

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

October 2023

YCC delegates and mentors,

It always seems like there is a sense of urgency in autumn. We try to pack so much into this season of transition, and I am often torn between trying to live in the moment while simultaneously preparing for winter.

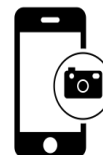
Many of these things we are trying to pack in include: hunting, visiting apple orchards, fall fishing, keeping on top of school homework, participating in or attending sporting events, garden harvests, and family time.

In between all of the rush of autumn urgency, make sure to find some time to slow down and take it all in. Find a minute to just appreciate the beauty of this season. Go on a slow hike, sit still and breathe in the smells of fall, or photograph the changing scenery.

The [WI Natural Resources Magazine](#) features an article on some great fall hikes around Wisconsin. Invite friends or family to explore a new trail with you. Take time to appreciate this fleeting season for what it is, slow down, and savor being in the moment.

~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

We want to feature YCC delegates in our monthly newsletters. Email or text outdoor pictures of yourself to:
kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov
or 715.299.0925



Visit the [WCC Facebook site](#) to see what's new



YCC Delegates in Action



Brody, YCC delegate from Racine Co. was excited to get out for the youth duck hunt. He had a successful day!



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson Co. (pictured far right) shot trap at the Beaver Dam Conservationists breast cancer awareness fundraiser. She is pictured with brother, Gavin (YCC alumni), Brie, and dad, Lowell (WCC delegate and mentor).



Shawn, YCC delegate from Racine Co. caught this 30 pound flathead catfish in the Rock River in Janesville.



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

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YCC Coordinator: Kyle Zenz (715) 299-0925 / kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov

WCC Liaison: Kari Lee-Zimmermann (608) 266-0580 / Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov

Welcome

We are excited to welcome new delegates to the YCC:

Zachary, Fond du Lac County

Jack, Dodge County



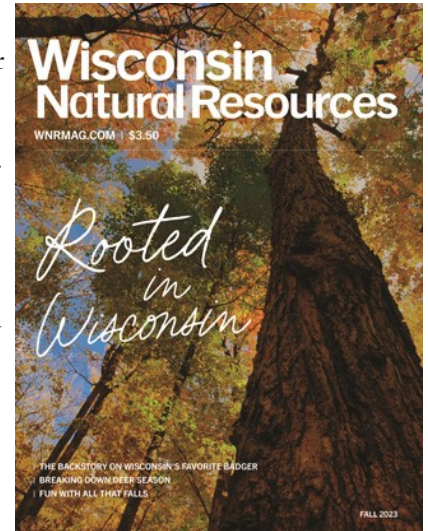
Wisconsin Natural Resources Magazine - Fall 2023

The latest issue celebrates all the autumn traditions “Rooted in Wisconsin,” with stories offering a little something for everyone around the state. Within the pages, you’ll discover a dive into Wisconsin’s thriving forest products industry. Additionally, learn more about an inclusive outdoor education space in Racine County, a look at the First Capitol Historic Site, a salute to the Northwoods and a guide for hiking trails you’ll surely fall for.

Explore the ghosts of port towns past with tales of thriving Lake Michigan coastal communities that vanished a century ago. Private well owners will find everything they need to know to keep their water supply safe. In the Kids Corner, prepare for a classic game of tic-tac-toe while learning about acorns, pine cones and growing trees. Plus, enjoy a special highlight on everyone’s favorite badger, Bucky.

Find these stories and so much more in the [fall issue of Wisconsin Natural Resources magazine](#).

Subscribe now to receive four issues of the *Wisconsin Natural Resources* print edition for \$8.97. Call 1-800-678-9472 or subscribe online at wnrmag.com.



YCC MENTORED WATERFOWL HUNT

October 21-22

Sandhill Wildlife Area, Babcock

All YCC delegates are invited to participate in a mentored waterfowl hunt. New and experienced hunters are encouraged to attend. Even if you aren't interested in waterfowl hunting, you are welcome to participate and learn about the process.

Overnight accommodations are available in the dormitory at Sandhill.

