

Aldo Leopold Environmental Education Award

For Lifetime Achievement in EE Excellence and Leadership

Miriam Patton

Miriam Patton was the second Naturalist for the Palo Alto County Conservation Board where she has been educating youth and adults for 31 years now. She has provided countless programs to thousands of individuals through the years. Quality environmental education programs are a reflection of the tremendous support she has received over the years from board members, staff and the public. The list of her accomplishments are numerous. Including her 25 year dedication as Chair to the Iowa Association of Naturalists Professional Development Program. Miriam also seeks out new members of IAN to introduce them to current members, creating networking opportunities. Thank you Miriam for your lifetime dedication to environmental education and to IAN.



Bohumil Shimek Environmental Educator Award

For Outstanding Efforts by an Environmental Educator

Becky Horton

Becky Horton was nominated for her “Zombie Archery Class,” which has been held for the last two years at the Wapsi Environmental Education Center. It ties in well with their Halloween hike, which happens the same day. Participants young and old learn how to shoot National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) equipment, archery safety, and then shoot at some great targets. Along the artwork for the targets (by Emily Santiago) puts a new spin on archery, and everyone likes Zombies! They have had at least 20 to 30 visitors (family groups) each time the event has been held, and it will be held again next year.



Chris Holt Youth Environmental Education Award

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

Justin Kinney

There is a new high school physical education program in Ridge View High School. Justin Kinney is the teacher that implements a wide variety of outdoor activities for his senior class. Students receive a Hunter Safety Education Certificate, firearm handling and training, archery, kayaking, fur harvesting, tomahawking and knifing, orienteering, and wild game processing. Students clean and cook a variety of wild game, including venison, dove, and fish. A special feature of the program, and favorite of students, is air rifle shooting. The course culminates in a six day expedition to the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, where the students will practice their skills in water safety, navigation, fishing, fire starting, and basic survival. This class takes a lot of planning, networking, and financial contributions. It is offered free of charge to students.



“Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award

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

Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group

The Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group is this year’s winner of the “Ding” Darling Environmental Education Award. The Quad City Pollinator Conference Planning Group consists of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Nahant Marsh Education Center, Rock Island County Soil & Water Conservation District, and Scott County Conservation Board. The Quad Cities Pollinator Conference was first held in 2015 to address both causes and solutions to the problem of disappearing pollinators in the Midwest. This year, 38 businesses and organizations sponsored the event, which saw over 275 people in attendance on Thursday and 120 on Friday for the pollinator habitat tours. Attendees came from 11 states: Iowa, Illinois, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin. A video contest was held for middle and high school students, asking them to answer the question, “Why are pollinators important?” Nearly 70 submissions were received. The grand-prize winner, Shraesht Dacha, from Bettendorf Middle School, was awarded \$1,000 for his school to fund pollinator projects and activities. Both of the runner-up awardees, Vincent Freiburg from Rock Island High School, and Andrew Ericksen and Isaac Blandin from St. Joseph Catholic School, received \$500 for each of their schools. Additionally, the “Busy Bee” award was presented to Bettendorf Middle School teacher, Kevin Roling, who showed great initiative towards helping pollinators; having his entire class work on creating videos. Kevin was awarded a seed pack from Cardno, valued at \$100.



Sylvan Runkel Environmental Education School Award

For Outstanding Whole-School EE Program

Nevada Central Elementary Multi-Age Teachers and the Story County Conservation

The Nevada Central Elementary Multi-Age Teachers and the Story County Conservation have a long history together. Each year efforts are made to coordinate the curriculum with the art teacher, media specialist, and music teachers. Students are organized into classes of 20-25 students; ages six to nine and eight to 11 years old. This past year, Story County Conservation, along with Nevada's ten multi-age classrooms and teachers, planted a pollinator garden. Leading up to the planting, a Naturalist went in and educated the students about pollinators and their importance. During the winter, a Naturalist and an educator from Neal Smith Wildlife Refuge brought in small greenhouses for the classrooms and the students planted prairie seeds. Then in May, all 240 students helped to plant the pollinator garden. The pollinator garden is located on church grounds, next to sports fields a few blocks from the school. A sign was placed explaining the project and students also created QR Codes for some of the different plants. Many students also said on an evaluation that they helped their parents start a new garden at home, or helped in an existing garden they had. As this information is reinforced each year the garden is used, it will continue to benefit the community.

