

**Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
Natural Resources Board Agenda Item**

SUBJECT: Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress initiative update

FOR: January 2015 Board meeting

TO BE PRESENTED BY: Larry Bonde, WCC Vice-Chair

SUMMARY:

In 2009, the Natural Resources Board asked, "Would you support the concept of establishing a Youth Conservation Congress?" on the Spring Hearing questionnaire. The question passed. With favorable input from the citizens, the NRB asked the WCC to proceed with getting a Youth Conservation Congress established that would function under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress.

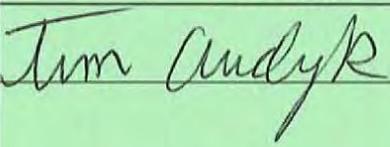
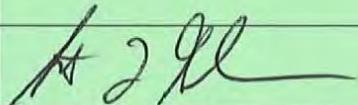
The WCC has worked to establish a YCC, and under the current program there are 20 youth from around the state that are participating. The program as presently organized has youth attending WCC meetings with their WCC delegate mentor. However, the Congress has struggled to identify a more tangible and appealing incentive for the participants that would really draw and keep their interest.

NRB Chair Preston Cole asked Deputy Secretary Moroney to assign a group of DNR staff that could assist the WCC in developing their YCC program. Land Division Administrator, Kurt Thiede and WCC Liaison Kari Lee-Zimmermann were assigned to lead the effort. The Wisconsin Conservation Congress will provide a brief update to the Board regarding the status and recent developments of the Youth Conservation Congress initiative.

RECOMMENDATION: Information only

LIST OF ATTACHED MATERIALS (check all that are applicable):

- Background memo
- YCC project proposal
- Recruitment poster, letter, and program summary
- Application and consent form

Approved by	Signature	Date
Tim Andryk, Bureau Director		1-15-15
Not applicable, Administrator		
<i>for</i> Cathy Stepp, Secretary		1/14/15

cc: Board Liaison – AD/8



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress



Goal: Effectively engage, educate, and involve youth in the management and protection of our natural resources and foster a conservation ethic through participation on the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress (YCC).

Background: In 2009, the Natural Resources Board asked, "Would you support the concept of establishing a Youth Conservation Congress?" on the Spring Hearing questionnaire. The question passed overwhelmingly. With favorable input from the citizens, the NRB asked the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) to proceed with getting a Youth Conservation Congress established that would function under the umbrella of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. The WCC undertook this charge with support from the DNR. The purpose of this initiative is to create a program that will instill a sense of ownership, civic pride, involvement and advocacy in the future stewards of our state's natural resources and sporting heritage. The YCC intends to be a hands-on opportunity to involve youth in natural resource management, citizen based science, and provide them an avenue to engage in policy making.

The Youth Conservation Congress may fulfill independent study requirements or service-learning hours/credits for some schools. Educators may also use this program to complement their course curriculum for interested students.

Objectives: The YCC will teach youth delegates about (1) natural resource management and careers through a variety of service-learning opportunities throughout the year and an all-day "field day" held in each DNR region, (2) the process by which Wisconsin's natural resource policy is determined, and (3) the role and history of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC), a statutorily created citizen advisory group¹. The YCC will (4) provide youth delegates with the opportunity to strengthen valuable transferable skills such as problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership skills through working with other Youth Conservation Congress delegates, WCC delegates, and DNR staff. The YCC will afford participants the opportunity to network with youth from around the state that are interested in natural resources as well as DNR professionals and policy makers.

