



## THE GREAT OUTDOORS

**17<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL AH WHY KNOT  
VOLUNTEER AWARDS, May 2022**  
*CU Maurice River applauds some exceptional  
volunteers.*

At the heart of CU Maurice River's watershed conservation are 340+ active volunteers, who in 2021 dedicated nearly 12,000 hours to protecting the integrity of the Wild and Scenic Maurice River – a river recognized for its outstandingly remarkable resource values of national significance. Each hour that is dedicated advances the protection of water resources, biodiversity, and habitat health for the enjoyment of future generations in *Down Jersey*.

During the calendar year, CU Maurice River staff identifies potential projects, coordinates volunteer opportunities addressing local environmental issues, and connects the public to these

activities. CU Maurice River invites the public to make a true positive impact on local environmental health through its community science and stewardship programming. Last year volunteers installed rain gardens, cleaned natural areas, *renaturalized* urban spaces, mapped wetland health, enhanced shoreline buffers, returned horseshoe crabs to the bay, managed a variety of avian species, surveyed flora and fauna communities, collected water and air quality data, and so much more.

Meanwhile, those with either a background in or passion for education shared their knowledge of the great out-of-doors with others. As instructors, teachers, naturalists, and general nature enthusiasts, they dedicated time to cultivating the appreciation and awareness of the natural world. They made a difference by leading nature walks, improving accessibility for all, maintaining nature trails, designing and conducting outdoor learning activities, connecting children with outdoor recreation opportunities, and serving as ambassadors, among other activities.

Since 2006, CU Maurice River has been recognizing the exceptional contributions made by volunteers via the Ah Why Knot Award. The name is

derived from volunteers' response when asked to help out - "Ah, Why Knot?" The 'knot' is a play on words because the original award was a wood carving of the nationally-threatened shorebird species called the red knot. Since the onset of this volunteer recognition program, CUMR has added the Sanderling Award to celebrate the achievements of youths, the Executive Director Award to laud volunteer leaders for new accomplishments, and the Presidential Award whose recipient is always a surprise. Let us introduce you to the 2022 Ah Why Knot Award winners and their work.

## **AH WHY KNOT AWARDEES**



*Retired CU Maurice River Office Manager Doreen Homan poses with Ah Why Knot Awardees Priscilla McCoy (left with grandchild) and Brenda Bundy (right).*

**Brenda Bundy** and **Pricilla McCoy** were honored as a dynamic duo who

have served the community and CU Maurice River for many years. In their ministerial capacity with Word of Life Christian Worship Center in Vineland they have led a summer enrichment program called Elevate. In that capacity they have coordinated CUMR's interactions with children and families on the river for over 16 years. In fact, three generations of children have attended the event.



Pricilla, who works at Rutgers University in Camden as a Senior Scheduling Officer, is a trainer and speaking coach with great oratory abilities. She is beginning an MBA program this year. Brenda, also a minister, hails from Williamstown, and



is a former HS teacher who completed her studies at Stockton University. Every year CU volunteers look forward to their interaction with the Elevate group. The children's behavior is stellar! We attribute it to the excellent role models that Brenda, Pricilla, and their cohorts provide.



*Ah Why Knot Awardee Beverly Smith (center) poses with CU Maurice River's Jane Galetto, Karla Rossini, Joe Moore, and Ethan Aronoff (left to right).*

**Beverly Smith** is a member of First United Methodist Church built in 1868. She is a board member whose responsibilities include helping to maintain the grounds, buildings, and properties of the church. A defunct building just adjacent to the brick church had to be demolished, leaving behind another vacant lot in downtown Millville. Soon after, the church and CUMR started working together to *renaturalize* the lot with a system of

pollinator and rain gardens. Beverly, a volunteer, played liaison between church administration, the parish, and CUMR. Her enthusiasm for the outdoors was easily visible via the slogans on her t-shirts. "Plant Trees" read the one she wore on the first day of installation. Her support of the project must have been infectious because Beverly brings with her a team of parish volunteers who show up again and again to get involved and to make a difference.

Beverly taught physical education at Vineland High School for 30 years, received Teacher of the Year in 2008, and was inducted in the Vineland High School Wall of Warriors in 2015. If you are local to the Millville-Vineland area, you may have met Beverly when receiving a bouquet from Colonial Flowers.

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*CU Maurice River Trustee Sue Fenili (center) poses with Executive Director Awardee Tony Klock (left), and Presidential Awardee and husband Dave Fenili (right).*

**Peter Manzelmann** is a CU Maurice River member, volunteer, and educator. Over the last year he has volunteered 65 hours to different restoration projects and outdoor education programs. He has helped at clean-ups of natural areas, monitored bluebird trails, installed avian nesting boxes, returned horseshoe crabs to the bay, led experiential learning outings designed for families, and has been a partner and friend for staff. Peter and his wife MaryAnn also just received a CUMR Wildlife-Friendly property designation in recognition of their

sustainable land management practices.

Peter is an educator by trade. He taught different subjects including language arts, social studies, science, environmental science, and outdoor learning during his 27 years at the Friends School of Mullica Hill. He resides in Mauricetown with his wife with whom he has four sons. Today you can find Peter working at Belleplain State Forest or Corson's Inlet. He is a member of the Commercial Township Environmental Commission and Mauricetown Historical Society.

