

# 2016 WCC AWARDS

## 2016 Awards

Hall of Fame

Statewide

Local

Delegate of the Year

Educator

DNR Staff

Special Recognitions

## THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS

### DICK KOERNER INDUCTED INTO WCC HALL OF FAME

Dick has been a member of the WCC since 1966, and in that time has served the Congress and citizens of Wisconsin exceptionally well in many different roles including: Winnebago County Chair, District 7 Executive Councilor, Chair of the Migratory Committee, Secretary of the Rules and Resolutions Committee, and representative of the WCC on the DNR Sturgeon Advisory Committee and Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee. A true conservationist, Dick has also been active outside the WCC as a member of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, Twin City Rod & Gun Club, Crooked Lake Sportsman's Club, Shadows on the Wolf, Walleyes for Tomorrow, Paynes Point Hook & Spear Club, and as a charter member of the Winnegamie Wetland Chapter of Ducks Unlimited. Dick's persona, insights, and zeal for the outdoors are greatly valued .



*Dick Koerner (2nd from left) receiving award from three past WCC chairs Ed Harvey (left), Rob Bohmann (3rd from left), and Steve Oestricher (far right).*

### STATEWIDE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress selected the **Wisconsin Trappers Association (WTA)** as the recipient of the **Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year** award.

The Wisconsin Trappers Association is an organization that focuses on traditions, education, and management. Founded in 1963, the Wisconsin Trappers Association began working to protect the future of Wisconsin's trapping heritage and central to this, is the education of the general public about trapping and the fur industry.

The WTA was a key partner in helping make trapper's education mandatory in Wisconsin in 1992 and since that time has helped shape BMP's (best management practices) for furbearers by trapping specific species and assisting with necropsy. With the help of the WTA, Wisconsin has become the leader in the country for the most humane traps and for working on trap standards.

Members work with the DNR by sitting on DNR furbearer advisory committees, assisting with teaching the DNR's "fur school," and assisting with the hiring of DNR furbearer personnel. Members of the WTA work closely with DNR staff, UW grad students and faculty, state veterinarians, and other organizations and agencies to help promote and educate the public about ethical trapping, responsible use of furbearer populations, and protection of habitat.

The Wisconsin Trappers Association has offered week long youth trap camps to educate youth about trapping, provides scholarships to students attending college, conducts trapper education course workshops, and even sponsors a youth organization called the Future Trappers of Wisconsin.

## LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

The **Apostle Islands Sport Fisherman's Association (AISA)** was honored as one of the recipients of the **Local Conservation Organization of the Year** award.

The AISA was founded in 1980 to be an advocate for sport fishermen in the Apostle Islands area. They have since become an organization of men and women who strive to maintain and improve the fisheries associated with Lake Superior, its bays, and the inland tributaries of the lake.

Over the last 30 years the AISA has worked diligently on a multitude of projects involving habitat restoration, fin clipping, fish refuges, and education. Most recently they have focused their efforts on designing a program to locate and remove ghost nets, as well as, pairing with Sea Grant to produce a video educating about the dangers of derelict fishing nets.

For their continuing commitment to conservation and their lasting contributions to the protection of the natural resources of Wisconsin, the Conservation Congress recognizes the Apostle Islands Sport Fisherman's Association as the Local Conservation Club of the Year.



*AI House accepting the award on behalf of the Apostle Islands Sport Fisherman's Association from WCC Chair Rob Bohmann.*

## LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

The **Outagamie Conservation Club (OCC)** was honored as one of the recipients of the **Local Conservation Organization of the Year Award**.

The OCC is a not-for-profit organization located in Hortonville, WI, and committed to the safe and fun use of Wisconsin's natural resources. The OCC is situated on 64 acres of land which lends itself to the organization's conservation and education efforts. Run completely by 18 volunteers, the OCC is able to operate their beautiful facility.

