

NEWS RELEASE

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GREAT RIVER GREENING ANNOUNCES 2008 ENVIRONMENTAL HONOREES OF THE YEAR



Great River Greening, a non-profit regional leader for community-based restoration of natural areas and open space, announced today the eight organizations and individuals to be honored as the environmental stewards of the year at its *A Million Shades of Green Gala* Friday, April 25, Arbor Day. The honorees are:



- Target Corporation** – Corporate Environmental Steward of the Year
- Aggregate Industries** – Environmental Business of the Year
- Minnesota DNR – Division of Ecological Resources** – Environmental Community Partner of the Year
- Minnesota Landscape Arboretum** – Non-Profit Environmental Steward of the Year
- Matt Mollet of Forest Lake** – Individual Environmental Steward of the Year
- Layne Kennedy of Minneapolis** – Landscape Photographer of the Year
- Kinji Akagawa of Afton** – Landscape Artist of the Year
- Joe Kingman of Saint Paul** – Founders' Award

The honorees have been chosen on the basis of their commitment to the environment as demonstrated through their accomplishments related to preserving, restoring, and enhancing natural areas; creatively using native plants in urban spaces; improving access to natural areas; and inspiring through their art an awareness of the natural beauty of our landscape which is our heritage.

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Target Corporation has been chosen to receive this award because of the Target Environmental Responsibility Program. The Target Environmental Management Program has developed and continues to develop systematic solutions to manage the environmental aspects of their business. This includes: waste reduction through recycling and reuse resulting in a 70% reduction in materials sent to landfill; participation in the Carbon Disclosure Project; commitment to energy efficiency and green energy use; and the development of eco-friendly products and packaging.

Target Corporation's long standing commitment to natural resources management is demonstrated at the Target distribution center in West Jefferson, Ohio, where Target was responsible for the re-establishment of 40 acres of wetlands in the watershed of Little Darby Creek, chosen as one of the Last Great Places in the Western Hemisphere by the Nature Conservancy.

Aggregate Industries has been chosen to receive this award because of their commitment to the community and the environment. This commitment is demonstrated through the implementation of an Environmental Management System which enables Aggregate Industries to identify and control the environmental impact of its activities and products; improve its environmental performance continually; and implement a systematic approach to setting and achieving environmental objectives. This EMS has resulted in Aggregate Industries meeting the requirements of and receiving ISO 14001 Certification.

Understanding and addressing their environmental impact is demonstrated in Aggregate Industries low carbon footprint compared to industry counterparts. The company also has pledged to further reduce its company-wide greenhouse gas emissions through partnership with the US Environmental Protection Agency's **Climate Leaders** program and its recent partnership with **Cool Climate Concrete (C3)**.

Beyond the development of innovative green products such as pervious concrete and porous asphalt, Great River Greening honors Aggregate Industries for their land management, restoration of habitat for wildlife, and commitment to biodiversity.

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – Division of Ecological Resources has been chosen as the Environmental Community Partner of the Year as a result of its ongoing commitment to partner with public and private organizations together with Minnesota residents to conserve and manage natural resources, ecosystems and maintain biodiversity. As a division of the Minnesota DNR it works to ensure a productive and healthy environment for present and future generations. Through its programs of education, planning and communications; environmental management, county biological survey; monitoring and control; natural heritage and nongame research, nongame

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wildlife programs; and scientific and natural areas the Minnesota DNR – Division of Ecological Resources is preserving and perpetuating the ecological diversity of Minnesota.

Specifically, Great River Greening honors the Minnesota DNR – Division of Ecological Resources for its work protecting natural resource values; preserving unique, threatened, and endangered resources; preserving unique cultural, historical, and archaeological resources; and improving and restoring degraded environments and mitigating environmental losses through their partnerships.

The Minnesota Landscape Arboretum has been chosen to receive this award because of its stature as a community and national resource for horticultural and environmental information, together with its reputation for research and public education, particularly in the area of development and evaluation of plants and horticultural practices for cold climates. Furthermore, Greening honors the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for its inspiration to visitors with quality plants featured in more than 1,000 acres of magnificent gardens, model landscapes, and natural areas.

Officially titled, The University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum, the Arboretum is part of the Department of Horticultural Science within the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences at the University of Minnesota.

Great River Greening's Board of Directors believe that the honor is most fitting as the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum celebrates the centennial of horticultural service to Minnesota, 100 years of cold-hardy fruit and plant research and discovery, together with 50 years as Minnesota's premier public gardens.

