

2017 WCC AWARDS

2017 Awards

[Hall of Fame](#)

[Statewide](#)

[Local](#)

[Delegate of the Year](#)

[DNR Staff](#)

THE WISCONSIN CONSERVATION CONGRESS

WILLIAM H. HOWE INDUCTED INTO WCC HALL OF FAME

By Lee Fahrney

William "Bill" Howe has been a member of the WCC since 1958, and found his way onto the Conservation Congress nearly 60 years ago, when he disagreed with commercial fishing rule changes on the Mississippi River. Bill decided then that something needed to be done and the only way to make a difference was to become a delegate and fight for what he thought was right.

Bill grew up having a close attachment to the Mississippi River. He spent his childhood and most of his adult life on the river. He remembers when the locks and dams were constructed. The river was his playground. He fished, hunted and ice skated on the river. He was still ice skating well into his 70's. At a young age Bill would set type for the family newspaper. At that time his grandfather and father ran the Courier Press, a Prairie du Chien newspaper. Bill



William Howe (center) receiving award from WCC Chair Larry Bonde (right) and Vice Chair Al Shook (left).

joined the Navy during World War II and worked in control towers, guiding Navy and Army Air Corps planes. Bill and his brother Jack would later take over the newspaper business and run it for several years before turning it over to their sons Gary and John.

Bill's interest in conservation started early in life. He remembers when Ernie Swift was the secretary of the Conservation Commission, forerunner of the current Department of Natural Resources. Ernie would hunt ducks with his family in the Prairie du Chien area. Bill's interest in conservation evolved well beyond the Mississippi and he would develop many close relationships with fellow conservationists and legislators across the state. Bill always kept himself well informed of the various issues, not just the local ones, but issues across the state and many issues involving adjacent states. Whenever possible he would attend meetings up and down the river. Many of those meetings would involve Corp of Engineer river projects. One of Bill's concerns with barges was oil being transported safely by use of double hull barges.

Today at age 94, Bill is still very involved in conservation. He currently serves on the Mississippi River Committee and the Legislative Committee. Serving on these committees hasn't stopped him from attending many other meetings across the state. Bill feels strongly that representation at meetings involving our natural resources is important. For nearly 60 years Bill has traveled this state attending meetings on various issues involving natural resources and never once submitted a travel voucher for food, gas or lodging. That is how important these issues are to Bill. Bill always has an interest whether it involves wildlife, the forests, the rivers, the lakes, trains, barges, or frac sand mining. The years of dedication, effort and leadership toward better conservation in Wisconsin has not gone unnoticed by the WCC.

For his dedication to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress, the state of Wisconsin, and the protection and improvement of our natural resources William H. Howe was inducted into the WCC Hall of Fame. Congratulations Bill!

WCC DELEGATE OF THE YEAR

By Lee Fahrney

The Conservation Congress recognized **Gary** and **David Mabie** with the **David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award**. The David A. Ladd Award is typically presented to the individual who has contributed the most to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress in the past year. This year, however, the award is bestowed on not one, but two, individuals who in tandem have contributed immensely to the success of the Congress over a long period of years primarily through their commitment to the Learn to Hunt Bear Program.

In support of that program, Gary Mabie and his son, Dave, have stepped up year after year to host the winner of the WCC Learn to Hunt Bear permit. If you ask Dave or Gary, their only regret in supporting the program is that one year the sponsored youth did not harvest a bear.

The father and son team also accommodate additional youth in the Learn to Hunt program—on one weekend hosting no less than six youth in their attempts to shoot a bear. The team has also been actively involved with Oconto River Kids, an organization that takes kids with life-threatening illnesses on hunting excursions.

Dave previously served as co-chair of the Outdoor Heritage Committee and was a member of the former Hunting with Dogs Committee. The family also takes part in the Taylor County Youth Expo every year, where the biggest draw is Dave's prize Plott hounds.

Dave credits his father with instilling him with the outdoor skills that he will carry with him throughout his life. Dave reports he began hunting rabbits and grouse with a 20 gauge at the age of eight.

An Army veteran from the Vietnam War era, Gary now enjoys living in northern Wisconsin surrounded by family and friends. This year, he is already active with the youth of the area, taking them out during the spring when tracks and other bear sign are well-defined.

It is because of this non-stop dedication, commitment to conservation, and the protection of the natural resources of Wisconsin, Gary and David Mabie are awarded the Wisconsin Conservation Congress David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award.