Over the last year, the OCC hosted five courses including hunter education, bow hunter safety, boating safety, snowmobile safety, and ATV safety. Their programs utilized 35 volunteers and saw approximately 530 students. In addition to their efforts in outdoors education, the OCC host a variety of community groups at their facility and also sponsor several sport shooting and archery leagues. Through fundraising efforts, the OCC donates yearly to the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and they have sponsored, installed, and paid monthly costs of a dusk until dawn light at a local boat launch.

It is for these efforts, their continuing commitment to conservation, and their lasting contributions to the protection of the natural resources of Wisconsin, the Conservation Congress recognizes the Outagamie Conservation Club as the Local Conservation Club of the Year.



*Mike Kohl accepting the award on behalf of the Outagamie Conservation Club from WCC Chairman Rob Bohmann.*

## WCC DELEGATE OF THE YEAR

The Conservation Congress recognized **Douglas Burrows** with the **David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award**. Although a relatively “new” delegate, with only 9 years of service to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, no one can question Douglas Burrow’s commitment to public service and conservation.

During his time with the Conservation Congress, Doug has represented Eau Claire county as Chair (2009-2010), Vice Chair (2008-2009, 2014-present), and a Member (2007-2008, 2011-2014). In addition Doug has sat on a variety of advisory committees covering a wide range of topics. A few of the committees on which he has served include: Pheasants Advisory, Outreach and Public Relations, Strategic Planning, and Outdoor Heritage and Education.

While serving the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, Doug has found time to serve as a member of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation and Eau Claire county Stewardship subcommittee working to acquire land to be used for conservation. He has served as the president of both the Chippewa Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever and the Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club. Doug also works as part of and advisory committee to the National Pheasants Forever Board of Directors to help revise the organizations charter agreement. It is because of this non-stop dedication, commitment to conservation, and the protection of the natural resources of Wisconsin, Douglas Burrows is the winner of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award. Congratulations Douglas.



Douglas Burrows accepting the David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award from WCC Chair Rob Bohmann

## EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

The Conservation Congress has chosen **A. Jim Heffner** as the **Conservation Educator of the Year**. Each year the Wisconsin Conservation Congress honors a deserving individual who is dedicated to educating others about the wise use and conservation of Wisconsin’s natural resources and environment.

Jim has been a Wisconsin Conservation Congress delegate for the last nine years. He has worked ceaselessly to help educate the people of Wisconsin in a variety of skills. Jim is a veteran of the U.S. Navy, as well as, the Green County Sheriff’s Department. Because of his career as a Deputy Sheriff in Green County, Jim trained to become a certified Hunter’s Education Instructor, and in 1985 began teaching. Over the course of 20 years Jim taught over 800 students in the Green county area.

Jim has been involved with six Muskie Clubs throughout the state, and it is through the Janesville Muskie Club that he began working with the Take-A-Kid Fishing program. He has worked with the program for 10 years. Jim and his wife, Carol, are both certified angler education instructors and have worked with a variety of different programs and have taught “Kids Fishing Tips” for the last eight years, sharing their passion and knowledge with over 3,500 youth and adults. Over the last seven years, Jim has taught 3rd through 5th grade students at Sugar Camp Elementary School Fishing Club. Through this club Jim teaches fish identification, regulations, casting safety, safe handling of fish, catch and release fishing, safe handling of boats and jet skis, preventing the spread of invasive water species, and being respectful and protecting the environment.

For his continuing commitment to outdoor education and lasting contributions to passing on our conservation legacy the Conservation Congress recognizes A. Jim Heffner as the 2015 Conservation Educator of the Year.



A. Jim Heffner accepting the 2015 Educator of the Year Award from WCC Chairman Rob Bohmann

## WCC RECOGNIZES DEPARTMENT STAFF

At its Annual Convention in May 2016 the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) recognized several DNR employees for their ongoing, outstanding work on behalf of the people and natural resources of the state.

