Walsh receives ESF environment award

By Katy Stech

James T. Walsh's passion for fishing spawned his environmentalism early on. It was this passion that led Walsh, a U.S. representative, to receive the 2003 Honorary Sol Feinstone Environmental Award for his extensive effort in environmental protection. The State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry and its president, Cornelius Murphy, sponsor the award.

“During the 14 years he has served in Washington, Congressman Jim Walsh has worked tirelessly for the people of Central New York, obtaining federal support for projects that help protect our environment and strengthen our efforts to create a sustainable future,” said Murphy.

While his work for watershed management, water quality and wastewater systems is recognized as environmental stewardship, Walsh is best known for securing funds for the Onondaga Lake Cleanup.

“The Environmental Protection Agency gave the county 15 years to clean up Lake Onondaga,” said Daniel Gage, Walsh's press secretary. "Without his effort, more money would have to come from federal taxpayers' wallets instead of local taxpayers' wallets.”

Currently, Walsh is one of 13 chairmen of the Appropriations Committee, giving him spending oversight responsibility for the Environmental Protection Agency, as well as 15 other government organizations.

Also, Bristol Myers-Squibb, an international company that manufactures bulk penicillin at its Syracuse plant, was recognized with the 2003 Sol Feinstone Award for implementing environmentally-friendly policies at its largest factory in Syracuse.

“This award isn't given out every year,” said Brenda Greenfield, an assistant to ESF president Murphy. "We give it to an individual who has gone above and beyond in the area of environmental protection.”

The award was established in 1976 by Sol Feinstone, an ESF alumnus, who wanted to recognize environmentally-conscious individuals and grassroots organizations. Past winners include the late Chief Justice Edward Douglass and New York Senator Carl Marcellino.

“SUNY-ESF is the only institution in the nation dedicated to environmental science,” Gage said. "The award is a confirmation that Walsh’s involvement with the environment has an influence.”

Murphy’s decision to award Walsh an Honorary Feinstone Award came easily.

“Representative Walsh is a passionate conservationist and has been passionate about protecting the environment in Central New York,” Murphy said. “That's why Walsh got this award.”