

Saginaw Bay Conservation Awards

Categories and Descriptions

Conservation Excellence Award: Agribusiness

- **Description:** The Conservation Excellence Award should recognize a specific individual working in agribusiness who has shown exemplary support of, or participation in The Nature Conservancy's agricultural conservation efforts in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Their contributions should be notable and show a true commitment to working with Saginaw Bay farmers to help them implement conservation practices and/or access conservation programs to address on farm resource concerns and improve regional water quality.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for the ongoing efforts of our partners in successfully implementing The Conservancy's agricultural initiatives in Saginaw Bay and to help build trust and deepen relationships with agribusiness thereby inspiring others to engage in our programs.
- **Possible Recipients:** Independent or Retail Affiliated Crop Advisors, Certified Crop Advisors, or Agronomists
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will nominate several candidates in consideration of the description and intent (above) and present these nominations to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection.

Conservation Excellence Award: Practitioner

- **Description:** The Conservation Excellence Award should recognize a specific conservation practitioner who has shown exemplary support of, or participation in The Nature Conservancy's agricultural conservation efforts in the Saginaw Bay Watershed. Their contributions should be notable and show a true commitment to working with Saginaw Bay farmers to help them implement conservation practices and/or access conservation programs to address on farm resource concerns and improve regional water quality.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for the ongoing efforts of our partners in successfully implementing The Conservancy's agricultural initiatives in Saginaw Bay and to help build trust and deepen relationships with conservation practitioners, thereby inspiring others to engage in our programs.
- **Possible Recipients:** NRCS Staff (Regional or County Staff), Conservation District Employees, MAEAP Technicians/Verifiers
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will nominate several candidates in accordance with the description and intent (above) and present these nominations to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection.

Conservation Excellence Award: Contributor

- **Description:** The Conservation Excellence Award for Contributors should recognize a specific individual or entity/organization who has shown exemplary support of, or participation in The Nature Conservancy's agricultural conservation efforts in the Saginaw Bay Watershed and would not be considered an agribusiness or traditional conservation practitioner. Their contributions should be notable and show a true commitment to working with The Nature Conservancy to improve water quality in the Saginaw Bay Watershed.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for the ongoing efforts of our partner and funders in successfully implementing The Conservancy's agricultural initiatives in Saginaw Bay and to help build trust and deepen relationships with said partners, thereby inspiring others to engage in our programs.
- **Possible Recipients:** Federal or State Agencies (or individual staff), FWS, DEQ, MDARD, corporations, commodity groups, watershed groups, county or state farm bureau groups etc
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will nominate several candidates in accordance with the description and intent (above) and present these nominations to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection.

Conservation Impact Award

- **Description:** The Conservation Impact Award should recognize a specific farmer who has implemented conservation practices on their farm (via a TNC supported conservation program) that has resulted in significant and sizeable environmental benefits. Environmental benefits could be described as tons of sediment or pounds of phosphorus reduced or gallons of groundwater replenished as a direct result of implementing a new conservation practice.
- **Intent:** To emphasize our commitment to outcome-based conservation, show appreciation for the ongoing efforts of farmers implementing conservation and to help build trust and deepen relationships with area farmers, thereby inspiring others to engage in our programs.
- **Possible Recipients:** Saginaw Bay Area farmers (row crop and vegetable farmers) enrolled in RCPP and or one of the Pay for Performance Projects
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will nominate several candidates in accordance with the description and intent (above) and present these nominations to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection.

Conservation Newcomer Award

- **Description:** The *Conservation Newcomer Award* is intended to recognize an established cash crop , vegetable or livestock operation that hasn't historically implemented conservation practices widely across the farm. An appropriate awardee would most likely not yet be MAEAP-verified and would be implementing an important nutrient management practice or in-field management practice for the very first time. Well qualified candidates would be farming more than 200 acres, would report a positive experience with the new practice and would likely have the potential to be "influential" within the agricultural community.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for farmers who are new to conservation and to help build trust and deepen relationships with area farmers. Ideally, by recognizing this farm operation with the *Conservation Newcomer Award*, we would encourage other historically non-participating farmers to consider implementing conservation practices for the first time.
- **Possible Recipients:** Saginaw Bay Area farmers (row crop, livestock vegetable farmers)
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will solicit nominations widely among Saginaw Bay area stakeholders. TNC will initially review nominations for completeness and present well qualified candidates to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection. If the Selection Committee concurs on the recommendation, TNC will accept their recommendation. If there is not complete agreement within the Selection Committee, majority vote will rule.

Conservation Veteran Award

- **Description:** The Conservation Veteran Award is intended to recognize an established cash crop, vegetable or livestock farmer that has demonstrated a longtime commitment to agricultural conservation on their farm. An appropriate awardee may be MAEAP-verified and would have extensive experience implementing important nutrient management or in-field management practices for a long period of time (likely more than 7-10 yrs). Well qualified candidates would be farming more than 200 acres, would be a strong advocate for conservation among their peers and would likely be "influential" within the agricultural community.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for farmers who have demonstrated a long term commitment to conservation and to help build trust and deepen relationships with area farmers. Ideally, by recognizing this farmer with the *Conservation Veteran Award*, we would encourage other farmers (who may be beginning to experiment with conservation) to continue implementing conservation practices well after cost share funding has ceased.
- **Possible Recipients:** Saginaw Bay Area farmers (row crop , vegetable and livestock farmers)
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will solicit nominations widely among Saginaw Bay area stakeholders. TNC will initially review nominations for completeness and present well qualified candidates to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection. If the

Selection Committee concurs on the recommendation, TNC will accept their recommendation. If there is not complete agreement within the Selection Committee, majority vote will rule.

Conservation Innovation Award

- **Description:** The *Conservation Innovation Award* is intended to recognize an established cash crop , vegetable or livestock farmer that has successfully implemented a new or innovative conservation practice on their farm. An appropriate awardee would have experience implementing either 1) an established practice that isn't widely used or accepted within this region or being used in a new and/or unexpected way or within a cropping system not typically suited to that practice or 2) a new practice that could be described as original, cutting edge, untested, and/or experimental. Well qualified candidates would likely be farming more than 200 acres (although the innovative conservation practice does not have to be applied to all acres), report a positive experience with said practices and would have the potential to be "influential" within the agricultural community.
- **Intent:** To show appreciation for farmers who are on the cutting edge of conservation innovation and to help build trust and deepen relationships with area farmers. Ideally, by recognizing this farmer with the *Conservation Innovation Award*, we would highlight interesting or new practices and encourage other farmers to pursue innovative applications of conservation on their own farms.
- **Possible Recipients:** Saginaw Bay Area farmers (row crop , vegetable and livestock farmers)
- **Selection Process/Criteria:** TNC will solicit nominations widely among Saginaw Bay area stakeholders. TNC will initially review nominations for completeness and present well qualified candidates to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection. If the Selection Committee concurs on the recommendation, TNC will accept their recommendation. If there is not complete agreement within the Selection Committee, majority vote will rule.