



Robert Bohmann, Chair
1105 Melvin Avenue
Racine, WI 53402
262-498-4605

Larry Bonde, Vice-Chair
12211 Marken Road
Kiel, WI 53042
920-693-8449

Lee Fahrney, Secretary
7860 McKena Road
Hollendale, WI 53544
608-967-2208

PRESS RELEASE

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CONTACT: Rob Bohmann, 608-235-5825
Kari Lee-Zimmermann, 608-266-0580

Conservation Congress Recognizes Leadership at All Levels at their Annual Convention

Manitowoc, Wis. – The Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognized and thanked several individuals and groups for their leadership roles in conservation. Awards were presented to recipients at the Friday evening banquet at the 78th annual Conservation Congress convention in Manitowoc, May 10-12.

The two-day affair brought together the 360-member delegation to discuss current issues relating to hunting, fishing, trapping, and resource management in Wisconsin. While there, they also took time out of a packed agenda to acknowledge others making a difference to further Wisconsin's conservation legacy.

DNR Staff

This year, as in the past, the Congress recognized a number of DNR employees for their outstanding service and dedication to Wisconsin's natural resources. **Kent Van Horn**, received the **2011 Wildlife Biologist of the Year Award** for his exceptional achievements in wildlife management, his dedication to enhancing opportunities for waterfowl hunters, and his commitment to working cooperatively with the citizens of Wisconsin. Retired fisheries supervisor **Paul Peeters** received the **2011 Fisheries Biologist of the Year Award** for his exceptional leadership and dedication to improving Wisconsin's world-class Lake Michigan fishery. **Darrell Waldera**, Training Director for the DNR Bureau of Law Enforcement, was recognized as the WCC's **2011 Law Enforcement Officer of the Year** for his dedication to the protection of Wisconsin's citizens and natural resources and his commitment to providing exceptional law enforcement training to warden recruits. And **Warden Mike Nice**, Richland County, was honored as **2011 Waterfowl Officer of the Year** for his outstanding efforts in waterfowl education and wetland protection.

Organizations

The **Outstanding Local Conservation Club of the Year Award** went to the **Beaver Dam Conservationists** and the **Statewide Organization of the Year** was the **Milwaukee School of Engineering Ducks Unlimited**. Both organizations were recognized for their impressive conservation

As established by Wisconsin State Statutes, the Wisconsin Conservation Congress is officially recognized as the only natural resources advisory body in the state where citizens elect delegates to represent their interests on natural resources issues on a local and statewide level to the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources. Their mission is to represent the citizens of Wisconsin by working with the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources to effectively manage Wisconsin's greatest asset, our abundant natural resources, for present and future generations to enjoy.

accomplishments last year. These organizations were chosen based on their efforts in the areas of conservation, habitat enhancement, recreational opportunities, fundraising, and service projects.

Individuals

The **2011 Educator of the Year Award** was received by a very deserving **Cathy Chybowski**, a retired Kettle Moraine High School Biology and Advanced Placement Environmental Studies teacher, who tirelessly engaged her students in conservation efforts through “work parties” at LuLu Lake Preserve and Lapham Peak State Natural Area and who has made a lasting impression many young people. Mrs. Chybowski is also an active volunteer with The Nature Conservancy.

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress also honored our **Congress Delegate of the Year, Dale Maas**, Dodge County for his exceptional service to the citizens of this state, his unwavering dedication to conservation and for selflessly giving of his time and knowledge. Dale is a driving force of the successful Outdoor Education Expo held annually in Dodge County. Since 2006 this hands-on event has brought the classroom to life for more than 25,000 kids, providing a free, fun outdoor experience and inspiring children to become active outdoor enthusiasts. The success of this event is due in large part to Dale’s behind the scenes work. The WCC also gratefully acknowledged the dedication of our delegates by handing out our years of service certificates and pins to those delegates who have served the congress for 15, 20, 25, 30 and over 35 years.

In addition, awards recognizing **Bradley Swenson, Clarence Uhren, and Joe Janak** were given for their efforts to mentor first-time bear hunters. **Dave and Gary Mabie**, who continue to mentor the winner of the WCC Learn to Hunt Bear tag, were also recognized for their ongoing dedication to passing on our outdoor heritage. And **Maurice Amundson, Mitchel Kirchmeyer, and Richard Kirchmeyer** were recognized for generously transferring a 2011 bear permit to a first time hunter.

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