

Environmental awards for school, organization

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A school and an organization in Northern Newfoundland were recognized last week for their efforts to protect and enhance the environment.

Straits Elementary in Flowers Cove was named a winner in the school or educational institution category, while NorPen Waste Management Inc., based in St. Anthony, won in the municipality or regional waste management committee category when the Newfoundland and Labrador Environmental Awards were presented last Monday in St. John's.

The awards acknowledge the efforts by individuals, communities, schools, and organizations in the province for creating healthy environments and promoting environmentally friendly activities.

Since October of 2002, Straits Elementary has been dedicated to preserving the Limestone Barrens from Port au Choix to Raleigh, home to a rare species of flowers. By incorporating the environmental awareness of the barrens into its curriculum, the school hopes to promote responsible use of the area and to educate the community about the region's fragile habitat.

"There are only five places in the world that the Long's Braya is found, so this area is very unique," said Principal Geneva Woodward. "Then we have the Fernald's Braya,

which is here on the peninsula in our area and it is threatened. So we have to take care of that to make sure it's there for tourists and for us to enjoy as well."

Ms. Woodward noted that by getting the school involved in the project, the children become environmentally-conscious at an early age, adding that it's something they can learn about with their parents. Since starting the project, the children have participated in field trips to see the flowers, researched the plants on the Internet, and painted pictures of the flowers.

She added that people in the community have been supportive of the project.

"Parents have made positive comments like how much they've learned about the Limestone Barrens and when they go out now on a hike, they're always taking notice. People that they meet, they let them know where they are.

"We're instilling pride into our younger kids, which is rubbing off onto the parents, and now it's going off into the community."

NorPen Waste Management is a non-profit committee organized to improve waste management practices on the Northern Peninsula. The board's goals include reducing the number of waste disposal sites on the peninsula and lowering the waste entering these sites by 50 per cent.

"We are currently setting up three consolidated landfill sites and we'll close out an



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Recipients of environmental awards were congratulated by Environment and Conservation Minister Tom Osborne (fourth from left). Among those recognized were Marie Coombs of Straits

Elementary (second from left) and Danny Patey of NorPen Waste Management Inc. (third from left). The awards presentation took place last Monday in St. John's.

existing 13 sites in the event that our three consolidated sites open up," said coordinator Danny Patey.

"We're heavily involved in public awareness and education on waste management issues, such as waste diversion, recycling, various types of re-use and reduction. We're talking with the schools and giving presentations to the kids on different waste management issues centering on recycling and littering."

Mr. Patey said the organization is honoured to receive the award and that it should help them gain more support for their cause.

"It proves that we've been actively and progressively pursuing an effective and efficient answer to solid waste management on the Northern Peninsula and we're doing our

part to maintain the sustainability of the environment for the areas," he said.

"It's a nice, prestigious environmental award for our board to win."

Other winners of awards were: Laura Jackson of St.

John's, individual; Conservation Corps of Newfoundland and Labrador, community group or organization; Gaia Environmental Youth Group of Bay Roberts, youth or youth group; and Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador,

business. The awards program is sponsored by the Department of Environment and Conservation, the Newfoundland and Labrador Women's Institutes, and the Multi-Materials Stewardship Board.