



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NIAGARA RIVER WATERSHED WINS THIESS INTERNATIONAL RIVERPRIZE

BUFFALO NIAGARA RIVERKEEPER ACCEPTS ENVIRONMENTAL AWARD FOR RIVER RESTORATION AT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE IN NEW DELHI, INDIA

IMPROVEMENTS TO REGIONAL WATERWAYS AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT WERE CELEBRATED BY AUSTRALIAN-BASED GLOBAL FOUNDATION

New Delhi, INDIA – The Niagara River Watershed was selected for a prestigious international award for excellence in river basin restoration, announced by the International RiverFoundation (IRF) at their annual Riversymposium in New Delhi, India. The IRF presented Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper with the Thiess International Riveprize, which is awarded each year to organizations demonstrating outstanding results in sustainable river basin management, restoration and protection worldwide. This year the winner will receive a \$200,000 AUD cash prize, and recognition as a global leader in river protection.

Jill Jedlicka, executive director of Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper, said that this recognition by the International RiverFoundation demonstrates the global importance of prioritizing clean, healthy waterways and the Great Lakes Basin.

“We are humbled and grateful for this recognition of the transformation of the Niagara River watershed, said Jill Jedlicka. “This honor is dependent upon and shared with our entire community, and is a testament to the decades of civic engagement of individuals, dedicated partners and our innovative staff and board. These forces combined have catalyzed regional waterfront revitalization and helped protect and restore many of our local waterways. This is a proud moment for our organization and community, as we have put the Buffalo Niagara region on the global map as a model for water resource protection and transformation.”

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper was recognized for their decades-long efforts to restore and protect the Niagara River watershed, including the massive Buffalo River restoration. Started in 1989 as a volunteer-based, grassroots organization, Riverkeeper is now credited with galvanizing a community-driven effort to protect and maintain the integrity of local fresh water systems. Through large-scale volunteer programs, civic engagement in water protection and revitalization efforts, water-based education programs and ecosystem planning and restoration, Riverkeeper has worked for over 26 years to protect and restore the Niagara River watershed. Today, the Buffalo Niagara region once again sees the Great Lakes and access to fresh water as a major component of regional economic revitalization.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper is also the reigning North American River*prize* winner. In May 2015, Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper was one of 40 contenders for the inaugural North American River*prize*, and after six months and three stages of review, the organization was awarded the prize in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The organization automatically became a "stage 2 finalist" for the Thiess International River*prize* competition, which opened in February. After several months of intensive review by an independent panel of judges, three finalists were identified in July, with the Niagara River watershed announced as the winner at Riversymposium's gala dinner.

Based in Australia, the International RiverFoundation works to support the sustainable restoration and management of river basins. As an international public benefit organization, they help restore and sustainably manage rivers. Their goal is to achieve improved health, ecological, economic, and social outcomes for people and the environment.

The Thiess International River*prize* was first awarded in 1999, and has grown to become a celebrated environmental award. There are now 15 international winners and more than 50 finalists who have demonstrated a commitment to restoring the world's rivers.

Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring our most valuable natural asset. Over the past 26 years, we have tackled some of the region's biggest fresh water challenges such as cleaning up toxic sediment, eliminating sewage overflows, restoring critical habitat, and advocating for the long-term health of the Great Lakes. Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's actions protect drinking water, connect people to waterways and contribute to a thriving water-based economy. To learn more, please visit www.bnriverkeeper.org.

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