Matt Mollet, a senior at Forest Lake High School, has been chosen as the Individual Environmental Steward of the Year because of his work in creating and developing www.greenteensblog.org, a blog for the conservationists of tomorrow. The purpose of the Green Teens Blog is the facilitation of communication and the sharing of programs and ideas among young people, youth groups and student clubs throughout the metro area. The goal of the Green Teens Blog, in Mr. Mollet's words, is "to foster environmental ideals in youth and to promote a deeper sense of appreciation for the natural world through communication between youth (Grades 7-12)." Further Matt believes the blog will facilitate discussion and collaboration with fellow youth leading to learning new ways that one can make a difference in one's community. It is also hoped that the blog will develop interest and involvement from young people who are not yet engaged in conservation efforts.

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Working independently and with minimal guidance, Matt developed the concept, goals, guidelines for blog use and moderation, etiquette, and format for the blog. Mr. Mollet then chose the internet server, designed and installed the blog's home page and site, and began the initial soft launch marketing.

Layne Kennedy has been chosen as Landscape Photographer of the Year because of his international stature as a landscape and wildlife photographer. Mr. Kennedy's photographs appear regularly in Smithsonian, Audubon Islands, Terre Sauvage, Nature Conservancy, National Geographic Traveler, National Geographic Adventure, Outside, Outdoor Explorer, *GEO*, *LIFE*, Sports Illustrated, Forbes, and Business Week. He has contributed to many books for a variety of publishers including photography for a book on the Great Lakes States and another book on the Apostle Islands for the National Geographic Society. He recently completed a book titled *Minnesota; Now & Then* for Voyageur Press. His latest book, *A Hard Water World-Ice Fishing And Why We Do It* will be in book stores this fall.

Specifically, Mr. Kennedy is being honored for his collection of images featuring the Great Plains, North American ecosystems, wildflowers, American Prairie, Great Lake States, wolves and wolf research, and conservation. Of particular interest to Minnesotans are Mr. Kennedy's photographs of the Ham Lake fire last year.

Kinji Akagawa has been chosen as Landscape Artist of the Year because his artistry and craft reflect a synergy with the land and nature. Mr. Akagawa's work can be found in places as diverse as the Nicollet Mall and Tettegouche State Park. His work, whether commissioned by the City of Houston, Minnesota State Arts Board, Walker Art Center, or Wisconsin State Arts Board, reflects a spirit of place. Mr. Akagawa's outdoor gathering places connect the past with the future and the visitor with nature. These works are created whenever possible from indigenous materials and are eco-friendly, reflecting Mr. Akagawa's long held philosophy of sustainability.

Mr. Akagawa's philosophy and artistry have been forged in lifelong journey of discovery that has taken him from refuge with family artists in Akita Prefecture to graduation from Kuwazawa Design School in Tokyo to the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, where he completed his BFA and taught. He received his MFA from the University of Minnesota and has taught at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, Atlanta College of Art and Design, MCAD, where he also served as Co-director of the Institute for Public Art and Design. Mr. Akagawa has been a visiting professor/artist at the University of Minnesota School of Architecture, visiting artist and lecturer at Osaka University of Arts/Osaka College of Arts, visiting artist at Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, and a visiting professor at the Bauhaus University in Weimar Germany.

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Mr. Akagawa is the 2007 McKnight Distinguished Artist.

Joe Kingman has been chosen to receive the Founders’ Award because as Senior Vice President of the Saint Paul Foundation, his management expertise, together with the efforts of such individuals as Paul Verrett, Mayor Norm Coleman, and last year’s recipient Ellen Brown, brought about the realization of Ben Thompson’s vision of a Great River Park.

Further, Mr. Kingman was a member of the steering committee when Greening the Great River Park was a project of the Saint Paul Foundation and helped lead the organization through the strategic analysis of whether or not to continue as a new organization. Joe served as the first Board Chair once Great River Greening incorporated. Drawing on his vast nonprofit and business experience, he led Greening through the nonprofit organizational start-up process, including development of the bylaws, governance structure, and first strategic plan. He personally mentored the first and the current executive directors. His personal commitment to community-building and conservation influenced the values that still shape the organization.

A million Shades of Green Gala will be held Arbor Day, Friday, April 25 at the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory in Saint Paul. The evening begins with a reception and silent auction at 6:30 p.m. followed by dinner at 8:00 p.m. with the awards ceremony at 9:00 p.m.

Sponsors of *A Million Shades of Green Gala* are: Concept Group, Pioneer Press/TwinCities.com, and Xcel Energy together with American Engineering Testing, Inc., Brookfield Properties Corporation, Liesch Associates, Inc., Lindquist & Vennum PLLP, and Jacques Whitford NAWA.

A Million Shades of Green is a ten-day celebration produced by Great River Greening in partnership with Saint Paul Parks and Recreation. Sponsors of *A Million Shades of Green Celebration* are: Saint Paul Parks and Recreation, Como Park Zoo and Conservatory, Granite Foundation, PioneerPress/TwinCities.com, Seven Corner Printing, and Concept Group.

For more information about Great River Greening visit www.greatrivergreening.org

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