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DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION

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2008 GOVERNOR'S ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP AWARDS ANNOUNCED
INDIVIDUALS, ORGANIZATIONS AND PROJECTS HONORED FOR ACHIEVEMENTS

Nashville, Tenn. - Environment and Conservation Commissioner Jim Fyke announced the winners of the 2008 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards today. The 14 winners will be recognized for their achievements and positive impact on the state's natural resources in an awards ceremony to be held in Nashville in June.

"Taking care of our precious natural resources is essential to preserving Tennessee's outdoor tradition," said Governor Phil Bredesen. "I want to express my congratulations to each of these individuals, organizations and groups whose stewardship is helping us protect Tennessee's air, land and water."

The Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards program recognizes exemplary voluntary actions that improve or protect our environment and natural resources with projects or initiatives that are not required by law or regulations. This marks the 22nd year for the awards program. Thirty-nine professionals from various public and private organizations judged more than 100 nominations to determine the award recipients.

The winner of one additional honor, the Robert Sparks Walker Lifetime Achievement Award, will be announced at the awards ceremony in June.

"Our environment impacts everything from recreational activities to the health of our communities, and I believe it is important to recognize the people and organizations that work so hard to protect it," said Fyke. "I am pleased to acknowledge and celebrate these Tennesseans who go above and beyond to enhance the condition of our shared environment."

The 2008 Governor's Environmental Stewardship Award winners are:

Category: Agriculture/Forestry

**Robert Thompson Conservation Farm in Niota
McMinn County**

Robert Thompson's 589-acre, 200-head cattle farm in McMinn County practices conservation efforts along the Oostanula Creek and Malone Springs in East Tennessee. These practices include extensive livestock exclusion fencing (4,685 feet), alternative water tanks (six with 6,000 feet of pipeline) and rotational grazing. These efforts have improved the health of the cattle herd and water quality. Water quality improvements stem from the reduction of sediment, which can occur when cattle travel over stream banks to reach water, as well as from the decreased amount of livestock waste reaching the stream.

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Category: Aquatic Resource Preservation

**Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute - *Saving the Sturgeon*
Tennessee River Watershed from Knoxville to Chattanooga**

In 2007, *Saving the Sturgeon* reached several new milestones. More than 60,000 lake sturgeon were released into the Tennessee River Watershed and monitored as far south as Alabama. New partners in the sturgeon conservation effort include Knoxville Girl Scout troops, East Tennessee fishermen and Gap Creek Elementary classes. Educational efforts were expanded through these partnerships by distributing wallet-size educational cards to fishermen at time of licensing, developing a coloring book for grades K-2 about lake sturgeon conservation efforts and engaging students to help with sturgeon releases near their school. The Tennessee Aquarium Research Institute also began monitoring released sturgeon with sonic tags and using an endoscope and anesthesia vaporizer to determine gender of released fish to enhance reproductive success.

Category: Building Green

**Metro Nashville Parks “Green” Nature Centers
Davidson County**

Metro Nashville Parks and Recreation developed and built three new nature centers that include sustainable building and design techniques - Shelby Bottoms Greenway, Beaman Park and Bells Bend Park. There were more than 25 sustainable features designed into each center, focusing on site sustainability, water-use efficiency, energy consumption and atmospheric impact, use of materials and resources, indoor air quality and design innovation. Some features include a green roof, rain-chains, rain catch basins, solar shades, electricity generation utilizing photovoltaic cells, geothermal heat pumps and pervious concrete sidewalks.

Category: Energy Leadership

**Cleveland State Community College
Bradley County**

Cleveland State Community College’s existing construction technology program was enhanced to include a focus on alternative and renewable energy sources, as well as the techniques and technologies for energy efficient construction. The project focuses on four areas: new curriculum, high school recruiting, workshops and seminars, and practical demonstration items. This enhanced program resulted in a new workforce development certificate, called the Zero Energy Housing Certificate; six new or revised courses; and more than 6,000 individuals exposed to energy efficient construction materials in the classroom, public meetings, presentations and seminars. So far, 122 students have completed more than 300 community college courses related to energy efficient construction at Cleveland State Community College.

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Category: Environmental and Education Outreach

Kilowatt Ours Youth Initiative (Jennifer Barrie)
Davidson County

The goal of the Kilowatt Ours Youth Initiative is to create and to foster an energy conservation ethic among young people. Students are engaged in an interactive program that trains them to become energy leaders in their homes, schools and communities. The Youth Initiative has developed standards-based curriculum materials and resources and created a peer education program that engages students in the process of assessing energy use and taking energy-saving steps in their homes and schools. The program targets students in grades 4-12. It is being implemented in Nashville schools and seeks to expand across the state. To date, the Youth Initiative has reached more than 5,000 students in 30 schools, trained 1,700 students to conduct home energy assessments, conducted five teacher training workshops, registered 500 students on the Web site and disseminated the curriculum to more than 850 educators across the United States. In January 2008, the peer education program was launched. The program trained 15 college students to be energy role models, educating younger students about energy conservation and renewable power.

Category: Greenways and Trails

Peterson Lake Nature Area - Town of Collierville
Shelby County

The Peterson Lake Nature Area and Boardwalk contains 70 acres of Wolf River bottomland forest and natural wetlands and includes a 0.7-mile section of boardwalk that provides new and exciting recreational and educational opportunities for the Collierville community. The boardwalk is one component of the five-mile Wolf River Wildlife Corridor and a major destination within the Collierville Greenbelt System. It includes interpretive panels, strategically placed to educate the public about the important role of each environmental element found along the pathway.

