

# Excess Soils Engagement Group receives Ontario's Amethyst Award

Angela Gismondi March 3, 2021



The Excess Soils Engagement Group (ESEG) has been recognized with an Amethyst Award in the service excellence category.

Established in 1992, the Amethyst Award is the highest order of recognition for excellence in the Ontario Public Service (OPS).

“We were totally surprised, I didn’t even realize we were in the running for it,” said Al Durand, a member of the ESEG.

“I was asked along with Andy Manahan (then) of RCCAO (Residential and Civil Alliance of Ontario) if we could put a letter together to the Ministry of the Environment regarding their work in terms of creating and supporting the Excess Soils Engagement Group, so we did. We sent that letter in and we understood the award was for Ontario public service employees only.

“Low and behold we received a note that the group received the award.”

The first phase of Ontario's new regulation for On-Site and Excess Soil Management Regulation 406/19 passed by the province under the Environmental Protection Act came into effect in January.

The ESEG was instrumental in informing the new regulation, which is part of a broader regulatory framework the province is putting in place to govern the management and reuse of excess soil excavated from large construction and development sites.

The province's goal is to "reduce (the) amount of excess soil disposed of in landfills, recognize soil as a valuable resource and prevent improper placement/reuse of soil to inhibit (the) contamination of clean sites."

The next phase of the regulation will come into effect Jan. 1, 2022.

Amethyst Award recipients are recognized across four categories: the Sandra D. Lang Lifetime Achievement, recognizing individuals whose work and achievements serve as an example of an extraordinary career of excellence and service within the OPS; the Katherine Hewson Outstanding New Professional, which recognizes individuals who have been in the OPS for five years or less and whose leadership has set an exceptional example of OPS values; Service Excellence, recognizing individuals, groups or partnerships for service excellence; and Digital Disruption, recognizing those who developed or utilize digital technology to introduce new concepts and practices.

Twenty-three overall recipients were chosen and the Excess Soil Team was one of 13 groups presented with an award in the Service Excellence Category.