Gary (front left) and Dave (front right) receiving the David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award from WCC Chair Larry Bonde (rear right) and Vice Chair Al Shook (rear left).

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 for application and nomination forms.

LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

The **North Wisconsin Rod and Gun Club** was honored as the recipient of the **Local Conservation Organization of the Year Award**.

The North Wisconsin Rod and Gun Club is a community oriented organization in Ashland County that has over 250 members. The club holds a variety of community events through the course of the year either to raise funds or as a free opportunities for people to learn more about outdoor sports. They annually sponsor a fishing contest for over 200 youth, ages 7 to 13, and have volunteers take them onto the lake fishing. Each child is given a prize after a day of fishing. The club also sponsors a fishing day for Wounded Warriors, a large ice fishing contest for the local communities, and sponsored trap shooting programs in both Ashland and Washburn High Schools.

In addition the club focuses on giving back to the community. They donate annually to local non-profit organizations, and they are financially supporting a brown trout genetic study through UW Stevens Point.

For their continuing commitment to conservation and their lasting contributions to the protection of the natural resources of Wisconsin, the Conservation Congress recognizes the North Wisconsin Rod and Gun Club as the Local Conservation Club of the Year.



Dave Sorenson accepting the award on behalf of the North Wisconsin Rod and Gun Club from WCC Chair Larry Bonde.

STATEWIDE CONSERVATION ORGANIZATION

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress selected the **Northwoods Youth Deer Hunt Challenge Committee** as the recipient of the **Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year Award**.

Though the Northwoods Youth Deer Hunt Challenge Committee is not a typical statewide organization, it does provide a broad regional reach and impacts many communities across Vilas, Oneida and Iron counties. Due to the large geographic influence this group's initiative has, the WCC felt that it was much more than a local organization. Founded in 2004, the committee consists of passionate people from the Lakeland Times, local business owners, the Wisconsin DNR, and the local Lions Club.

Northwoods Youth Deer Hunt Challenge (NYDHC) began working to promote deer hunting among youth ages 10-17 across northern Wisconsin. The NYDHC raises approximately \$25,000 annually in cash and donations, which is then used to provide participating youth with the equipment and opportunities needed to have quality hunting experiences.

The NYDHC not only provides youth with the opportunity to hunt, but they also provide seminars for participants, to teach and inform them about turkey calling, gun cleaning, identifying furs and pelts, and cleaning harvested animals to name a few. The NYDHC is designed to encourage the hunting tradition through real life experiences, in hopes that the participants will continue on with the traditions into adulthood.

In addition the NYDHC strives to support its participants academically as well. Each year they provide scholarships to area students that have participated in the NYDHC with special preference given to students planning on entering an outdoor related field.

For their efforts in continuing the education of youth in a Wisconsin outdoor tradition, the Conservation Congress recognizes the Northwoods Youth Deer Hunt Challenge Committee as the Statewide Conservation Organization of the year.



Gregg Walker, publisher of the Lakeland Times, accepting the award from WCC Chair Larry Bonde on behalf of the Northwoods Youth Deer Hunt Challenge Committee.

WCC RECOGNIZES DEPARTMENT STAFF

At its annual convention in May 2017, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) recognized several DNR employees as outstanding professionals for their ongoing work on behalf of the people and natural resources of the state.

Tom Hauge receives WCC Outstanding Professional of the Year

Tom Hauge began his career with the department in 1979 and recently retired from the position of Director of the Bureau of Wildlife Management.

During his tenure with the department, Wisconsin added significant harvest opportunities for doves, bear and crow. Under his leadership we held our first modern wolf season and began the reintroduction of elk to the state.

Tom helped to develop new opportunities for education. He was instrumental in implementing mentored hunts, Learn-to-Hunt, Watchable Wildlife, conservation education centers, and better access to Wisconsin's public lands.

Tom helped to diversify the wildlife program and people to more efficiently serve Wisconsin's wildlife and citizens. Wildlife health and Species of Greatest Conservation Need are now considered in every aspect of Wildlife Management's programming.

For these reasons and his exceptional dedication to the area of wildlife management and his achievements for building a valued and successful program, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Tom Hauge as Outstanding Professional of the Year.



Tom Hauge (center) accepting the Outstanding Professional of the Year Award from Vice Chair Al Shook (left) and Chair Larry Bonde (right).