Category: Green Schools - K-12

The Harpeth Hall School - Environmental Stewardship
Davidson County

The Harpeth Hall School formed a campus-wide Environmental Stewardship Committee to look broadly at the school's environmental practices to explore more green initiatives, expand existing programs and make it a leader for environmental sustainability among educational facilities. Some of the 2007-2008 initiatives include adding more recycling bins on campus; eliminating plastic take-out containers and styrofoam cups and replacing them with recyclable paper containers; serving locally produced fruits and vegetables in the dining hall; using green cleaning products; installing bike racks on campus; installing operable windows for fresh air; using bamboo flooring and linoleum when renovating; and using native plants on campus. The Tennessee Urban Forestry Council certified Harpeth Hall as an arboretum in 2007.

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Category: Green Schools - Higher Education

**Vanderbilt University
Davidson County**

The Commons Project consists of five newly constructed residence houses, five renovated residence houses, and the Commons Center on Vanderbilt's Peabody campus. The Commons is the foundation of Vanderbilt University's College Halls System, a residential college program. This project has become a touchstone for collaborative environmental initiatives of all types and has made The Commons a showcase of sustainability and a model for comprehensive environmental responsibility on a college campus. Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design certification of new and renovated buildings, attractive and energy-saving building features, waste reduction and recycling programs, use of alternative fuels, selection of recycled and renewable materials and educational demonstrations for each of these items are incorporated into every aspect of life at The Commons. Exposing all of Vanderbilt's first-year students to the sustainable features of The Commons will help disseminate these concepts, wherever these students go, for decades to come.

Category: Hazardous Waste Reduction

**Johns Manville Facility in Etowah
McMinn County**

Johns Manville's fiberglass plant in Etowah employs 250 people and supplies fiberglass for a variety of products, including residential shingles. In 2007, the Etowah plant opened a new state-of-the-art, high-speed line to produce nonwoven glass mat. The company's new glass furnaces have abatement systems to remove particulates and sulfur dioxide from the discharge stream. Recognizing the potential reuse and waste reduction from this effective capture of original materials, the Etowah plant launched a \$225,000 engineering project to reuse this captured material as part of its glass making recipe. The effective reuse of the raw material, rich in expensive batch ingredients, reduced the amount of hazardous waste generated at the site and decreased the overall cost of manufacturing. In 2006, the Etowah plant generated 840,820 pounds of this material, which was shipped off-site and disposed as a hazardous waste. Reuse began in February 2007, and that year the Etowah plant shipped only 180,720 pounds of hazardous waste for disposal - a 79 percent reduction.

Category: Natural Heritage

***Tennessee's Wild Side* - Weekly Outdoor Adventure TV Program
Statewide**

Tennessee's Wild Side is a weekly outdoor adventure television program supported by the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency and The Nature Conservancy, produced by The Renaissance Center and broadcast statewide by numerous public television stations. In 2007, Alan Griggs, in cooperation with the Department of Environment and Conservation's Division of Natural Areas, produced several *Wild Side* programs highlighting species and lands of high conservation significance. *Tennessee's Wild Side* has produced more than 130 shows highlighting conservation and the environment.

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Category: Parks and Recreation

**Bell Buckle Community Park
Bedford County**

The Bell Buckle Park is an approximately 10-acre park developed in the heart of historic Bell Buckle. The park was created by renovating the old Bell Buckle Elementary School property along Bell Buckle Creek and the old Nashville Chattanooga Railroad line. This area is prone to flooding and the project reclaimed the property by constructing a half mile asphalt walking path, playground, picnic pavilion and a Poets Garden. There are also plans for a future amphitheater. Bell Buckle is the smallest city in Tennessee to have achieved Tree City USA status from the Arbor Day Foundation.

Category: Pollution Prevention

**Bridgestone Firestone North American Tire, LLC - Warren Plant
Warren County**

Bridgestone Firestone installed new pollution-reducing technologies at its Warren County facility, which benefit the environment and the budget. Steps to prevent pollution at the plant include the use of non-polluting hydrogen fuel cells in automated vehicles inside the plant, a reduction in the amount of mercury lighting used in the facility and water-conserving fixtures in restrooms. The facility also provided free air compressors throughout the community to allow people to keep their vehicle's tires appropriately filled to optimize fuel economy and to reduce air pollution. Personnel from the Warren County facility are involved in mentoring other facilities within the Bridgestone family of companies in the use of these new technologies.

Category: Solid Waste Reduction

**U.S. Fence Facility in Bulls Gap
Hawkins County**

U.S. Fence, Inc. is a leader in PVC and wood fencing and outdoor rail design and employs more than 500 people. The Hawkins County facility completed a major expansion to its physical plant and also made significant investments in its manufacturing operations. As production continued to grow, plant officials recognized their waste stream was increasing, too. U.S. Fence was disposing of approximately 100,000 cubic yards of solid waste annually, most of which could have been recycled. The company instituted new waste reduction and recycling processes and made informational signs, purchased collection bins and painted floors to reinforce the new process. More than a year into the comprehensive waste reduction and recycling program, the Bulls Gap plant is saving more than \$450,000 annually through reduced tipping fees and offsetting revenues generated from recycling plastic, cardboard and PVC waste.

For more information about the Governor's Environmental Stewardship Awards program, visit:
www.tn.gov/environment/awards/.

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