Ada Hayden Conservation Education Award

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

Polk County Conservation

The Polk County Conservation received a Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) - Conservation Education Program grant to work with 10 religious organizations to install native pollinator gardens at their place of worship. In addition to providing the garden designs and native plants, they educated congregations about pollinators and steps they could take at home to help pollinators. Congregations were chosen as the target audience because they have land to provide habitat for pollinators and they care about what happens at their place of worship. Three different pollinator education programs were created for adults, teens, and younger kids to focus on who pollinators are, why they are important, and what steps they can take to help pollinators. Polk County Conservation conducted 16 pollinator education programs with 12 congregations for a total of 380 people. After the education programs, the pollinator gardens were prepped and planted by congregation members in the months of May and June. Each pollinator garden was approximately 300 square feet and included over 200 plants. There are 18 different species of native perennial plants that will provide a variety of blooms from spring until fall, so there is always a nectar and food source for pollinators. Polk County Conservation will continue to be in contact with each congregation to provide future education programs or support for their native pollinator garden.



Lincoln Heights Lutheran congregation members planting their pollinator garden



The 18"x24" interpretative sign placed at each pollinator garden

Outstanding Environmental Education Program (2 or less full-time equivalent naturalists)

For Excellence in EE Programming by an Agency or Institution

Henry County Conservation

Henry County Conservation Environmental Education Program has come a long ways over the years. In 2004 they had 400 residents participating in programs. In January of 2005, a Naturalist, Cari Nicely, was hired and participation numbers increased to 1,520. The program has continued to grow each year and through November 23, 2016, 15,446 people have taken part in 591 environmental education programs provided by the Henry County Conservation Department's Naturalist and Ranger-Naturalist. The environmental education budget is \$3,750.00 annually. Henry Counties EE program as even improved New London fourth grade Iowa Assessment in Science by 14 percent! Cari has a wide variety of programs ranging from a mentoring program with Mount Pleasant High School to a two day pioneer field trip event for all fifth graders in the county!

Outstanding Environmental Education Program (3 or more full-time equivalent naturalists)

For Excellence in EE Programming by an Agency or Institution

Nahant Marsh Education Center

Founded in 2000, Nahant Marsh is a unique urban wetland that offers the community recreational, educational, volunteer, and research experiences. The educational staff at Nahant Marsh has grown over the last several years to meet the needs of the community- from one Naturalist in 2010 to 4 full-time and 1 part-time Naturalist today. The education staff at Nahant Marsh has been able to significantly increase their impact on the community over the last several years. In 2012, Nahant Marsh's educational program served around 7,500 people. This year, they have already served around 17,000 people though on-site and outreach programs. The Nahant Education staff has been instrumental in creating new educational opportunities for people of all ages. The staff works closely with several urban schools and after-school programs in the Quad City area, providing students with what is usually their first experience in nature. These programs have introduced a new audience of people to Nahant Marsh, and more importantly, to Iowa's ecosystems and all they have to offer.

Outstanding Volunteer

Kaleb Kaster

Kaleb Kaster is a high school student in Harlan and has been volunteering his time for the past two years for Shelby County Conservation. Growing up he attended Christina Roelofs summer camps every year until he was too old to attend. Once he was too old to attend, Kaleb volunteered his time to assist with the summer camps. He has even turned down paying jobs to help Christina with her camps. Kaleb has also assisted with public canoeing programs and takes time to find and donate night crawlers to help feed the Christina's education animals. Kaleb has been such a wonderful volunteer, he will be Christina's summer help in 2017.

Outstanding Interpretative Print Media

E Resources Group, Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), and Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University.

E Resources Group, Women Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN), and Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication at Iowa State University have worked closely together to create 10 publications with women land owners being their target audience. Their goal was to produce publications to successfully get conservation information in women's hands. Since 2007, these three groups have held numerous meetings for women land owners across 10 states to discover what this audience wanted to know about conservation. Topics for the meetings spanned a range of conservation topics, such as soil health, hunting and wildlife, the Farm Bill programs, and wetlands. Their 10 publications of interpretive brochures and booklets occurred at the direction of Jean Eells of E Resources Group, with grant funding to WFAN through a variety of sources and communication expertise from Iowa State graduate students supervised by Michael Dahlstrom of Greenlee School of Journalism and Communication.