### Mike Zeckmeister recognized as WCC Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Mike Zeckmeister is a Natural Resources Region Program Manager working out of Spooner, WI. Mike has worked with the Department of Natural Resources since 1990, when he began working as the Sandhill Wildlife Area property manager. Since the 90's Mike has worked as an LTE Conservation Warden, Land Program Supervisor-Antigo and District Wildlife Supervisor.

Mike Zeckmeister has been previously recognized for his accomplishments across several species and for his leadership in responding to the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease in Washburn County in 2012. It was here he led local efforts to quickly provide public education on CWD and develop a science-based, efficient surveillance effort. Working with many bureaus within the DNR and a citizens advisory team (CAT), he coordinated development & implementation of a response plan.

Mike has also been instrumental in establishing and maintaining the Clam Lake Area Elk herd, where he worked to develop amendments to the Elk Management Plans for the Black River & Clam Lake Areas.

In addition Mike has worked on projects involving both wolves and black bears in northern Wisconsin, which has led to protocols dealing with depredation and nuisance issues. It is because of these accomplishments that Mike has been able to establish lasting relationships with a wide variety of people and wildlife management agencies.

For his exceptional dedication to the area of wildlife research and his achievements in sharing information and expanding knowledge the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Mike Zeckmeister as the Wildlife Biologist of the Year.



*Mike Zeckmeister accepting the Wildlife Biologist Award*

### WCC Fisheries Management Award goes to Max Wolter



*Max Wolter accepting the Fisheries Management Award from Rob Bohmann*

Max Wolter works as a Senior Fisheries Biologist out of the Hayward service center in Sawyer county. Max currently leads the DNR's Panfish team and regularly contributes to the Musky team due to the large quantity of Musky waters in his area.

Max is very dedicated to outreach in Sawyer county and many of his current activities include working closely with local sports and conservation groups. Some of his projects include developing new stock quotas for streams that have shown new potential for trout management, tree drop and fish stick projects on Lake Nelson, and providing regular updates to the Hayward Visitors Center and lake associations to help educate the public on current Fisheries programs.

For his exceptional achievements in outreach and his dedication to creating excellent fishing opportunities the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Max Wolter as the Fisheries Biologist of the Year.

## WCC RECOGNIZES DEPARTMENT STAFF

### **Conservation Warden Jesse Ashton — Law Enforcement Officer of the Year**

Jesse Ashton serves as a Conservation Warden out of Luck, WI, in northern Polk County. Jesse has constructed a well rounded program that focuses extensively on a cooperative network of citizens within his administrative area. It is this program and network that have allowed him to take on the responsibilities and work loads of two warden stations for the past two years.

Jesse's ability to connect with the community has lent itself to many educational opportunities. Jesse has been able to maintain a 100% attendance rate at his safety courses and works closely with community groups to implement Learn to Hunt Turkey programs and he guides youth every year in this hunt. Jesse has also worked to organize hunts for both disabled hunters and terminally ill youth, so that they may also have an opportunity to experience the outdoors.

As a warden, Jesse is very committed to justice and has grown a reputation as a fair but firm officer. In the last year Jesse has issued over 20 criminal violations and 130 civil violations. He works hard with other law enforcement agencies, as well as the Polk county DA's office, to promote and ensure fair penalties for DNR violations. Because of his skills, Jesse is an instructor in hunting enforcement, boat school, advanced interviewing and interrogation, as well as serving as a field training officer for Warden Recruit Training.

For his efforts in protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and dedication to his community, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Warden Jesse Ashton with the Conservation Warden of the Year award.

### **Warden Mike Neal selected as the Conservation Waterfowl Officer of the Year**

Warden Mike Neal is a field warden stationed in Door County and is an avid waterfowl hunter. Warden Neal began working as a Conservation Warden in 1999 and has been serving the state of Wisconsin for 21 years.

Mike began waterfowl hunting with his father at a very young age. They would hunt on any lake, river, or pond that lent itself to a young sportsman's ambitions. His love for waterfowl hunting has only grown and manifested itself in the purchase of a house in central North Dakota, so that he might pursue his passion in other states.

