

MEDIA RELEASE

Non-profit volunteer group makes a big splash receiving the Calgary Award for Environmental Achievement

June 15, 2020 (Calgary, AB): 'CreekWatch Citizen Science and Stewardship coordinated by the RiverWatch Institute of Alberta was honoured with an Environmental Achievement Award by the City of Calgary.

The Calgary Awards celebrate and recognize outstanding achievements and contributions made by Calgarians. Specifically, the Environmental Achievement Award recognizes leadership, innovation, and action in environmental stewardship that reduces the impact on and restores our city's natural environment.

"We are proud to have you join this year's group of outstanding Calgary Awards recipients that make our city a great place to live. I hope you and your staff will take pride in knowing that your organization has been chosen as a leader and a role model for our community. On behalf of City Council and the citizens of Calgary, I thank you for enhancing the quality of life for Calgarians and for being an inspiration to our city," said Calgary Mayor Naheed Nenshi.

"CreekWatch enables community volunteers to become more knowledgeable and engaged with the health of their local creeks. We don't tell volunteers how healthy their creek is – instead, we provide them with the support and tools to research and discover on their own. It's about community-based environmental monitoring, and receiving an Calgary Award is exciting confirmation that the work of our volunteers is valued," said Reed Froklage, RiverWatch Citizen Science Programs Manager.

Each year since its beginnings in 2015, CreekWatch and approximately one-hundred corporate and community volunteers across Alberta have taken-up the challenge of answering: "How healthy is our local creek?" Equipped and trained in using portable water quality labs, CreekWatch volunteers have collected and analyzed samples from more than a dozen urban and rural stormwater creeks. From these different locations, annual reports are produced evaluating the relative health of Alberta's creeks.

CreekWatch participants contribute further by offering a hand in stewardship events involving shoreline clean-ups, invasive weed removal and tree planting. Additionally in 2016, as part of its shoreline activity along Calgary's Bow River, CreekWatch participants came upon – and later helped remediate - a major stormwater spill of some half-million industrial plastic pellets scattered along 10 kilometers of riverbank. Because of this keen detection work, a 760-hour shoreline remediation by CreekWatch followed.

Major CreekWatch funding is in partnership with HSBC Bank Canada, with additional funding through Dream Development, Invistec Consulting, Park Paving, Brookfield Residential and Raywalt Construction. Expert advice was contributed by staff at the City of Calgary and Alberta Environment and Parks. Hundreds of monitoring hours and thousands of water quality data points were generated by community and corporate volunteers, with all information available at www.creekwatch.ca

For more information regarding CreekWatch and the Calgary Awards, please contact:

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