

## **Environmental Stewardship Awards-To be Read at Commission Meeting**

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** AG-Forestry

**Award Recipient:** Baldwin County Soil & Water Conservation Districts

**Agency/Group:** Conservation AG Education Program

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

The Baldwin County Soil & Water Conservation Districts Conservation Ag Education Program includes the Land Judging Practice Competition, the Water Festival, & the Progressive Agriculture Farm Safety Days. These programs have instilled knowledge to hundreds of students throughout Baldwin County on agriculture, safety, and water quality which are important topics for natural resource protection. The Conservation District's Ag Education Program is an inspiration and deserves recognition for the program's distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Large Business

**Award Recipient:** Grand Hotel

**Agency/Group:** Sustainable Business Practices

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Since opening its doors in 1847, the Grand Hotel's identity has been inextricably linked with a proud heritage as a social host and a vital part of Baldwin County's history. The Grand Hotel's Green Meetings & Sustainable Food & Beverage Programs promote conservation practices which include the use of recycled meeting supplies, biodegradable recycled lunch to-go boxes, and the use of cardboard coolers versus styrofoam coolers for group excursions. The Grand Hotel's promotion of sustainable practices is an inspiration, and the Grand Hotel deserves recognition for its distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Small Business

**Award Recipient:** Cooper Farm

**Agency/Group:** 4-H Community Club

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

This small family owned and operated farm offers fruit trees and other gardening plants for sale as well as community education on gardening, mulching and other basic homesteading techniques. Community education events offer alternatives to harsh fertilizers, through the use of composting and other low impact techniques. Cooper Farm is also the sponsor for the Foley 4-H Community Club. This club plays a vital role in encouraging the younger generation to preserve our agricultural heritage. By instilling excitement about agriculture in children, they aim to shape a future generation that cares for the environment, continues our agricultural history, and potentially pursue a career in farming. Cooper Farm's sponsorship of the Foley 4-H Club is an inspiration and deserves recognition for the program's distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Education Program

**Award Recipient:** Jessica Sampley

**Agency/Group:** Gulf Shores High School Career Tech Program

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Jessica Sampley is the Director of Academies and Career Tech Program at Gulf Shores City Schools. She supervises and leads a variety of initiatives in the school district, and works closely with all academies, electives, Sustainability, and STEAM Programs. She started the Gulf Shores High School Sustainability Academy, which includes Gulf Coast Sciences, Ecotourism, and Plant Science and Gardening Programs. Jessica's passion for the Career Tech Program is an inspiration, and she deserves recognition for the program's distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Education Teacher

**Award Recipient:** Tammy Grace

**Agency/Group:** Environmental Education

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Tammy Grace is an outstanding champion for conservation and environmental education at Stapleton Elementary school. Her environmental efforts include the school's participation in Alabama PALS (People Against a Littered State), Adopt-A-Stream, and Alabama Wildlife Federation Outdoor Classroom Programs. Mrs. Grace's conservation legacy continues through her students who have learned about

the importance of taking care of our environment through numerous lessons taught directly by her as well as by experts she brought into her classroom. Most importantly, however, the students have learned from the powerful example of her personal commitment and her passionate advocacy for nature. Mrs. Grace's servant heart has been transmitted directly to her students and they have become school champions for conservation. Mrs. Grace's environmental impact on her students is an inspiration and she deserves recognition for her distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Environmental Organization

**Award Recipient:** Tom & Laurie Eberly

**Agency/Group:** Little Lagoon Oyster Gardening Program

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Tom and Laurie Eberly are very active members of Little Lagoon Preservation Society and contribute to the volunteer, non-profit organization in many ways including administering the Little Lagoon Oyster Gardening program. The oysters provide real benefits to Little Lagoon in the form of water filtration and quality habitat. In 2023 the program grew over 54,000 oysters. These oysters not only benefited the water quality of Little Lagoon but were also used to restock 2.74 acres of closed reef restoration sites in Mobile Bay, repopulating the oyster reefs and providing shoreline protection. The Eberly's volunteer work with the Little Lagoon Preservation Society is an inspiration and they deserve recognition for their distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Government Agency