Mike has excelled in many facets of his fields, but has been noted for his accomplishments in enforcement, education, and community outreach. Mike has been known to devote time to many outdoor education programs, but has especially taken to working with youth through the Wisconsin DNR's Learn to Hunt program and working closely with wildlife staff to secure grants for habitat improvements.

Mike's dedication to enforcement and education has led him to work for Port Security as a Regional Dive Team member and work as the Dive Safety officer for the DNR's statewide dive program. In addition Mike teaches the warden recruits during the "duck school" trainings.

For his efforts in waterfowl and wetland protection the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Warden Mike Neal for his exceptional service to the citizens and natural resources of the state as the Waterfowl Officer of the Year.



*Jesse Ashton the WCC Law Enforcement Officer of the Year*

## TIM ANDRYK RECOGNIZED FOR YEARS OF SERVICE

Timothy A. Andryk, Chief Legal Counsel in Central Office - Madison, retired from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on January 8, 2016 after 29 years of dedicated service to the citizens of the State of Wisconsin. Tim began his state service with the Bureau of Wildlife Management in 1986 as a wildlife biologist LTE. In 1987, Tim was hired into the State Migratory Bird Specialist position. In 1993, he made the decision that he could better work to protect and enhance hunting and fishing opportunities by becoming an attorney, and was hired as the Fish and Wildlife Staff Attorney for the Department of Natural Resources.

Tim was a natural fit as the fish and wildlife attorney, and provided critical, respected and recognized legal advice and support to the Department of Natural Resources, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, and the citizens of this state throughout the state and the country, through the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) and the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA). Tim continued to be the Fish and Wildlife Staff Attorney for the Department until 2011, when he was named to the position of Chief Legal Counsel for the Department of Natural Resources.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes and thanks Tim Andryk for his many years of exceptional guidance and friendship to the Conservation Congress, service to the citizens of this state, and unwavering dedication to the conservation of Wisconsin's natural resources.



Tim Andryk receiving award from WCC chair Rob Bohmann

## ROB BOHMANN RECOGNIZED FOR LEADERSHIP



WCC Chair-elect Larry Bonde with WCC Chair Rob Bohmann

This year Rob Bohmann was recognized for twelve years of service to the Wisconsin Conservation congress.

Rob Bohmann first joined the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in 2001, and served Milwaukee county as a delegate until 2003. Rob took a brief hiatus and moved to Racine county where he was elected to serve the conservation congress again. He was immediately elected chair of Racine county in 2006, and continues to serve in this position. In 2007, Rob was elected to the Executive Committee of the Congress where he served as the Vice Chair through 2011, when he was elected chair of the Executive Committee. Rob served the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in this capacity until he decided to not seek reelection this year.

In Rob's tenure as Chair of the Conservation Congress he has helped the congress weather difficult budgets, changes made to the Congress' rule making processes, and even through the Deer Trustee Report in which WCC delegates chair County Deer Advisory Councils. In addition he has helped implement a strategic planning process that has been working to focus the overall goals of the WCC, which will lend a strong prevailing theme for which to conduct future business.

Through many struggles and triumphs, Rob has always done what he felt was best for the WCC and has worked to move the WCC by building relationships rather than being unwilling to make compromises. It is for these great twelve years of service and five years of leadership as chair that the WCC, recognizes Rob Bohmann with this award.

## DO YOU KNOW AN ORGANIZATION OR INDIVIDUAL THAT SHOULD BE RECOGNIZED?

Each year the Conservation Congress seeks nominations for Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year, Local Conservation Organization of the Year, and Educator of the Year.

If you know of a statewide or local conservation organization or individual dedicated to educating others on conservation matters, please consider nominating them for one of the Conservation Congress's annual awards.

Visit the WCC website at [dnr.wi.gov](http://dnr.wi.gov) for application and nomination forms.