

**For Immediate Release**

**3/5/07**

**Schoharie River Center**

2047 Burtonsville Road

Esperance, NY 12066

Att: John McKeeby

875-6889

**RE: Local Youth Environmental Group Wins Prestigious National Environmental Advocacy Award**

The Schoharie River Center's Environmental Study Team (EST) has won the SeaWorld/Busch Gardens/FujiFilm Environmental Excellence Award. Since 1993 the Anheuser-Busch Adventure Parks have recognized the outstanding efforts of K-12 students and their teachers, across the country, who are working at the grassroots level to protect and preserve the environment. The Environmental Excellence Award is given to eight recipients annually, based on a program review by judges from the foundation and nationally recognized conservation and education partners.

EST is a year-round outdoor club for youth ages 13-18. The team meets bi-weekly and the project encourages youth to utilize and apply what they are learning in their academic studies (Science, Math, History, and Arts) to local environmental studies, field research projects, local history and archeology, and community education activities of the Environmental Study Team. This award recognizes the Schoharie River Center's Environmental Study Team Program as a national model for youth development and experiential learning.

In operation since 2001, the Environmental Study Team's activities have included identifying and documenting local point sources of pollution entering the Schoharie Creek and providing that information to appropriate authorities so that action could be taken. Working under the supervision of trained biologists and ecologists, the youth EST members learn to analyze, interpret and present the findings of their scientific and environmental research in writing and orally to the public and to local government officials in public meetings and scientific conferences. The team has participated in

numerous community clean-up activities, they participate annually in Hudson Basin River Watch's Clean Water Congress and the New York State Envirothon Program of the NYS Soils and Water Conservation District.

The Environmental Study Team of the Schoharie River Center was chosen out of a national field of 113 applicants. Nineteen judges from twelve nationally recognized environmental organizations were involved in the project evaluations, including Conservation International, Hubb-SeaWorld Research Institute, the Izaak Walton League of America, the National Geographic Society, National Science Teacher's Association, National Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, and the World Wildlife Fund. Each winning program is partnered with an environmental organization for continued mentoring. The National Wildlife Federation has chosen to sponsor the EST program for the purposes of this honor. Members of the team will travel to San Diego, California to receive their award.

The Environmental Study Team is supported by the United Way of Schenectady County, the Schenectady County Youth Bureau, and the Montgomery County Youth Bureau, as well as by the membership of the Schoharie River Center. The program is open to youth ages 13-18 and currently involves students from Duanesburg, Schalmont, Schoharie, and Fonda Fultonville School districts. For further information, contact John McKeeby, Program Director at (518) 875-6889.