Activities to meet objectives:

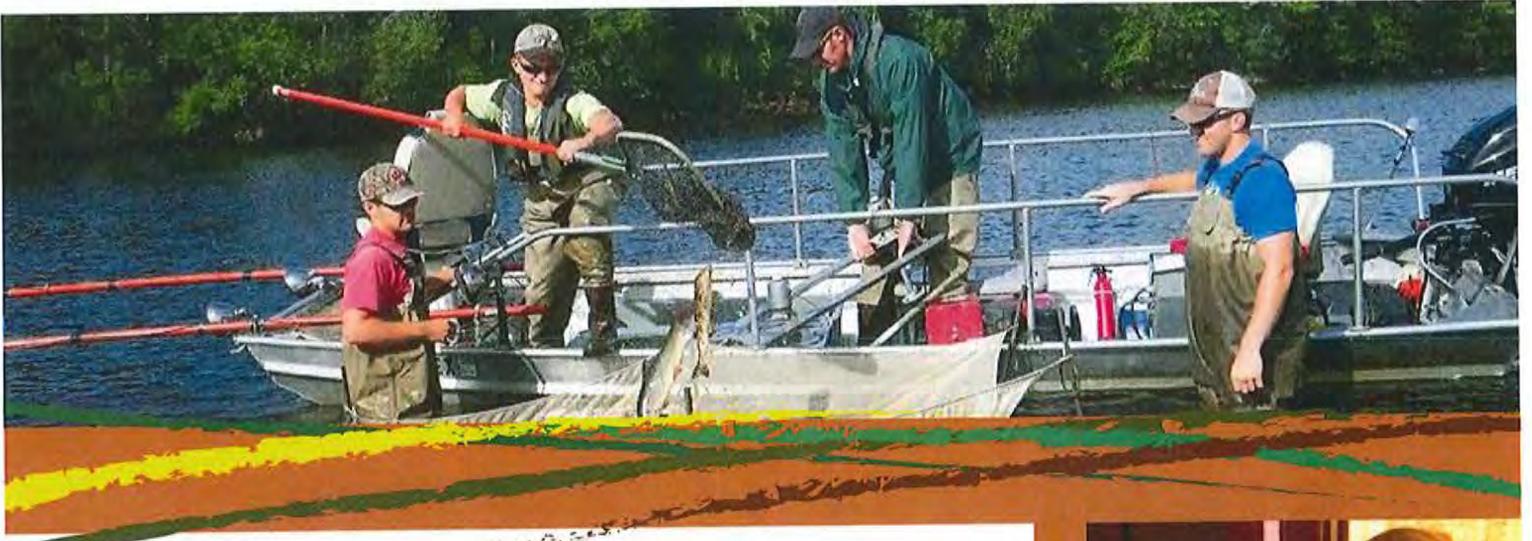
1. The DNR, will host an all-day field day in each DNR region that will expose YCC delegates to the many facets and factors involved in natural resource management, to various career options in natural resource related fields and afford them the opportunity to interact with professionals in

those fields, and enable them the opportunity to participate in typical work done by natural resource professionals. YCC delegates will have the opportunity to work with DNR staff on a wide variety of volunteer opportunities (depending on youth interests, season and opportunities available) such as fish netting or wildlife surveys, tagging or marking fish at a hatchery facility, assisting with habitat assessments, air monitoring, ride-alongs, or water quality sampling. In addition, YCC delegates will receive a complimentary Natural Resources Foundation membership and will have an opportunity to attend Natural Resources Foundation educational field trips at a reduced rate.

- 2-3. Youth delegates will have access to DNR policy makers and will participate in WCC meetings such as the district meeting, advisory committee meetings, the DNR and WCC Spring Hearings, and the WCC annual convention in May. The Youth Congress will afford young adults with an interest in natural resource and sporting heritage related issues a voice in the management of those resources and activities. YCC delegates may work with the Conservation Congress county delegation and district councilors to introduce a resolution to effect change at the annual Spring Hearings, which they can follow through the WCC process.
4. Participants can make an oral and/or poster presentation on their service-learning project at the annual Wisconsin Conservation Congress' convention², thereby strengthening communication and presentation skills. YCC delegates will also participate in break-out sessions at the annual convention that will require the delegates to work in groups to discuss current natural resource issues facing the state and determine potential problem-solving options. Youth will also work together to mold and shape the YCC program moving forward.

