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Former Dufferin County employee honoured with Forest Stewardship Award

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

A former Dufferin County employee is being recognized for her decades of dedicated work.

Caroline Mach, former manager of the Dufferin County Forest, was presented with the Forest Stewardship Award from Forests Canada during their conference in February.

The Forest Stewardship Award is presented to an individual for outstanding activities in private land forest management and strong support of forestry promotion, education and understanding.

?Having spent a long time working for the County, looking after the County Forest, and to have my work recognized is amazing. I feel really honoured,? Mach told the Free Press.

Mach graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Toronto in 1993 before being hired for a contract forest management planning position at the County of Dufferin. The contract became a full-time position managing the Dufferin County Forest, which she held until her retirement in the summer of 2024.

During her nearly 30-year career as manager of the Dufferin County Forest, Mach created two forest management plans, including harvesting, ecosystem service values, and climate change implications. She was also instrumental in developing the Dufferin County Outdoor Recreation Plan and the ?Dufferin County Forest ? Our Forest, Our Future? corporate branding.

In addition to receiving the Forest Stewardship Award, Mach has been the recipient of the CIF Southern Ontario Section Tree of Life Award in 2024 and the John H. Sellers Award for outstanding promotion and awareness of professional forestry in Ontario in 2010. She also received the Fernow Award, presented by the Ontario Professional Foresters Association (OPFA) in 2003.

Mach was nominated for the Forest Stewardship Award by the current Dufferin County forest manager, Kevin Predon.

Jess Kaknevicius, chief executive officer for Forests Canada, told the Free Press in an email that Mach was selected for the award for the ?decades of work she devoted to the Dufferin County Forest and the impact that she continues to make on the natural world.?

Forests Canada is a tree-planting charity, which looks to improve forest health, support ecosystem services, and foster community connection with nature while also creating and restoring forested landscapes.

For more information about Forest Canada visit www.ForestsCanada.ca.