



## **REGION'S COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES TO HONOR ERIK KIVIAT**

### **Legendary Scientist Will Receive Higher Education's Top Environmental Award**

#### ***For Immediate Release***

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October 16, 2014. Though Erik Kiviat has spent his life, and forty-five year research career, in the epicenter of hard-edged environmental politics – the Hudson River Valley -- his idealism about the role of science in our environmental future has never waned. In fact, it has now earned him *The Great Work Award in honor of Thomas Berry*, bestowed annually by the Environmental Consortium of Colleges & Universities.

“Dr. Kiviat is legendary amongst Hudson Valley scientists and environmentalists as the gold standard for ethical research and the pursuit of environmental truth,” said Michelle Land of Pace University who serves as the Environmental Consortium’s director. “This year’s award not only recognizes his life’s work, it echoes his call that knowledge must be the basis for environmental decision-making.”

Kiviat will be recognized by the members of the Environmental Consortium at their 11<sup>th</sup> annual conference, “The Pedagogical Pursuit of Environmental ‘Truth’: Mobilizing our Collective Expertise,” at Russell Sage College in Troy, NY on November 8, 2014.

Born and raised in the Hudson Valley, Kiviat is a research associate at Bard College and co-founder and executive director of Hudsonia, a not-for-profit institute for research, education, and technical assistance in the environmental sciences. He is a wetlands scientist and ecologist known for his work on rare native species as well as invasive nonnative species, and for research projects that span North America, Europe, and Africa.

But Kiviat’s greatest interest is the Hudson River watershed, where career and personal passion meet. Hudsonia’s Habitat Connections Initiative conducts research on wildlife, plants, and their habitats in the Hudson Valley and the northeastern states. Hudsonia’s Biodiversity Resources Center, under the leadership of Gretchen Stevens, provides training to non-scientists such as planning board members, staffs of environmental organizations, and conservation commissions. To assist decision makers and environmentalists alike Dr. Kiviat has authored or co-authored hundreds of technical assistance reports covering the region from the Troy Dam to New York City and beyond. (More on Dr. Kiviat in the attached biography.)

“Erik Kiviat is a key contributor to our ecological understanding of the Hudson River and watershed,” said Vassar anthropology professor Lucy Johnson, Consortium chair and president of the Hudson River Environmental Society, which promotes science and science

education. “His devotion to the sciences and to the region is reflected in both his professionalism and his lifelong personal commitment. He is truly a Hudson Valley treasure and a worthy recipient of the Environmental Consortium Great Work Award.”

“Dr. Kiviat exemplifies the philosophy of Father Thomas Berry in whose honor the award was created,” said Land. “His dedication to teaching, student research and to the significance of creatures great and small are the embodiment of Father Berry’s vision of higher education’s singular role in protecting Earth’s ‘great community.’ ”

**The Great Work Award in honor of Thomas Berry** is named for Thomas Berry, whose vision for the role of the university in the planet’s environmental future inspired the formation of the Environmental Consortium in 2004.

The award recognizes individuals in higher education whose work exemplifies Berry’s admonition that colleges and universities should "reorient the human community toward a greater awareness that the human exists, survives, and becomes whole only within the single great community of the planet Earth."

Previous winners include Gus Speth of Vermont Law School and Iona College’s Conveners of the Thomas Berry Forum for Ecological Dialogue: Brian Brown, Kevin Cawley, Kathleen Deignan, and Daniel Martin.

**The Environmental Consortium of Colleges & Universities’** mission is to harness higher education’s intellectual and physical resources to advance regional, ecosystem-based environmental research, teaching, and learning with a special emphasis on the greater Hudson-Mohawk River watershed. Spearheaded and hosted by Pace University, the Consortium’s headquarters are situated within the Pace Academy for Applied Environmental Studies in Pleasantville, New York.

*For more information on The Great Work Award in honor of Thomas Berry and The Environmental Consortium of Colleges & Universities, email [info@environmentalconsortium.org](mailto:info@environmentalconsortium.org).*

## **Erik Kiviat**

Erik Kiviat, PhD, is a lifelong resident of the Hudson Valley and cofounder of Hudsonia, a nonprofit institute for research, education, and technical assistance in the environmental sciences, based at the Bard College Field Station on the Hudson River. A certified wetland

scientist, he has more than 40 years' experience with natural history and environmental issues in the Northeast, and elsewhere in North America. He also has worked extensively with policy-makers, land use planners, and environmental managers.

Formerly professor of environmental studies at Bard College's Graduate School of Environmental Studies, Kiviat has researched the habitats and populations of rare and common turtle species, and performed landscape-level management of animals with large area requirements. He has conducted studies of biota, communities, and ecosystems in tidal wetlands and other habitats of the Hudson River, and other northeastern estuaries. He spent 14 years examining biodiversity and its management in the urban landscape of the Hackensack Meadowlands, and researched the ecology and management of invasive plants, especially long-present species such as common reed, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, and water chestnut, which have both positive and negative impacts on native biodiversity and environmental services.

Throughout his career, Erik Kiviat has been teaching professionals and students. He also has authored or coauthored 80 publications and 200 technical assistance reports on wetland ecology, rare species, conservation science, invasive plants, Hudson Valley natural history, and human ecology.

Hudsonia's Biodiversity Resources Center offers training to nonbiologists who make land use decisions, including town planning boards, land trust staff, and conservation commissions. It's also created detailed habitat maps and biodiversity reports covering over 400 square miles of Hudson Valley towns and watersheds. Hudsonia's Habitat Connections Initiative has studied rare species, invasive species, forests, wetlands, streams, and the estuary, to develop scientific information for planners, conservationists, and researchers.

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