¹The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is the only statutory body in the state where citizens elect county delegates to represent their interests and advise the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources on how to manage Wisconsin's natural resources.

²The WCC convention is an annual gathering of the 360 statewide delegates held in May.



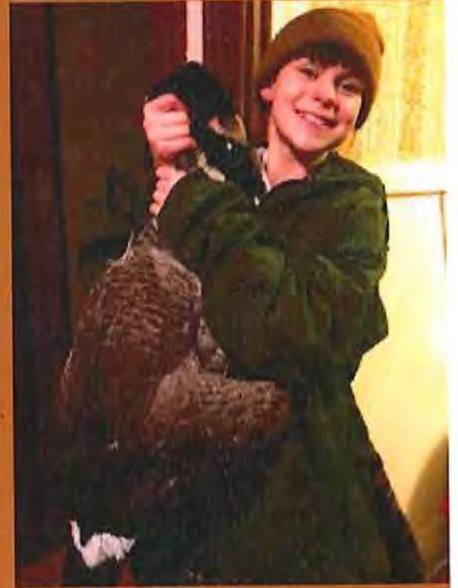
GET INVOLVED

- Enjoy spending time outdoors?
- Want to make a contribution to your community?
- Want your voice to be heard?
- Want to kick-start a career in natural resources?

Join the WISCONSIN YOUTH CONSERVATION CONGRESS

For more info contact Kari Lee-Zimmermann at **608-266-0580**
email Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov

Apply by **XXXXXXXX XX, 20XX**





December 4, 2014

RE: Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress initiative

To whom it may concern:

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are pleased to announce an exciting opportunity for high school-aged students. The **Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress (YCC)** is a new initiative to inspire and inform the next generation of dedicated, ethical, and conservation-minded citizens. The YCC program will afford participants the opportunity to expand and develop important transferable skills while encouraging and preparing them for civic involvement.

Students will be exposed to various aspects of natural resource management and have access to professionals in those fields. They will also gain real world experience through a variety of service-learning opportunities. They will gain an understanding of the process by which Wisconsin's natural resource policy is determined and the role and history of the state's statutorily recognized citizen advisory body, the Conservation Congress. Participants will strengthen valuable skills such as problem-solving, effective communication, teamwork, and leadership competencies through working with other Youth Conservation Congress delegates, WCC delegates, and DNR staff, while building an appreciation for the many facets of resource management.

(I could add a "timeline" of events if we think that would be helpful and once we have that nailed down).

If you know someone interested in participating in and shaping the future of this program, please have them complete the attached application or contact Kari Lee-Zimmermann (DNR/WCC Liaison) at (608) 266-0580 or Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov for more information. The deadline to apply is XXXXXX.

Sincerely,

Kari Lee-Zimmermann



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress



Goal: Effectively engage, educate, and involve youth in the management and protection of our natural resources and foster a conservation ethic through participation on the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress (YCC).

Objectives: Teach youth delegates about:

- natural resource management and careers through a variety of service-learning opportunities throughout the year and an all-day "field day" held in each DNR region
- the process by which Wisconsin's natural resource policy is determined
- the role and history of the Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC), a statutorily created citizen advisory group

Provide youth delegates with the opportunity to:

- strengthen valuable problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership skills through working with other Youth Conservation Congress delegates, WCC delegates, and DNR staff
- network with youth from around the state that are interested in natural resources and DNR professionals and policy makers
- work with the Conservation Congress county delegation and district councilors to introduce a resolution at the annual Spring Hearings, which they can follow through the WCC process
- make an oral and/or poster presentation on their service-learning project at the annual Wisconsin Conservation Congress' convention
- engage in break-out sessions at the annual WCC convention in May to discuss current natural resource issues facing the state

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress is the only statutory body in the state where citizens elect county delegates to represent their interests and advise the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources on how to manage Wisconsin's natural resources. The WCC convention is an annual gathering of the 360 statewide delegates held in May.

For more information on how to participate in the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress, please contact Kari Lee-Zimmermann (DNR/WCC Liaison) at (608) 266-0580 or

Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov.