**Award Recipient:** Orange Beach Wildlife Center

**Agency/Group:** Wildlife Rehab & Restoration

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Orange Beach's Wildlife Center and Management Program offers services for situations involving injured or orphaned wildlife. There is limited availability of such services in Baldwin County, and it is a great credit to Orange Beach that it rises to meet and manage the need. The center's mission is to provide learning experiences for interns, and engaging support from the community. The Center and Management Program deserves recognition for its distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Government Employee

**Award Recipient:** Angie Eckman

**Agency/Group:** Water Watch Steward

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Angela Eckman is the Environmental Manager for the City of Foley. Her unwavering commitment to community engagement is what sets Angie apart. She goes above and beyond in assisting not only the citizens of Foley but also those throughout Baldwin County. As an Alabama Water Watch monitor, she actively contributes to the protection and monitoring of our local waterways. Moreover, Angie generously shares her knowledge as a trainer, empowering others to become proficient in water quality monitoring. Her role in handling water testing chemicals for the entire county highlights her organizational skills, demonstrating responsibility in overseeing inventory and storage. Her sustained involvement underscores her commitment to preserving our coastal ecosystems and fostering a sense of responsibility within the community. Angie is an outstanding government employee, and she deserves recognition for her distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Individual Citizen

**Award Recipient:** Pitman, Turner & Milling Families

**Agency/Group:** TiTi Swamp Land Donation

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

In 2023, the Pitman, Turner, and Millings families donated 65 acres of wetlands in Titi Swamp along Scenic 98 in Fairhope to the South Alabama Land Trust for perpetual conservation. Titi Swamp has been identified as a critical coastal conservation area by the Mobile Bay National Estuary Program. The conservation of this land ensures that it will continue to serve as coastal wildlife habitat, flood mitigation and water quality treatment. The Pitman, Turner, and Millings families deserve recognition for the perpetual conservation of this portion of Titi Swamp. The donation reflects the high value that they place on the natural environment and their commitment to preserve open space for the benefit of the community. Their gift is an inspiration and deserves recognition for their distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Student Initiative

**Award Recipient:** Cade Kichler

**Agency/Group:** Lillian Recreational Park Wildlife Viewing Area

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Cade Kichler is an Eagle Scout with Scout Troop 70 in Elberta. Cade designed, organized, and implemented an Eagle Scout project to provide a native tree and flower garden, birdhouses, picnic tables and informational signage for the Lillian Recreation Park. The wildlife viewing area is a very special place. This wonderful project will encourage people to come, sit, relax, enjoy, and learn about the environment for years to come. Cade's leadership skills have been shown through his project. Cade's Eagle Scout Project is an inspiration, and he deserves recognition for his distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.

**Environmental Stewardship Award Category:** Special Recognition

**Award Recipient:** Andrew Ernest James

**Commission Meeting Award Comments:**

Our last award will be in honor and memory of the late Andrew Ernest James whom we lost in a tragic accident last year. Andrew was a Licensed Professional Engineer who was highly skilled in Water Resources, Hydraulics, Environmental Engineering, Construction Engineering, and Transportation Engineering who tirelessly worked to restore streams, build sustainable roadways, design context sensitive developments all while protecting and enhancing the natural environment. Andrew played an intricate part in many watershed restoration projects throughout Baldwin County including projects in the D'Olive Creek, Fish River, Magnolia River, Bon Secour River, and Sandy Creek Watersheds. Andrew will be remembered as an exceptional Civil Engineer who cared deeply for his community and environment. Andrew's environmental legacy is an inspiration, and it deserves recognition for his distinguished service and strong commitment to the environment, our community and all the citizens of Baldwin County.