Saturday, October 21

1:00 - Learn about waterfowl hunting

3:30 - Head out to flowages to hunt*

6:30 - Potluck dinner

7:30 - Basic gun cleaning demonstration

8:30 - Campfire s'mores

Sunday, October 22

Early morning - possible waterfowl hunt*

9:00 - upland bird hunt, woodcock, grouse

12:00 - wrap up and head home

* Waterfowl hunting will be dependent on water levels in the flowages.

This hunt will be held in conjunction with the YCC Oversight Committee Meeting on Saturday, October 21st.



YCC OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

October 21, 9:30-2:00

[Sandhill Wildlife Area](#), Babcock

The YCC Oversight Committee will meet to discuss business and plan programs for the upcoming year. All YCC delegates are invited to join the meeting. Ideas and input are always welcome! [View agenda and details](#).

BECOME A JUNIOR VOLUNTEER INSTRUCTOR



Have you completed DNR safety courses? Would you like to help instruct classes?

The Junior Instructor program is a great way for youth to get involved, plus gain skills like public speaking and confidence.

Hours put into the program may also meet volunteer hour requirements that some schools require to graduate.

A Junior Volunteer Instructor needs to be between the ages of 12 and 17 and have successfully completed a safety course within the designated education program. The Junior Volunteer Instructor needs to be sponsored by a local certified instructor. The junior volunteer instructor and sponsor complete the junior volunteer instructor application and submit it to their local DNR Outdoor Skills Trainer (OST). Junior volunteer instructors can assist the instructor in the program, but cannot instruct on their own. The years that a junior volunteer instructor participates count toward full instructor certification, and will eventually count towards instructor years of service. When a junior instructor turns 18 years of age they need to complete the certification process forms and consult with their local OST.

Application for Junior Volunteer Instructor: <https://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/forms/8500/8500-143.pdf>



Olivia, YCC delegate from Chippewa Co. recently became a Junior Volunteer Instructor. She is pictured with her mentor, Don Dukerschein.

SEEKING HUNTER EDUCATION INSTRUCTORS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is seeking volunteers passionate about promoting safe, responsible and ethical hunting practices to serve as certified hunter education instructors. Volunteer opportunities are available in all parts of the state.

Since the program's creation in 1967, more than 20,000 volunteer instructors have trained and certified more than one million hunters across Wisconsin. These efforts have directly contributed to a significant decrease in hunting-related incidents.

The continued dedication and exceptional quality of volunteer instructors have been the primary reasons for the program's success.

Becoming a volunteer instructor is a great way to give back to local communities and have a part in shaping the next crop of Wisconsin hunters.

"As a volunteer instructor, I get to give back to a sport that I truly love by training students to be safe for themselves, fellow hunters and their environment," said Rick Heisler, a volunteer instructor for more than 40 years and the hunter education program's 2022 Instructor of the Year. "Teaching these courses has become a vital part of my life."

There are two ways to become a certified volunteer hunter education instructor. Interested volunteers can either serve as an apprentice under a sponsoring instructor for at least two complete courses or attend a certification training session hosted by a DNR Outdoor Skills Trainer.

Once certified, the DNR provides volunteer instructors with all the materials and equipment required to teach a hunter education course. Instructors must only teach one class every three years to remain certified, although many teach more.

For more information about becoming a volunteer instructor or applying, [visit the DNR's website](#).



YCC INDIVIDUAL FOCUS OPPORTUNITY

What: Each YCC delegate will identify a conservation topic or outdoor skill they would like to learn more about. This will be a self-driven focus project, supported by the YCC coordinator and YCC mentors. The YCC Oversight Committee will receive updates on projects throughout the year. This project should reflect interests, or a topic/field each YCC delegate wants to explore further.

Why: Youth participating in the YCC focus opportunity will gain valuable knowledge related to natural resource management, advocacy, leadership, and outdoor skills.

