

2012 IAN | ICEC

Conservation & Environmental Education Excellence Awards Program

Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award

Mark Wagner for Lifetime Achievement in EE Excellence and Leadership

Our lives are documented by numbers. How old we are, how many years we have been married or worked at a job. This year's winner of the Aldo Leopold Award for a Lifetime Achievement in Environmental Education has some pretty impressive numbers. He has worked in the environmental field for 40 years, 27 of those years with the Jasper County Conservation Board and 34 consecutive years as a hunter education instructor. As a founding member of the Iowa Association of Naturalists he has helped define what environmental education is within the state and continues his legacy as an interpreter at the National Mississippi River Museum & Aquarium in Dubuque, Iowa. Mark Wagner exemplifies what it means to be a naturalist, land steward and conservationist. He is a leader in environmental education in Iowa and is the 2012 award recipient of the Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award for a Lifetime of Achievement in EE.

Outstanding County Conservation board EE Program (2 or less interpreters)

Mahaska County Conservation

This award commends excellence in County Conservation Board's environmental education program of counties with two or less interpreters. In 2012, Mahaska County Conservation programs reached over 18,000 people with an EE budget of only \$7,227. Programs offered included a youth outdoor field day, live healthy hikes, day camps, fishing programs, a maple syrup festival, landowner workshops, and movies on the barn. Many of the programs were enhanced by partnerships with other agencies and organizations. The success of the environmental education program is evident by the participation of the people in Mahaska County.

Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award

For Outstanding Efforts by an Environmental Educator

Kate Zimmerman

Kate Zimmerman, Director of the Ringgold County Conservation Board (RCCB), has been awarded the Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award. When she hired in 2010 there was no environmental education programming in place. Kate immediately began conducting school, public and civic group programs. In the past year alone, she has reached over 2500 people through her educational efforts. Kate has also worked hard to expand public awareness on the prairie chickens found in her county by working with the Iowa DNR and developing educational signage at the Kellerton Bird Conservation Area.

“Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award

For Outstanding EE Program or Event which Informs and Educates the General Public

Driftless Safari, Winneshiek CCB

“Driftless Safari” began in 2011. That year 850 individuals registered to travel across Winneshiek County in search of 20 rubbing posts (wooden posts with reverse-embossed tiles attached). Each participant received a free safari map, guidebook, bag, and crayons with directions to each location and clues to find rubbing posts. At the end of the summer 90 participants had completed the safari. The program had succeeded in getting people outside and exploring Winneshiek County and the natural/cultural resources it has to offer. In 2012 the program continued with over 1,000 individuals registered to participate in the safari. Energized by Winneshiek's success,

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Allamakee and Clayton CCBs also began a safari program. Congratulations to WCCB for creating such a great program and for receiving the 2012 “Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award for Outstanding EE Program or Event.

Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award

For Outstanding Efforts to Educate About Preservation, Land Management, or Natural Resource Conservation

Gary Siegwarth

Many individuals have been impacted this year’s Ada Hayden Conservation Award winner. His passion for natural resource conservation is apparent whether he is teaching about trout, soil erosion or floating down the Turkey River. Gary has spent the last two decades inspiring others to preserve the land through stewardship and sound land management practices. To ensure these values are continued by future generations, Gary partners with teachers and county conservation boards; demonstrating to local youth how to burn prairies, clean up rivers and plant trees. Don Anderson had this to say about Gary Siegwarth, “*He has a great connection with high school kids and has done a lot to get young people involved in the outdoors. I honestly believe that my students appreciate our streams, public lands, and wildlife more after working with Gary.*” Congratulations to Gary Siegwarth for inspiring others and receiving the 2012 Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award.

Frederic Leopold Environmental Education Award

For outstanding EE efforts by Business, Industry, or Labor

Jean Eells

The Frederic Leopold Environmental Education Award is given to a business, industry, or labor for outstanding effort in the conservation field. This year’s award goes to Jean Eells of E Resources Group. E resources was founded in 1998 by Jean Eells and Wendy Zohrer. E Resources Group has worked at integrating environmental education and interpretation into natural resources programs, land management, and agricultural conservation beyond the contracted business agreement. Jean has networked to bring together multiple organizations and individuals to better benefit conservation practices and service to the community. She has also advised the IAN & ICEC on projects. Since 2003 Jean has volunteered on the State Soil Conservation Committee and is currently the Vice Chair. Jean has provided leadership to the conservation community and truly lived out her conservation ethic through her projects with E Resources Group.

Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award

For an Outstanding EE Program for Youth or Conducted by Youth (Preschool-Grade 12)

Palo Alto Ducks Unlimited

For the past 16 years the Palo Alto Ducks Unlimited Chapter has sponsored an event called, “Greenwings Youth Program”. Partnering with Palo Alto County Conservation, they help nearly 100 children each year learn more about Iowa wetland habitats and the recreational opportunities. The day includes a variety of activities including duck calling, duck identification, fishing, skinning, and wood duck house construction. In a county with a population of less than 10,000 residents, this annual program makes a huge splash with local youth. Congratulations to the Palo Alto Ducks Unlimited Chapter for receiving the 2012 Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award.

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Outstanding Interpretative Print Media

Polk County Conservation

Most county conservation boards have newsletters; however not many are fifteen pages long and in full color! “Nature News” published by Polk County Conservation keeps residents informed on county wide environmental issues and improvements. It is fun to read and helps educate the public on upcoming activities such as the bond referendum that passed in November 2012. Congratulations to the staff of Polk County Conservation in producing such a high quality newsletter and receiving the 2012 Outstanding Interpretative Print Media Award.