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## MEDIA RELEASE

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### **Conservation Congress Recognizes Leadership at All Levels at their Annual Convention**

Madison, Wis. – The Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognized several individuals and groups for their leadership roles in conservation. The awards were presented to recipients during the Friday evening banquet at the 82<sup>nd</sup> annual Conservation Congress convention in Manitowoc, May 13-14.

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

#### **DNR Staff**

Again this year the Congress singled out a number of Department of Natural Resources employees to recognize for their outstanding service. **Mike Zeckmeister**, wildlife biologist, was presented with the wildlife award for his commitment to deer and elk management and community outreach in northeast Wisconsin. Fisheries biologist **Max Wolter** received the fisheries award for his dedication and excellent work on the panfish management plan, as well as habitat management in the Sawyer County area. **Jesse Ashton** (Polk County) was honored as the Law Enforcement Officer of the Year for his outstanding law enforcement efforts, well-rounded program, and work within his community including organizing hunts for people with disabilities and a deer hunt for terminally-ill youth. Rounding out the DNR staff awards was Waterfowl Officer of the Year presented by the WCC Migratory Committee. Mike Neal (Door County) was selected to receive this distinction for his efforts in waterfowl education, wetlands protection, youth involvement, habitat improvement, and waterfowl enforcement.

#### **Organizations**

The **Wisconsin Trappers Association** was recognized as the **2015 Statewide Conservation Organization of the Year** for their ceaseless efforts in providing training, outreach to youth, public education, and advocacy for trapping. There were two **2015 Outstanding Local Organization** awards

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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.

given this year: the **Apostle Islands Sportfishermen's Association** & the **Outagamie Conservation Club**. Both organizations were recognized for impressive conservation accomplishments this past year. These two local organizations were chosen based on their efforts in the areas of conservation, education and safety, recreational opportunities, fundraising, and service projects.

### **Individuals**

The **2015 Educator of the Year Award** went to **Jim Heffner** of Eagle River for his extensive efforts to educate and engage youth and adults as a certified Hunter Safety Instructor and certified Fishing Angling Instructor. Jim has been sharing his knowledge and passion for the outdoors for well over 20 years.

**Doug Burrows** from Eau Claire County has been selected as the recipient of the WCC's **David A. Ladd Delegate of the Year Award**. Doug has been on the Congress for 8 years and is very active in the Congress and his community. Beyond the role and responsibilities of being a local county delegate, Doug also finds time to be the secretary of the WCC Outreach & Public Relations Committee, represent the WCC on the DNR Pheasant Committee, be President of the Chippewa Valley Chapter of Pheasants Forever, serve on an advisory committee to the Pheasants Forever's National Board of Directors to revise their Charter Agreement, be president of the Eau Claire Rod and Gun Club, and be a member of the Eau Claire County Stewardship Program Subcommittee.

The WCC also inducted **Dick Koerner**, Winnebago County, to the **Wisconsin Conservation Congress Hall of Fame**. Dick has been a member of the WCC since 1966 and in that time has served the Congress and citizens of Wisconsin exceptionally well in many different roles including: Winnebago County Chair, District 7 Executive Councilor, Chair of the Migratory Committee, Secretary of the Rules and Resolutions Committee, and representative of the WCC on the DNR Sturgeon Advisory Committee and Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee. A true conservationist, Dick has also been active outside the WCC as a member of the Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, Wisconsin Bowhunters Association, Twin City Rod & Gun Club, Crooked Lake Sportsman's Club, Shadows on the Wolf, Walleyes for Tomorrow, Paynes Point Hook & Spear Club, and as a charter member of the Winnegamie Wetland Chapter of Ducks Unlimited. Dick's persona, insights, and zeal for the outdoors are greatly valued.

The Congress also ushered in a new era in the organization's leadership as **Rob Bohmann** stepped down as chair and **Larry Bonde** was elected to lead the Conservation Congress. Rob has served the past five years as chair of the independent advisory body to the Natural Resources Board, but did not run for a sixth term. Bohmann was recognized by the Congress for his years of leadership at the annual convention and was recognized by the Natural Resources Board at their April meeting.

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