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Eskasoni elder wins Eco-Hero Award for environmental work

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SYDNEY — An Eskasoni elder is recipient of a environmental hero award, named in honour of a fellow Cape Bretoner.

Albert Marshall has received the 2009 Marshall Award for Aboriginal Leadership as part of the Eco-Hero Awards delivered each year by the Nova Scotia Environmental Network, an umbrella organization of provincial environmental and health organizations.

Marshall is known for speaking critically of oil and gas explorations and their environmental impacts on Unama'ki or Cape Breton.

He is also among a group of native elders opposed to strip mining on Boularderie Island.

According to the NSEN, the environmental awards were first launched in 2007 as a way of recognizing groups and individuals who have made a significant contribution to environmentalism in the Nova Scotia.

Eco-Heroes Awards are now presented in eight categories.

"All these individuals and groups are exceptional and inspirational environmental leaders," said Tamara Lorincz, NSEN executive director, as quoted in a press release. "The province is a better place because of their efforts."

The Marshall award is granted to a First Nations individual or group who has demonstrated great environmental leadership.

The award is named after Allister Marshall of Chapel Island First Nation who provided leadership on a variety of environmental issues locally, provincially and nationally for years.

Allister Marshall became involved with NSEN when he attended their annual general meeting in 1992. He helped form the Save Our Seas and Shores Coalition and also joined the First Nation Environmental Network and the Atlantic First Nation Environmental Network.

Allister also sat on the National Council of the Canadian Environmental Network and he continues to be a member of the CEN Forest and Water Caucuses.

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