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Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Celebrates 2024 Impact Award Winners and a Year of Conservation Success at *The Happiest Hour*

Fox-Wolf honored leaders in conservation, highlighted a year of environmental progress, and engaged the community in celebrating a healthier future for our watershed.

APPLETON,WI, October 18, 2024 – The Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance hosted its annual *The Happiest Hour* on October 10, gathering community members, conservationists, and local leaders at the scenic The Hillside at Plamann Park to celebrate the 2024 Impact Award winners and reflect on a year of watershed successes. Sponsored by NEW Water, the event was filled with positive energy, showcasing the many environmental wins achieved across the region.

“This event was all about celebrating the good—both the people making a difference and the progress we’ve made together,” said Jessica Schultz, Executive Director of the Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance. *“It’s inspiring to look back at all the successes we’ve shared, and the energy in the room tonight shows just how excited everyone is for what’s next.”*

Honoring the 2024 Impact Award Winners

The evening’s spotlight was on the 2024 Impact Award winners, each of whom has driven meaningful change in conservation and sustainability:

Lifetime Achievement Award: Hallett "Bud" Harris

Bud Harris was honored for more than 50 years of dedication to water conservation, shaping key efforts such as the Fox River PCB cleanup and the Lower Fox River TMDL study. His impact extends beyond his teaching career, with his leadership, mentorship, and advocacy continuing to inspire conservation efforts throughout the region.

Seven Oaks Dairy for its leadership in sustainable farming, adopting innovative soil health practices that improve water quality and agricultural runoff management.

Jeff Manzanec, Senior Consultant at raSmith, for his contributions to stormwater management and his ability to engage the community through paddling events and water-based outreach.

Community First Credit Union for their commitment to eco-friendly infrastructure, using native plantings and permeable pavers to reduce water runoff at multiple facilities.

Ryan Kudish, meteorologist at WFRV-TV Local 5, for his *Sustainably Speaking* segment, which raises awareness about local environmental issues and inspires community action.

“These winners represent what’s possible when passion and innovation come together,” said Jessica Schultz. “They’ve made a lasting impact on our watershed, and tonight we got to celebrate that.”

Celebrating a Year of Watershed Wins

In addition to honoring individual achievements, the event highlighted the region’s collective progress over the past year. From water quality improvements to community-driven conservation efforts, attendees reflected on the power of collaboration in making meaningful change.

“We’ve seen exciting progress this year,” said Schultz. “Whether through new projects, stronger partnerships, or increased community involvement, it’s clear that momentum is building. Every win, big or small, moves us closer to a healthier watershed.”

A Night to Remember

Set against the beautiful backdrop of The Hillside at Plamann Park, the celebration featured live music from The Sazerac Trio, appetizers, Wisconsin old fashioned, and craft beer. NEW Water’s sponsorship helped create a warm, festive atmosphere where community members and conservation leaders came together to connect and reflect on the year’s successes.

“We wanted this to be a night for everyone—because it takes a community to protect a watershed,” said Schultz. “It’s been a great year, and tonight we got to feel good about how far we’ve come.”

As the evening concluded, attendees left with renewed energy and excitement for the year ahead, knowing that the community’s collective efforts are making a lasting impact on the watershed’s future.

About the Awards

The Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance Impact Awards are presented annually to individuals and organizations that show leadership in environmental conservation within the Fox-Wolf Watershed. These awards highlight efforts

to protect natural resources, improve water quality, and promote sustainable practices.

About Us

Fox-Wolf Watershed Alliance is a non-profit organization that works with partners to protect and restore the water resources of the Fox-Wolf River Basin.

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