Conservation Warden Mike Disher — Outstanding Professional of the Year

Mike Disher serves as a Conservation Warden with the Winnebago Team in Calumet County. Mike is well respected by the local sportsman's clubs in his area for his dedication to conservation, his collaboration with the clubs, and the support that he provides to the local communities that he serves. Mike has constructed a well-balanced law enforcement program and serves as a community-centric warden and works to build excellent relationships with the citizens of his area. Because of his ability to create relationships, he is able to develop rapport with students of all ages in the Hunter Safety classes he supports. His approach is simplistic and non-threatening, which allows him to engage participants and kids and allows them to feel comfortable in front of law enforcement officers, yet still gets key messages across.



Mike Disher accepting the WCC Outstanding Professional of the Year Award from WCC Chair Larry Bonde.

Mike annually puts together a picnic and awards night for all of the Safety Instructors in his area at one of the local clubs. The picnic is well attended and the Instructors look forward to the hospitality and networking that this event provides. In addition, Mike is very active with Calumet County's Conservation Alliance and supports the efforts of all the hunting and fishing clubs that are involved in the alliance. Every year he organizes the spring clean up of public hunting lands in the counties he serves and rallies the local clubs to support his efforts. It is the little things like these that make Mike stand out among Wisconsin's Conservation Wardens.

As a warden, Mike is very committed to getting the Learn to Pheasant Hunt programs started and running for both St. Anna Sportsman's Club and Oxbow Sportsman Club in Calumet County. Through his knowledge of hunting and his passion, guidance, and support, these programs have grown over several years and both youth and adults have had

WCC RECOGNIZES DEPARTMENT STAFF

the opportunity to learn how to hunt pheasant in eastern Wisconsin. In addition it has allowed the clubs to develop relationships with their communities and provide local participants and experience that they had not previously had.

For his efforts in protecting Wisconsin's natural resources and dedication to his community, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes Warden Mike Disher with the Outstanding Professional of the Year Award.

Russ Warwick Honored with WCC Outstanding Professional of the Year

Russ Warwick is a Wisconsin DNR Fisheries Technician stationed in Hayward, Wisconsin. With over 30 years of dedicated service to the state of Wisconsin and the Bureau of Fisheries Management, Russ has had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects with a career dedicated to improving fisheries in Wisconsin.

During Russ' career he has worked on cutting edge fisheries programs that have led to innovative technology and regulations that have advanced fisheries science around the state.

Russ has also worked to create many educational outreach programs and opportunities for youth, seniors, the disabled and novices. He has personally taught thousands of people to fish and appreciate the natural resources of Wisconsin. Russ also helped found "Fishing Has No Boundaries" a now national organization dedicated to providing fishing opportunities for disabled people.

Russ has taught himself to be an effective communicator and actively engaged many partners of the Wisconsin DNR. In addition he has been a valuable resource in connecting the department with the Native American community and tribal agencies in Hayward.

For dedication to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Bureau of Fisheries Management and the natural resources of our state, the WCC honored Russ Warwick with the Outstanding Professional of the Year Award.



Russ Warwick accepting the Outstanding Professional of the Year Award from Larry Bonde.

Warden Doug Zeihen selected as the Conservation Waterfowl Officer of the Year

Warden Doug Zeihen is a field warden stationed in Waukesha County and is an avid waterfowl hunter. Warden Zeihen has been serving the state of Wisconsin as a Conservation Warden for 25 years.

In addition to his normal responsibilities, he is involved with training new wardens at Wisconsin's Recruit Waterfowl School. In 2012 he volunteered to take on the Cooperative North American Shotgunning Education Program (CONSEP). The program is designed to help shotgun shooters sharpen their skills in marksmanship, distance estimation and equipment selection. Warden Zeihen's main focus has been on training instructors to implement the program statewide.



Doug Zeihen accepting the Conservation Waterfowl Officer of the Year Award from WCC Vice Chair Al Shook.

Warden Zeihen works closely with wildlife and water regulations staff and helps to facilitate discussions with private landowners regarding wetland protection. He is also a statewide leader in waterfowl enforcement and has a good feel for taking the most effective approach and shows excellent discretion to gain the best results from a situation. It is for this reason that he is respected among the waterfowl hunting community in the area he serves.

As a warden, he enjoys teaching and is a mentor with the UW Stevens Point Law Enforcement Association and in Learn to Hunt waterfowl, turkey and pheasant programs. Warden Zeihen takes every opportunity in these settings to teach about waterfowl hunting and sharing his passion with others.

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