

Wisconsin Conservation Congress' Youth Conservation Congress (YCC) Initiative

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the Wisconsin Conservation Congress?

Created in 1934, the Conservation Congress is the only statutorily-created citizen advisory body to the Natural Resources Board (NRB). Citizens elect delegates to represent their county interests and advise the Natural Resources Board and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on the management of Wisconsin's natural resources.

2. What is the Youth Conservation Congress Initiative?

The goal of the program is to 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). The YCC purposes to give young people under the age of 18 a voice and 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.

3. What do Youth Congress delegates get to do?

YCC delegates will have the opportunity to participate in a DNR sponsored regional field day that will allow them to interact with professionals in their fields of interest. YCC delegates will also be able to preferentially 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 be able to attend Natural Resources Foundation educational field trips at a reduced rate. YCC delegates will attend Conservation Congress meetings with their mentor and participate in policy making processes.

4. What are the benefits of participating?

YCC delegates will be exposed to various career options in natural resource related fields and will also be able to participate in typical work done by natural resource professionals. Participants can strengthen valuable problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and leadership skills through working with other Youth Conservation Congress delegates, Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) delegates, and DNR staff. This program will offer youth opportunities to strengthen core competencies sought by employers and will provide resume building experiences. Youth delegates will also work together to mold and shape the YCC program moving forward. The Youth Conservation Congress may fulfill independent study requirements or service-learning hours/credits for some schools.

5. What is required of me as a Youth Conservation Congress delegate?

YCC delegates will be expected to attend and participate in WCC meetings including two district meetings per year, the Spring Hearings and the annual convention. In addition, there will be an all-day field day held in each region of the state in March.

6. What is the time commitment?

The district meetings and spring hearings are typically held on weekday evenings, while the annual convention, DNR/WCC field day, and any advisory committee meetings will be full day commitments. The time commitment for service learning activities will vary depending on the opportunity.

7. When will the YCC activities take place?

YCC activities and service learning opportunities will take place throughout the year, but the majority of the time commitment will be in the spring. The regional field days and WCC district meetings will both take place in March, the Spring Hearings are the second Monday in April, and the WCC's annual convention is in May.

8. How do I find a WCC mentor?

YCC applicants can initiate contact with the WCC delegates in their county to find a mentor, or the Wisconsin Conservation Congress also has a committee that will work with you to find a mentor within the five-person delegation in your county.

9. How do I apply for the YCC?

The YCC application and consent form can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/About/WCC/ycc.html>.

10. Is there a cost to participate?

There is no cost to participate in the YCC program outside of the inherent costs to travel to the meetings, field days, and service learning opportunities.

11. Is there a deadline to apply?

Applications for the program are accepted and reviewed on an ongoing basis.

12. Who can apply to participate in the YCC?

There are no specific age requirements except that youth must be under the age of 18. The program is typically geared toward youth that are of high school age.

13. Can more than one student from my school participate?

Yes, absolutely!

14. How do I get independent study credit for participating in the YCC?

Youth should work with their school to determine if this program will fulfill the requirements for independent study credit.