How: YCC delegates will work with the YCC Coordinator to develop a plan to:

- Identify learning goals and potential projects
- Connect with partners and identify timeline
- Share experience

Following initial plan development, the YCC coordinator will assist youth in developing a timeline and connect youth with DNR staff and other partners. All projects will be unique, and the time commitment for each project will vary based on the interest and availability of each YCC delegate.

YCC delegates may check with their school district to see if an independent credit option exists for this type of focus project. (All school districts have unique requirements for independent study projects)

When: The project timeline will run from September 1st through August 31st each year.

September through November – Identify a learning goal and submit a proposal to the YCC Coordinator.

December through April – YCC delegates will gather information, meet with partners, complete hands on learning activities, participate in field days, and ultimately plan a virtual, written or in person skill sharing opportunity to present to YCC peers.

May – Present final projects/learning at the WCC Convention. Presentations can be a poster, photo display or video.



Think about why you joined the YCC...

This individual focus opportunity is designed to help guide you as you explore your conservation interests and set a yearly learning goal. You will be supported in this focus opportunity by mentors, partners and the YCC Coordinator.

YCC Upcoming Opportunities

OCTOBER

- Oct. 7-8 - [Youth Deer Hunt](#).
- Oct. 11 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Waterfowl Hunting overview, Todd Schaller, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association.
- Oct. 21 - YCC Oversight Committee meeting at Sandhill Wildlife Area.
- Oct. 21-22 - YCC mentored hunt program at Sandhill Wildlife Area.

NOVEMBER

- Nov. 8 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Topic to be determined.
- Nov. 18 - 26 - Wisconsin gun-deer season.

DECEMBER

- Dec 13 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about Sturgeon Spearfishing in Wisconsin, Margaret Stadig, WDNR.

JANUARY

- Jan. 10 - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about taxidermy.
- Jan. 21 - Tentative YCC ice fishing event.
- Jan. 21-22 - Free fishing weekend in Wisconsin.

WANNA GO HUNTING?

DNR HUNTING WEBINAR SERIES

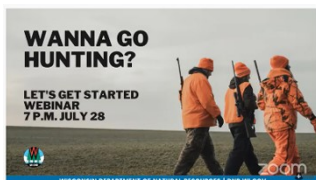
The series is designed for those interested in learning about hunting, fishing and trapping. Each episode features guest speakers

sharing their experiences getting started with hunting and includes discussions addressing common challenges faced by those new to hunting, fishing or trapping.

Wanna Go Hunting Series:

- [Let's Get Started!](#) - [What Can We Hunt?](#) - [Where Can We Hunt?](#) - [Where can we practice shooting?](#) - [Who Can We Learn From?](#)

Follow the [DNR YouTube](#) channel to learn more.



YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING -

Wednesday, September 13, 7:30-8:30pm



Join us for a program about waterfowl hunting, with Todd Schaller. Todd is currently the Vice President of the [Wisconsin Waterfowl Association](#), and has had a life-long passion for waterfowling. Todd is a retired WI DNR Conservation Warden, and served as the Chief Conservation Warden for the state for six years prior to his retirement.

Watch your email for details and a zoom link.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

The DNR releases pheasants in suitable habitat across the state throughout the months of October to December.

This could be an opportunity for a field experience releasing pheasants with a DNR biologist.



Contact your mentor to determine if this is an option for you. If you need assistance initiating contact with a biologist, or determining release dates, please contact the YCC Coordinator.

Are pheasants being released in your county? Search by county to determine pheasant release locations: [Pheasant Stocking Information \(wi.gov\)](#)

DEER HUNTER OBSERVATION SURVEY

To gain a better understanding of the relative abundance and distribution of deer and other mammalian/avian wildlife species in the state, the DNR is developing a long-term database of deer hunter observation data. Past efforts have provided the agency with valuable information for managing many wildlife species

The survey period is open through January 7th. . You can help with this survey by recording the following from your deer hunting trips:

- date hunted
- number of hours hunted
- county
- zone (map)
- land type
- weather conditions
- type and number of animals observed



Data can be reported by a mobile device, desktop or by mail.

Learn more about the observation survey:

<https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/WildlifeHabitat/wlsurvey.html>