

# Washington Gold Miners Receive Ecology Award

by David Knowlen

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Representatives from Washington State's independent, small-scale gold mining community recently accepted an award and a message of gratitude from the leader of the State's Department of Ecology.

During a public ceremony held in Renton, Washington, State Ecology Department Director Jay Manning personally recognized the efforts of Washington's small-scale miners, thanking them for their continuing

According to Manning, the small-scale gold mining community has transferred to Ecology Department officials more than 160 pounds of mercury recovered from within the state's rivers and streams since the program began three years ago.

Following his remarks, Director Manning presented mining representatives with an award and a citation honoring state gold miners as "Quicksilver Champions." Washington's Resources Coalition President Mark Erickson and Director Bruce Beatty accepted the award on behalf of Washington's gold mining community.

Erickson acknowledged that modern gold recovery methods offer an "added benefit to the environment by removing quantities of toxic heavy minerals as well as recovering the

continued in the early 20th century.

In recent years Washington's Resources Coalition, a mining advocacy group, has worked in close partnership with state gold miners and the Department of Ecology by establishing cooperative mercury collection facilities at several local state gold shows and at the annual summer Washington "Miner's Rally" event.

Erickson stated, "Our efforts to dispose of streambed mercury began in 2002, when we led similar activities with an Oregon Mining Rally, and we've been pleased with the support of Washington's miners in working with the Ecology Department people. We are also very pleased that they recognized the miner's commitment to this program." ❌

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All smiles here celebrating receiving the Ecology Departments Quicksilver Award are left to right President Richard Holcomb of the Bedrock Mining Club, President Mark Erickson of the Washington Resources Coalition, Ecology Department Director Jay Manning and the Resource Coalition's Betty and Bruce Beatty.

efforts in reducing the residual mercury content within the state's rivers and streams. Manning was also complimentary to the state's gold miners saying that they "leave the river better than they find it."

The Department of Ecology "Quicksilver Awards" recognition event, held during "Earth Day" ceremonies on April 23, was attended by officials from the state's gold mining associations, representatives from state and local environmental groups, recycling organizations, community ecology officials and business leaders.

gold from the streambeds."

"It's been our commitment to collect and transfer this recovered mercury to State Ecology officials," Beatty advised. He added, "Gold miners are as concerned about the condition of the state's rivers and streams as the environmental groups."

Residual mercury is often found within streambed sediment and on the bedrock and comes from both natural and industrial mining sources. Early miners during the late 1800s used mercury to improve their fine gold recovery, however, this practice was dis-