



The Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club

Meredith Brown - 2009 Conservation Award - Non-Member

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The Conservation Award - Non-Member is given in recognition of an outstanding contribution by a non-member in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley.

Meredith Brown is the Executive Director of Ottawa Riverkeeper. This organization is "an independent voice for the Ottawa River, working to protect, promote and improve its ecological health and future."

Ottawa Riverkeeper was founded in 2001. In its relatively short existence, Ottawa Riverkeeper has almost single-handedly raised the profile of the Ottawa River and its conservation needs to extraordinary heights. This was particularly evident when faulty City of Ottawa structures poured over a billion litres of raw sewage into the river in July 2009. The issue was politically charged and could easily have spun out of control as various levels of government fought over who was most responsible.

Meredith Brown was a voice of reason throughout the crisis, being called upon by the public and the media to sort the science from the hyperbole. This resulted in a calm, fact-based response to a long-standing problem, and a major commitment of funds from all levels of government for the enhancement of the quality of the Ottawa River. Meredith played a major role in keeping the public debate on the river's needs firmly science based. Regionally and nationally significant natural environment features and functions across the entire lower Ottawa River watershed have benefited as a result.

We believe that Meredith has made an outstanding contribution in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley. After all, the Valley would not exist without the river which Ottawa Riverkeeper works to protect.

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This page was created 23 May 2010

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