### **Keynote and Ah Why Knot Awardee**

**PETER FULLAGAR** was awarded for his years of dedication to the Shorebird Recovery team. Peter hails from Australia and migrates to the Delaware Bayshore in time for the arrival of the shorebird migration.

Peter brings a host of expertise to the NJ Shorebird project. He worked for CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research 1964-1992. His research interests include seabird and water fowl, social behavior of mammals and birds and social communication in birds, particularly vocalization.



Born England, 28 June 1938. Educated University of London (BSc (Hons) 1960, PhD 1964). CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research 1964-92, initially as a member of the rabbit research group, working on waterbirds, especially waterfowl, 1980-89 and retiring as Senior Research Scientist; Honorary Research Fellow working as Honorary Curator, Wildlife Sound Library and Bioacoustics Laboratory, Australian National Wildlife Collection 1992 to date.



Left to right: Peter, Drs. Amanda Dey and Larry Niles.

Expertise in wildlife sound recording and sound spectrography. Established Australasian Seabird Group 1971. Founder member, Royal Australasian Ornithologists Union Field Investigations Committee (later Research Committee), which was instrumental in setting up the HANZAB (Handbook of Australian, New Zealand and Antarctic Birds) project, in which he has been heavily involved. Led (with John Disney, q.v.) Conservation Biology team in bringing the Lord Howe Island Woodhen back from the brink of extinction.

Peter offered the keynote address at the award ceremony.

## **SANDERLING AWARD**



*CU Program Coordinator Joe Moore (left) presents Thomas Riggins (right) with the Sanderling Youth Award.*

**Thomas Riggins** is a recent High School graduate, Class of 2022. This past year Thomas decided to work with CU Maurice River to complete his Eagle Scout Project, which included the improvement of the raingardens at WheatonArts. The group worked on cleaning out the trenches, increasing their slope, improving water channeling, and adding to the garden plantings. This was a dirty and onerous project (especially since he broke his arm just before the work dates), but Thomas coordinated a large group of Boy Scouts to get the job done, and left the system much improved!

## **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AWARD**



*CU Maurice River Trustee Sue Fenili (center) poses with Executive Director Awardee Tony Klock (left), and Presidential Awardee and husband Dave Fenili (right).*

**Tony Klock** is a CU Maurice River trustee, naturalist, and youth educator. For his volunteer leadership, he was presented an Ah Why Knot Award in 2006 and the Presidential Award in 2017. Each year Tony dedicates hundreds of hours to helping CU Maurice River meet the goals of its mission. Leading outdoor education programs comes naturally to Tony, but he also works hard at it. He has an insatiable drive to learn about the great out-of-doors compounded with a passion for connecting others with the natural world. This year, Tony was presented with the Executive Director Award for his generous disposition for lending a hand to CU staff again and again over the last two years.

During the upheaval caused by the pandemic, Tony's willingness to help out was an enormous benefit to CU Maurice River's programming. Tony upped his leadership in many ways to usher CUMR through. He went above and beyond to provide staff with virtual programming ideas in order to meet the unusual circumstances, and also offered to lead many of the same. Once it was announced that the safest place to be was outside, Tony led dozens of outings, assisted in maintaining on-going projects, collected data, fundraised, and so much more. Staff is forever grateful for Tony's dedication to

conservation, outdoor education, and CU Maurice River.

This is Tony's 32nd year as a school teacher, currently at Kresson Elementary where he offers enrichment activities and gets students outside in the Kresson native meadow he worked to establish. While he grew up along the Atlantic in Ocean City, Tony has spent the last 30 years in Port Norris. Unfamiliar with Port Norris until he found his home there, he quickly fell in love with the NJ Delaware Bayshore through experiences with the fire company and the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. While at home, he enjoys gardening and watching birds, butterflies, dragonflies and all of nature's wonders. Tony is a family man who enjoys life with his wife, Marcia, their two labs, and his large Irish family. You can find him and follow his outdoor adventures @TKPortNorris on Instagram or Facebook.

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## **PRESIDENTIAL AWARD**



Dave with Ex. Director, Karla Rossini

Dave Fenili has been a quiet force at CU Maurice River. He is always doing things for CU and the community. Reticent and modest such that folks often don't notice all that he is accomplishing, Dave is constantly making things, whether for our avian projects, educational programs, or fundraisers; he loves creating and constructing. His artistic talents have

continually added to the CU coffers. If there is trail trimming, trash clean-up, education programming, event set-up, cooking, ferrying of items, tree planting or the like, Dave is there. Beyond his and his wife Sue's contributions to the organization they both volunteer for the Vineland Shade Tree Commission and Vineland Environmental Commission.

## **RETIREMENT COMMEMORATION**

At the Annual Ah Why Knot Awards, CU Maurice River honored Doreen Homan, the soon-to- retire Membership, Events, and Office Manager. Doreen has handled the membership roles for CU Maurice River for 35 years. For the past eight years Doreen has worked full time for CU and was instrumental in setting up our local office. Prior to working fulltime Doreen ran incubator units to launch businesses and was President both at the Millville and Vineland Chambers. Her service and expertise have been invaluable in expanding CU to a fulltime workforce. She left our region for a time to assist her mother through her twilight years. When her mother passed, Doreen and her husband Carl returned to our area. Since then, she has been the voice and face of CU. She keeps track of many of our members' milestones, health, accomplishments and the like. Her interest in people has served our

membership well and we are all grateful.