeatedly misrepresenting the carbon tax in particular during a press conference held less than 48 hours after historic flooding in NS where lives were lost. During the press conference Premier Houston spent 5 minutes misrepresenting the policy by explaining to the reporter who asked about it that the carbon tax impacts citizens of Pictou County particularly as they can't take their children to hockey or dance class on their bicycle, while purposefully omitting mentions of rebates associated with carbon tax AND that there are known alternatives to driving a gas car, such as electric vehicles and public transit, all of which he has power to prioritize and implement.

THIRD PLACE: Premier Tim Houston again! - For unjustified delays to the release of the Coastal Protection Act (which his party voted in favour of in 2019) regulations causing unfair offloading of coastal development regulation responsibilities and costs onto Municipalities, and putting our coastlines further at risk from reckless development while ignoring obvious climate hazards.

BUBBY MOOERS AWARD FIRST PLACE: Wekatesk Augustine - Wekatesk (pronounced Wegadess) works for the Native Alcohol and Drug Counselling Association (NADACA) in Eskasoni First Nation. For the last 3 years, Wekatesk has been an incredible community partner and advocate for the EAC's Pop Up Bike Hub program. He's also helped us look for funding at times when we weren't sure how to fund the program for the communities in Cape Breton. He was the community partner that suggested we go to the other 4 Mi'kmaq communities in Unama'ki back in 2021. He's been exceptional, supportive and enthusiastic about the project and ensuring that his community has access to safe cycling opportunities.

SECOND PLACE: Ducie Howe, Dorene Bernard, Charles Bull, Sadie Quinn, and Hope Moon - For their incredible contributions of time, energy, wisdom and brilliance to collectively organize the first People's Parade for Life on Earth! Our first organizing committee meeting was just 8 weeks before the event, and these folks put in countless volunteer hours to plan and implement the parade. It was a huge success, with over 35 groups, an estimated 750 people in attendance, and a real sense of joy, connectedness, and genuine celebration.

THIRD PLACE: Unama'ki / Cape Breton Climate Change Task Force - For their dedication and enthusiasm in working to promote climate awareness and action around Unama'ki Cape Breton. They are a resourceful and dedicated group of citizens without core funding (yet!) who are doing really excellent education, advocacy, community mobilization work around climate. Their citizen-driven climate leadership is an example for communities around the province.

TOOKER GOMBERG AWARD:

Arlington Forest Protection Society - for saving a place with science! In fall 2022 the group sounded the alarm that an area of Crown land was beginning to be cut by forestry company Westfor at Goldsmith Lake. The group hosted a "bioblitz" on the land and identified 8 species at risk at the site, including Black Ash, and Blue Felt Lichen, which is Nova Scotia's provincial lichen and an indicator of old forests. The company and Province had not previously noted these species which are supposed to be protected by law against the impacts of forestry. The Society's documentation, communications, and public outcry led to the Province pausing the clearcut and requiring more species at risk surveys. Arlington Forest Protection Society did an outstanding job of conducting citizen science and then using their findings to call on government and companies to at least follow the minimal environmental protection processes we have in place in Nova Scotia.

