



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE – Thursday, August 10, 2017
Contact: Lia Parisien, (202) 266-4931 or lparisien@ecos.org
Environmental Council of the States (ECOS)

ECOS 2017 State Program Innovation Awards Highlight State Leadership and Creativity

Washington, DC – The Environmental Council of the States (ECOS) today announced the recipients of its 2017 State Program Innovation Awards, to be presented at the association’s Fall Meeting in Jackson Hole, Wyoming. The annual awards program recognizes outstanding state initiatives that can serve as replicable models for other states.

“ECOS spotlights the innovation of state environmental agencies in addressing community concerns, improving the interface of regulated entities with state agencies, and putting land back into productive use,” said ECOS President John Linc Stine, Commissioner of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. “Nearly 30 projects were nominated for this recognition, and we commend these award winners on their selection.” Nominations were sought in the areas of business process improvement, community outreach, and land revitalization – as well as innovations in air and water.

Selected by the [ECOS Executive Committee](#), this year’s honorees are:

- ❖ **Alabama Department of Environmental Management: Electronic Inspections.** A new electronic inspection process allows state inspectors to capture data from a tablet device to enhance efficiencies, increase data accuracy, and improve timeliness for citizen access. Since implementation, the number of construction stormwater inspections performed has increased by almost 30%.
- ❖ **Missouri Department of Natural Resources: Local Government Portal or "Assistance Gateway" Application.** An innovative portal application gives communities customized online access to tools and resources that address their environmental compliance and infrastructure planning needs. During the soft launch of the app, 35 users registered, and three states and one tribe expressed interest in deploying their own version of the portal using Missouri’s code.
- ❖ **District of Columbia Department of Energy & Environment: Green Workforce Development.** Three workforce development programs – the Green Zone Environmental Program, Solar Works DC, and River Corps – are preparing District residents for job opportunities in the green industry. Nearly 1,000 young people have participated in the programs, and a number of participants have gone on to land jobs in the field.
- ❖ **Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment: Oil & Gas Health Information & Response Program.** An initiative of oil and gas emissions experts serves to provide timely responses to health concerns, monitor and analyze data trends, assess health risks, and effectively communicate scientific findings. Since 2015, more than 300 health concerns have been reported to the program, and all have been responded to within one business day by health professionals.
- ❖ **Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection: Brownfields to Playfields Initiative.** The cooperative pilot project program aims to restore and repurpose more than 40 acres of former industrial lands for recreation and conservation, particularly in underserved communities, by improving project coordination between multiple state agencies, local governments, federal programs, and private partnerships. In July, a groundbreaking ceremony at the first of seven pilot projects dedicated the future site of the Ira Reynolds Riverfront Park, transformed from a former railyard in Susquehanna County.
- ❖ **Idaho Department of Environmental Quality: Dixie Drain Project.** The cost-effective alternative drain plan carried out by state and federal environmental agencies and the City of Boise addresses pollution in the Dixie Drain. The Dixie Drain facility is currently removing 25 pounds of phosphorus per day and is expected to remove 80 pounds per day in 2020.

On September 12, ECOS Fall Meeting attendees will learn more about the winning programs from the leaders of each state agency receiving an award. All nominees will be featured in a future *ECOS Green Report*. To register for the meeting, visit www.ecos.org.

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ECOS is the national nonprofit, nonpartisan association of state and territorial environmental agency leaders.