

NEWS RELEASE

From the Brodhead Watershed Association

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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BWA founder wins award of a lifetime

Edie Stevens of Paradise Township, who has spent most of her 78 years in environmental activism, would be the first to say that her work isn't over yet. That won't stop PennFuture from giving her the Women in Conservation Lifetime Achievement Award on April 7 at Keystone College, LaPlume.

Most of Stevens' adult life has been single-mindedly devoted to protecting the water and woods, native plants and animals, family farms and green views of northeastern Pennsylvania.

As a member of the League of Women Voters, she began her life of environmental stewardship lobbying for safe water in Harrisburg. She was a founder of Brodhead Watershed Association and has been the guiding hand behind the BWA since its inception in 1989. Edie was instrumental in founding Pocono Heritage Land Trust, and also serves on her township's Planning Commission and Environmental Advisory Council – which she helped found.

During her many volunteer hours devoted to BWA's varied projects, she has done everything from installing stream-name signage, to supervising 26 years of stream quality testing, to – most recently – creating rain gardens in Stroudsburg, East Stroudsburg and Stroud Township. She's not afraid to get her hands dirty, and she never backs away from a fight for clean water – including tough, complex negotiations and court battles.

"I can only hope the next generation(s) take up the battle, and/or benefit from our work," Stevens said. "The fight is never over."

She runs her family farm on green principles, with solar power, wide stream buffers and plans to install a geothermal heating system. The determination to "live green" is "in my genes," Stevens said. "My sister in Alaska and my niece in Georgia are doing the same thing I am" in environmental work. Her sons, Carl of New Hampshire and Ben of Massachusetts, share her commitment to caring for the natural world.

Of all her career accomplishments, she is most proud of "where BWA is today, which is the work of many activists who love the Poconos and want to keep our streams clean."

Bob Heil, executive director of BWA, said, "The Brodhead Watershed and Pocono region has been fortunate to have not only have a long history of great environmental leaders, but also fortunate that many of these leaders have been women. Edie Stevens has earned her place among these leaders as someone who has turned her passion for the environment into action and results."

Stevens is grateful for the award, but doesn't consider it a laurel to rest upon – after 50+ years of activism, she has no plans to quit and instead seeks to help the next generation continue the cause.

"Young women today come into the field with wonderful technical training and backgrounds," she said. "But please: Never lose the passion that drove you here to begin with."

PennFuture, which has a northeastern office in Wilkes-Barre, is a nonpartisan organization working toward a clean-energy economy. BWA is a nonprofit environmental organization formed in 1989, dedicated to protecting and preserving water resources and the environment of the Brodhead watershed. For information, call 570-839-1120 or see brodheadwatershed.org.