



AMY DeHART, RACC nominations chair, talks about the efforts of Elise Sheffield (left), who received the Community Educator Award.



CHRIS WISE accepts an award from Amy DeHart as one of the founders of the Rockbridge Solar Co-op.



KATHERINE SMITH is given a RACC Lifetime of Service Conservation Award by Amy DeHart.



HUNTER MOHRING accepts the 2016 Conservation Award.

RACC Recognizes Area Residents

Group Marks 40th Anniversary

The Rockbridge Area Conservation Council recognized several area residents as it celebrated its 40th anniversary and conducted its annual meeting at Windward Farm in Glasgow Oct. 30.

Amy DeHart, RACC nominations chair, presented four awards to people in the community who were nominated by their Rockbridge County peers for recognition of their

service to the community and to the environment, upholding the highest standards promoted by RACC over the years.

One of the awards went to VA Sun, Chris Wise and Bob Biersack, for their commitment to renewable energy source development and founding of the Rockbridge County Solar Co-op.

The 2016 Conservation Award was given to Hunter Mohring and Karen Bailey for their work creating The Meadow, a natural burial ground

established to honor and promote natural life cycles.

Elise Sheffield at Boxerwood Gardens received the 2016 Community Educator Award. She is the "guiding light" for Boxerwood Gardens as it has become beloved throughout the community and highly regarded across the state, a spokesman said.

Katherine R. Smith was recognized with a RACC Lifetime of Service Conservation Award. In concert with others, Smith has initiated, grown, and helped sustain

several initiatives in the Rockbridge area that have enriched the community. Her extensive knowledge and valuable contributions continue to this day, a spokesman said.

Also during the meeting, Dr. John Knox, in his keynote presentation, addressed "The Biological Case for a Natural Forest Ecosystem on House Mountain" and was followed by a spirited question and answer period.

Co-President Lee Merrill introduced the afternoon's featured speaker and Co-President Gregg Amonette followed Knox's talk with

an abbreviated business meeting recitation of the many activities that RACC has been involved in over the past year. The full, four-page, single-spaced distillation of RACC's activities is available at <http://rockbridgeconservation.org/>.

The use of the renovated barn at Windward Farm for the meeting was more than large enough for the 80 members and friends of RACC who attended and was made possible through the generosity of the farm's new stewards, David Boone and Simone Siex.