

# WINNERS OF THE 2021 ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION AWARD

BY TERRY BONACE, ENVIRONMENTAL RESTORATION GROUP

For our 2021 Environmental Restoration Award, we had a difficult decision with two top contenders. So, we declared it a tie. The winners are Marilyn Klecka and Bob Cassel of 23 Lake Shore County Road and Susan and Paul Zucker of 6 South Merrivale.

Marilyn's property, which is co-owned with her three sisters, is located between Lake Shore County Road and Rogers. Their ownership goes back to 1955 when Marilyn's family purchased the site and operated a Lithuanian resort called the Villa Albra. The resort was open until 1970. Recently, from reading articles in Sand Tracks and having a site visit from ERG board members in 2017, Marilyn and her friend Bob began removing the invasive species on the property. They have since made outstanding progress in removal of garlic mustard, Japanese knotweed (one of our toughest invasive plants to remove), privet, multiflora rose, burning bush, oriental bittersweet, lily of the valley, English ivy, bush honeysuckle and common butterbur (possibly the only place in Beverly Shores where this invasive ornamental plant was found). While removing these invasive species, native plants were revealed: lowbush blueberry, ebony spleenwort, false Solomon's seal, and rarest of all, starflower. Their next steps include planting more native species on their property.



Marilyn Klecka and Bob Cassel



Susan Zucker

Paul and Susan Zucker purchased their property along Merrivale in 2004 and later built their home in 2012. The property consists of high dunes with steep ravines. Though many native species remained, invasive species like burning bush, oriental bittersweet, Japanese barberry, periwinkle, and garlic mustard were taking their toll on the natives. The Zuckers called upon ERG and experts at the Shirley Heinze Land Trust to learn more about the invasive plants. In addition to their own hard work, they hired the contractor Erdelac Land Management to survey and remove invasive species from a large area of their property. With the invasive plant removal, several native woodland species that were temporarily in hiding reappeared like red trillium, yellow and white trout lily, and sharp and blunt-lobed hepatica. Other natives like dwarf bush honeysuckle, New Jersey tea, wild lupine, butterfly weed, and purple coneflower have been returned by plantings where once they were likely quite common.

We applaud Marilyn and Bob and Susan and Paul for their labors in doing battle with our many invasive species and encouraging the return of a wide diversity of valuable and uncommon native species.

Please look for details in early 2022 on how to become a candidate for next year's Environmental Restoration Award. If you would like to see the entire application submitted for Marilyn and Bob and Paul and Susan, please see our web site at [www.bserg.org](http://www.bserg.org).

You will also find information there on native plants and non-native, invasive plants. As always, the Environmental Restoration Group (ERG) will be glad to help identify plants for you and make suggestions for native replacements. Don't hesitate to contact Terry Bonace ([tbonace@gmail.com](mailto:tbonace@gmail.com)) or Candice Smith ([candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com](mailto:candicepetersonsmith@gmail.com)).

