

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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**RIFCO Recognizes Local Conservationist**

The RI Forest Conservator's Organization recently presented its "Friend of the Forest" Award to Peter Stetson of Richmond, RI, a science teacher at the Coventry High School, for his work with the Envirothon Program and motivating Rhode Island's youth to be better stewards of our environment. The award was presented at RIFCO's Annual Dinner on November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at the West Valley Inn.

According to RIFCO President William Fortune, who presented Peter with the award, "Peter has been an effective promoter of land conservation, watershed protection, and healthy forests through his involvement with the Envirothon Program and through his mentoring of students in his classes." Peter is the current president of the RI Envirothon, which runs the state-wide high school team competition that engages students in the subjects of Forestry, Soil science, Wildlife biology, and Aquatics, along with an annual special topic presentation, at an outdoor event held each spring.

RIFCO also presented its annual "Conservator of the Year" award to the Hope Associates, Inc., accepted by Hans T. Bergey of Hope, RI. The award was presented to Hope Associates in recognition of their support to the organization and all woodland owners, and their careful stewardship of protected land along the Pawtuxet River in Hope, including the town's recreational area at Hope Mill Pond and the woodlands and wildlife habitats in that area.

RIFCO is a statewide, non-profit organization dedicated to the protection and wise use of Rhode Island's woodland resources. The Conservator of the Year Award is granted annually to a member that significantly supports the activities of the organization, and the Friend of the Forest Award is granted to those individuals and organizations that make significant contributions towards the long-term protection of RI's woodland resources. For more information about RIFCO and the Farm, Forest, Open Space Program, contact RIFCO at (401)568-3421, or visit [www.rifco.org](http://www.rifco.org).

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