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Scott Williams
(207) 783-7733

scott.williams@mainevlmp.org

Unwavering Commitment to Protecting Natural Resources Awarded

Auburn, Maine, March 20, 2009 - The Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program (VLMP) has received the annual “Outstanding Stewardship Award” from the Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD). Thomas Gordon, Chairman of the District Board of Supervisors, and Jami Fitch, Project Manager, presented the award at the Annual Meeting of the District on March 18 in Gorham. Gordon noted that the special award is reserved for a group that displays an unwavering commitment to protecting Cumberland County’s natural resources.

The VLMP, formed in 1971, is the longest-standing citizen lake monitoring program in the U.S., as well as one of the largest, with several hundred active volunteers throughout Maine who are certified to monitor the health and quality of Maine’s lakes and ponds. The VLMP is the largest provider of lake data in the State of Maine. Volunteers are trained to monitor lake water quality, and to screen lakes and ponds for invasive plants, such as Eurasian Milfoil.

In presenting the award to VLMP Executive Director, Scott Williams, Gordon and the CCSWCD applauded the VLMP for the essential role that it plays in protecting Maine’s lakes, noting that the data collected by volunteer monitors is fundamental to the watershed protection work of the District. Gordon stated that the lake watershed work of the District “would not happen” without the work of the VLMP.

The VLMP was also recognized for its efforts to establish the Center for Invasive Aquatic Plants. *“In recognizing the threat that invasive aquatic plants pose to surface waters” Gordon stated, “you have once again empowered volunteers to play a vital role in protecting Maine’s lakes and ponds. VLMP is truly at the forefront of the State’s fight against invasive aquatic plants.”*

At no cost to volunteers, the Maine VLMP trains and certifies volunteers, and provides basic monitoring equipment and lifetime technical support. Many VLMP volunteers have been continuously active since the early days of the program. In receiving the award, Williams acknowledged the remarkable commitment and passion demonstrated over the years by volunteer lake monitors throughout Maine. It is understood that this award recognizes and honors every volunteer in the program!

For more information about the Maine Volunteer Lake Monitoring Program, please visit the organization’s website: www.mainevolunteerlakemonitors.org

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