Youth Conservation Congress Application



Name of Applicant: _____

Date: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

County: _____

High School: _____

Current School Year: _____ - _____

School Address: _____

Grade Level: _____

Will your participation in the YCC be used for independent study, school credit, or volunteer hours?

Yes No If yes, who is your advisor/ teacher? _____

Please indicate your areas of interest:

- Wildlife
- Endangered Resources
- Waste and Remediation
- Fisheries
- Parks and Recreation
- Air Management
- Law Enforcement
- Forestry
- Water Resources
- Other _____

Briefly explain why you are interested in participating in the Youth Conservation Congress. Please include the outdoor activities in which you participate and your involvement in outdoor or conservation organizations: _____

I, _____, affirm that the information provided above is

(Print name of applicant)

accurate and truthful.

I further consent to the reproduction and use of my likeness by the State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources/ Wisconsin Conservation Congress in all manners, including advertising, display, exhibition and art purposes in perpetuity. And I consent to the use of my photograph by any nominee or designee of the State of Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources/ Wisconsin Conservation Congress including any publisher or agency, and such picture of me may be used for all of the aforesaid purposes without any limitation or reservation.

Applicant signature: _____, Date: _____

(Over)

I, _____, authorize the applicant to participate in
(Parent/legal guardian printed name)

Department of Natural Resources/Wisconsin Conservation Congress/Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress meetings and activities. I further consent to the photo release for the applicant as described above.

Parent/legal guardian signature: _____, Date: _____

I, _____, WCC delegate, _____ County, agree to
(WCC Mentor printed name)

mentor/sponsor the above applicant.

WCC delegate signature: _____, Date: _____

Mail application to: Kari Lee-Zimmermann
WCC/DNR Liaison
PO Box 7921
Madison, WI 53707

Deadline to apply: XXXXXXXX



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress



Mentoring Program

Activity Consent Form for Parent/Legal Guardian and WCC Mentor

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Participant:

First Name, Middle Initial, Last Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip Code _____
 Birth date (month/day/year) ____ / ____ / ____ Age _____

Dates and locations of meetings YCC participant may attend with WCC mentor/sponsor:

WCC Mentor/Sponsor Contact Information:

First and Last Name _____
 Address _____
 City, State, Zip Code _____
 Telephone Number _____
 Relationship to WYCC participant _____

Parent/Legal Guardian Emergency Contact Information:

_____ has indicated an interest in participating in the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress. Participation in the YCC is being done with the goal of developing and mentoring future conservation leaders. The parent and/or legal guardian (signed below) has given their permission for the minor to attend and participate in WCC functions such as study committee meetings, the Annual Convention, Spring Hearings, district meetings, and other WCC functions listed above. The minor will be accompanied by the WCC member, (signed below), who will act as his/ her mentor/sponsor throughout the YCC participant's term.

The parent and/or legal guardian understands that the above named minor may be offered the opportunity to participate in conservation-related activities with Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources staff. Activities may include, but are not limited to, field days, fish netting or wildlife surveys, tagging or marking fish at a hatchery facility, assisting with habitat assessments, and boating activities associated with fisheries management. The parent/legal guardian understands that such activities may involve physical activity and may take place outdoors. The parent/legal guardian understands the risks involved with participation and has given their permission for the minor to participate in such activities.

The parent/legal guardian agrees to assume full responsibility for the minor's participation in any such activities. The parent/legal guardian hereby agrees to release, hold harmless, and waive any and all claims against the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, its employees and agents, and the Wisconsin Conservation Congress and its delegates for any bodily injury, accident, illness, death, loss or damage to personal property, or other claims related to the minor's participation in such activities.

Parent/Legal Guardian Printed Name _____
Parent/Legal Guardian Signature _____ **Date** _____

I understand & agree to abide by all WCC Code of Procedures & be an active participant.

Youth WCC Participant Printed Name _____
Youth WCC Participant Signature _____ **Date** _____