

Peterborough-area environmentalists rewarded for five innovative projects

Second annual Rotary Environmental Innovators Awards support environmental innovation with a total of \$12,500 in funding

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The recipients of the second annual Rotary Environmental Innovators Awards are, from left to right, Brandon Cotes of Flora's Reign, Peter Currier and Lindsay Briden of Catchacoma Old Growth Trail Enhancement, Maria Cotes of Flora's Reign, Sarah Jamieson of Moths & Bats, Dave Furdas and Joann Marcotte for Gerry Marcotte of Tick Suit, and Jenn McCallum of Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group. (Photo courtesy of Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund)

The four Rotary Clubs of Peterborough along with Cleantech Commons at Trent University announced the winners of the second annual Rotary Environmental Innovators Awards at an event on Friday evening (April 19) at Camp Kawartha in Douro-Dummer, with \$12,500 in total funding awarded to support the recipients' projects.

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of Flora's Reign) and two each received \$1,000 (Jen McCallum of Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group and Gerry Marcotte of Tick Suit).

"These projects exemplify the spirit of innovation and dedication to environmental conservation that the Rotary Environmental Innovators Fund aims to support," said Graham Wilkins, chair of the Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund (REIF), in a media release. "Each award reflects the passion and creativity of individuals devoted to protecting the environment. May (their) dedication inspire us all to continue our journey towards a sustainable future."

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GRAHAM WILKINS
REIF CHAIR

REIF was established in 2022 by a collection of active citizens and businesses to support and advance the work of local environmentalists. Along with community donations, the initiative is supported by the Rotary Club of Peterborough, the Rotary Club of Peterborough Kawartha, the Rotary Club of Bridgenorth-Ennismore-Lakefield, Fenelon Falls, and the Rotary Club of Fenelon Falls, as well as Cleantech Commons.

"Our club is inspired by the remarkable individuals and organizations recognized here tonight," said Betty Halman-Plumley, president of the Rotary Club of Peterborough. "We draw inspiration from the exceptional individuals and organizations honoured at the event for their ingenuity in addressing pressing environmental challenges."

"These award winners ignite a sense of purpose within us, urging us to champion environmental stewardship and bring a sense of hope for tomorrow," added Susan Davidson, president of the Rotary Club of Bridgenorth-Ennismore-Lakefield.

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Brandon and Maria Cotes of Flora's Reign (middle) with the Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund's honorary champion Martin Yuill (left) and chair Graham Wilkins. (Photo courtesy of Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund)

Sarah Jamieson, Moths & Bats

Pollinators like the rusty-patched bumblebee and monarch butterflies are declining rapidly, with alarming statistics suggesting significant population decreases. Moths, often overlooked, face similar threats and are poorly studied.

Jamieson's research aims to understand the intricate connections between moths, plants, and bats to preserve their habitats and populations better. It includes uniting local citizen scientists and inspiring gardeners to support nighttime ecosystems to encourage conservation actions.

Katie Krelove, Catchacoma Old Growth Trail Enhancement

The Catchacoma Forest Stewardship Committee aims to enhance public hiking trails in the Catchacoma Forest, highlighting its rare old-growth eastern hemlock ecosystem.

The project will raise awareness and support for the forest's protected status through educational signage and guided activities, including recreational, educational, and research opportunities. By engaging community volunteers, the project will create accessible trails and informative signage to promote conservation values and biodiversity appreciation.

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Maria Coates, Flora's Reign

Flora's Reign is an augmented reality (AR) mobile game where players restore nature by planting and nurturing virtual gardens of native plants in real-world locations.

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Through AR technology and community engagement, the game innovatively bridges digital entertainment with ecological awareness, empowering players to become stewards of the environment.



Joann Marcotte with Dave Furdas for Gerry Marcotte of Tick Suit (holding a sample suit) with the Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund's honorary champion Martin Yuill (left) and chair Graham Wilkins. (Photo courtesy of Rotary Environmentalist Innovators Fund)

Jen McCallum, Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group

The Ashburnham Memorial Stewardship Group, which organizes two clean-ups of Ashburnham Memorial Park (aka Armour Hill) every year, aims to transform the park into a vibrant and biodiverse space by reimagining the existing parking lot at the top of Armour Hill as a multi-use green area.

Through community engagement and professional design, the project seeks to mitigate environmental issues such as garbage dumping while enhancing wildlife habitat and promoting sustainable recreation.

Gerry Marcotte, Tick Suit

Marcotte's Tick Suit offers protection against ticks and biting insects, addressing the growing threat of Lyme disease and other insect-borne illnesses. The dense and tear-resistant fabric and ventilation panels enhance the safety and comfort of researchers and outdoor workers.

The project aims to mass produce and distribute these suits globally, benefiting environmental workers and communities worldwide.

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