



2021 MINNESOTA CLIMATE ADAPTATION AWARDS

THE MINNESOTA CLIMATE ADAPTATION AWARDS

The Minnesota Climate Adaptation Awards, presented by the Minnesota Climate Adaptation Partnership (MCAP) since 2014, recognize and celebrate exceptional achievements in leadership, education, research, policies, and practices that improve resilience through the development, advancement or implementation of climate adaptation strategies. To honor their accomplishments and impact, MCAP will present each recipient with an award created from recycled glass by Michael Tondor of Blue Skies Glassworks in Two Harbors, Minnesota.

Award Recipient - Individual

Dr. Meredith Cornett

The Nature Conservancy in Minnesota, North Dakota, and South Dakota

Dr. Meredith Cornett is the Science Director for the Minnesota, North Dakota and South Dakota Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, leads the Chapter's Tackling Climate Change initiative, and is an adjunct member of the graduate faculty in the University of Minnesota's Department of Forest Resources and Conservation Sciences Graduate Program. With her expertise in climate change, forest ecology, restoration and science communications, Meredith is described as a "super star" partner and leader around the topic of climate change in Minnesota and beyond.

She has initiated outstanding collaborations and led some of the most innovative, large-scale research projects on climate change adaptation in Minnesota's forests, particularly the "Adaptation Forestry in Minnesota's Northwoods" and "Conifer Strongholds" programs. Not only is Meredith leading with passion in researching ways for Minnesota's forests to adapt to on-going climate change, she also played a leading role in expanding The Nature Conservancy's "Conserving Nature's Stage" analysis across Minnesota and the Great Lakes region, which will help conservationists identify places on the landscape that are most likely to retain biological diversity under climate change.

Meredith excels at research, education, and partnerships, and through her project coordination skills and leadership in gathering important data, educating natural resource specialists and citizens, and partnering with others, is driving progress in climate change adaptation in Minnesota.

Learn More: <https://www.nature.org/en-us/about-us/who-we-are/our-people/meredith-cornett/>



The Minnesota Climate Adaptation Awards are presented by MCAP
The awards are supported by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Barr Engineering, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, Minnesota Agricultural Water Certification Program, the Minnesota Department of Health, Minnesota Sea Grant, the University of Minnesota Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships, and Emmons & Olivier Resources, Inc.

Award Recipient - Partnership

City of Rochester Sustainability and Resilience Task Force

The City of Rochester and partners at Center for Energy and Environment launched a Sustainability and Resiliency Task Force in Spring 2020 to develop an Action Plan for the Rochester community with five main focus areas: City for Health, Accessible Transportation, Climate Change Resilience, Vibrant Neighborhoods, and Resilient Economy.

Task Force members represent and deliberately seek a diverse spectrum of voices and expertise, and apply lenses of equity, sustainability, and resilience to the work of developing the Action Plan to ensure that no one is left out of a sustainable and resilient Rochester. Embracing a holistic view of climate change adaptation, the Task Force uses its own professional expertise, lived experience, and knowledge of the community to match these needs with solutions that enhance the sustainability and resilience of the community, including and especially climate change adaptation.

As an example, the Task Force linked the need to enhance access to parks and green space to mitigate the increased urban heat island effect linked to climate change, providing community access to lakes and swimming pools when it is hot, and other community and ecological services.

Learn More: <https://www.rochestermn.gov/departments/community-development/sustainability/sustainability-resiliency-task-force>

Award Recipient - Organization

South Washington Watershed District

The South Washington Watershed District (SWWD) is located entirely in Washington County, MN and has a mission to reduce flooding and protect surface water quality in partnership with state and local government, and private landowners. The SWWD provides local leadership for climate adaptation and resiliency: for instance the SWWD is the only watershed district to create a Climate Resiliency Plan and are providing direct assistance to small cities that lack the capacity to do this type of work alone.

They have successfully engaged city and county staff and leaders in climate resiliency planning without triggering political debate or resistance, and completed a number of large-scale flood mitigation and habitat restoration projects that provide multiple benefits for the community. In particular, while completing a 20-year project to provide a safe route for stormwater runoff to overflow from land-locked portions of Woodbury and Cottage Grove during 100-year storm events, the SWWD made sure to incorporate habitat restoration and green infrastructure on the site with traditional pipes and ponds capable of handling a large volume of runoff (most of which soaks into the ground to recharge groundwater aquifers). Through the vision and action of the SWWD (working with Great River Greening and community volunteers) to restore prairie and oak savanna as part of a flood mitigation project, the area will eventually become a welcoming city nature area with trails and outdoor gathering spaces.

Learn More: <https://www.swwdmn.org/>

Interested in learning more about award-winning climate adaptation efforts in Minnesota? Visit www.wrc.umn.edu/climateawardsarchive for more MCAP Climate Adaptation Award highlights!

