

# News Release

## TWO FAMILIES WIN CONSERVATION AWARDS

MANOTICK, June 19, 2006 — Eric and Cheryl Ruhs of North Grenville, and Brian and Les Billings of the Perth area shared top honours in the Rideau Valley Conservation Foundation's Annual Conservation Awards ceremony for 2005. Certificates were recently presented at the Conservation Authority's 40th anniversary celebration at the Baxter Conservation Area in front of about 250 people. This distinction sheds a little light on some of the many, amazing, voluntary environmental actions that people do every day in this watershed.

The Ruhs family have built a new home on the banks of the Rideau in the Municipality of North Grenville. They have gone out of their way to maintain and encourage the natural shoreline buffer on their land. They have resisted the temptation to remove all the cattails and put new lawn right down to the water. They have created a beautiful and functional piece of natural Rideau riverbank.

Brian and his father Les Billings have been organizing, fundraising for and coordinating Scouts Canada tree planting for the past 20 years on properties in the Drummond/North Elmsley Township area. When Les passed away a few years ago, his son Brian stepped up and continued the family tradition of instructing children and teaching youngsters the values of reforestation and natural landscape.

Foundation Chair Mary Bryden said, "We offer our sincere thanks to the Ruhs family for taking such good care of the health of their part of the Rideau watershed. And we are very proud to have worked with Les and Brian Billings in planting tens of thousands of new trees over the years with Scout participation. The benefits of these actions are felt by all residents of the Rideau Valley watershed."

The annual Conservation Awards are offered to individuals, families, businesses, non-profit groups or community associations for outstanding voluntary work in improving the health of the Rideau Valley watershed during the previous year. Candidates could be working in tree planting, water quality protection, shoreline stewardship or any other field that contributes to supporting the environmental health of the valley.

Previous winners include the Riverside Park Girl Guides (1995), the Society of Ontario Nut Growers (1996), the Friends of Foley Mountain (1997), the Friends of the Jock River (1999), MAPLE (2000), the Rideau Environmental Action League (2001), the combined Environment Committee of Ottawa South / Muskies Canada Ottawa Valley Chapter (2002), Friends of the Tay Watershed (2003) and the Monterey Inn Resort & Conference Centre (2004).

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