

Saginaw Bay Agricultural Conservation Awards Dinner
March 1, 2018 | Bay City, MI
Award Categories and Descriptions



Award Benefits

- Awardees are recognized at our March 1st awards dinner, featuring audience members from agribusiness, conservation, philanthropy, and government. Nominators, awardees, and their guests should plan to attend! [Click here to register.](#)
- Awardees are featured in Nature Conservancy communications, reaching 1000s of constituents.
- Awardees receive a custom, beautifully framed award photo featuring stunning photography of the Saginaw Bay Watershed.

Peer-Nominated Awards

To make a nomination for our peer-nominated awards visit nature.org/sagbayawards. You may nominate yourself or someone else. All nominations must be received by January 1, 2018. Please contact Ben Wickerham at 517-316-2286 for questions or assistance.

Selection Process/Criteria: The Nature Conservancy will solicit nominations widely among Saginaw Bay area stakeholders. The Conservancy will initially review nominations for completeness and present well qualified candidates to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee consists of representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Agri-Business Association, Delta Institute, and Michigan Farm Bureau. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on the final selections. If the Selection Committee unanimously agrees on a recommendation, the Conservancy will accept it. If there is not unanimous agreement within the Selection Committee, majority vote will rule.

Conservation Innovation Award

- **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 and vegetable farmers)
- **Guidelines:** Farmer must be farming land within the Saginaw Bay Watershed ([watershed boundaries](#)). Conservation can be either voluntary implementation or funded via a conservation program.
- **Description:** The *Conservation Innovation Award* is intended to recognize an established cash crop or vegetable 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 500 acres, report a positive experience with said practices and would have the potential to be "influential" within the agricultural community.

Conservation Newcomer Award

- **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 and vegetable farmers)
- **Guidelines:** Farmer must be farming land within the Saginaw Bay Watershed ([watershed boundaries](#)). Conservation can be either voluntary implementation or funded via a conservation program. Conservation practice first implemented in 2016 or 2017.
- **Description:** The *Conservation Newcomer Award* is intended to recognize an established cash crop or vegetable operation that hasn't historically implemented conservation practices widely across the farm. An appropriate awardee would most likely not yet be Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (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 500 acres, would report a positive experience with the new practice and would likely have the potential to be "influential" within the agricultural community.

Conservation Veteran Award

- **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 and vegetable farmers)
- **Guidelines:** Farmer must be farming land within the Saginaw Bay Watershed ([watershed boundaries](#)). Conservation can be either voluntary implementation or funded via a conservation program.
- **Description:** The *Conservation Veteran Award* is intended to recognize an established cash crop or vegetable farmer that has demonstrated a longtime commitment to agricultural conservation on their farm. An appropriate awardee may be Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program (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 years). Well qualified candidates would be farming more than 500 acres, would be a strong advocate for conservation among their peers and would likely be "influential" within the agricultural community.

Selection-Committee Nominated Awards

Selection Process/Criteria: The Nature Conservancy will nominate several candidates and present these nominations to the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee consists of representatives from The Nature Conservancy, Michigan Association of Conservation Districts, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Michigan Agri-Business Association, Delta Institute, and Michigan Farm Bureau. The Selection Committee will evaluate the nominations and make recommendations on final selection.

Conservation Excellence Award: Agribusiness

- **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
- **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.

Conservation Excellence Award: Practitioner

- **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:** Natural Resource Conservation Service employees (Regional or County Staff), Conservation District employees, Michigan Agriculture Environmental Assurance Program technicians/verifiers
- **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.

Conservation Excellence Award: Contributor

- **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), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality, Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, corporations, commodity groups, watershed groups, county or state farm bureau groups, etc.
- **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.

Conservation Impact Award

- **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 Regional Conservation Partnership Program and or one of the Pay for Performance Projects
- **Description:** The *Conservation Impact Award* should recognize a specific farmer who has implemented conservation practices on their farm (via a Conservancy 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.