

Local leaders to be recognized for environmental conservation

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ALTON - Organizers of the Mississippi Earthtones Festival will recognize two local community leaders for their contributions to conservation efforts in the region. Alley Ringhausen, Director of Great Rivers Land Trust and Andrew Dobson, local freelance photographer will be awarded the 2018 Confluence Conservation Leadership Awards on Saturday, September 15, at 4:00 PM, on the Festival's main stage.

Awarded each year since 2007, The Mississippi Earthtones Festival Committee recognizes local residents who make significant contributions in environmental conservation in the Riverbend region. Past awardees come from eclectic backgrounds and iconic area institutions and include Patti Brown, formerly of the Nature Institute, Nate Keener, Director of Sustainability, Lewis and Clark Community College and Sister Maxine Pohlman, SSND, Director of the LaVista Ecological Learning Center,

The 2018 recipients have worked tirelessly to advocate, educate and inspire action in areas of environmental education, sustainability, and land conservation.



Alley Ringhausen has served as the Executive Director of Great Rivers Land Trust since 2001. Under his leadership, GRLT has protected thousands of acres of property in Illinois and Missouri, developed wetlands, reduced soil erosion, planned parks, restored streams, and partnered with numerous organizations. His accomplishments include implementing the Piasa Creek Watershed Project in partnership with Illinois American Water Company, restoration of the Boy Scout Lake at Camp Warren Levis, promoting the designation of the Rocky Fork Creek area as part of the Underground Railroad Network to Freedom, and improvement of scenic, historic and ecologically significant properties along the Meeting of the Great Rivers National Scenic Byway. He has cultivated partnerships with many entities including: the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, the National Park Service, Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the Sierra Club, Principia College, Lewis & Clark Community College, National Great Rivers Research and Education Center, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville, The Nature Institute, and the Illinois Nature Preserve Commission.

As a freelance photographer and local community volunteer, Andrew Dobson has spent untold hours using his talent to photo document and create art to promote the work of many organizations whose work is based on conservation and the environment. On any given day he will be out in the region's wild and natural areas documenting *IMississippi* River Clean Ups, farming at LaVista CSA, Hiking at the Nature Institute, paddling on Piasa Creek or the Mighty Mississippi, or hiking the majestic limestone bluffs of the Palisades. His images of the natural beauty of our region can be found in various publications and social media posts that promote conservation, recreation and eco-tourism in our watershed. Andrew has designed many of the coveted Mississippi Earthtones Festival t-shirt designs, including this year's "Positive Energy, Go With the Current" design.

A special thank you to Mississippi Mud Pottery owners, Felicia Breen and Chad Nelson, who graciously donated time, talent and materials to produce the award.

About Mississippi Earthtones Festival:

Mississippi Earthtones Festival is a free family friendly event that celebrates our Mississippi River Culture through art, music and conservation. The festival has been held since 2006 on the third Saturday in September. The event is organized by the Sierra Club's Three Rivers Project and Alton Main Street. This year's event will be held Saturday, September 15, from noon to 10:00 pm on Broadway in Alton, IL.

For more information go to: <https://www.facebook.com/EarthtonesFestival/>