

NATIONAL AWARDS

54 Founders Award

Considered the League's highest honor, this award is bestowed on an individual or organization for outstanding contributions to the conservation of America's natural resources.



Paul W. Lepisto (South Dakota):

As a member of the League's national staff for 17 years, Paul has been a steady and strong voice in South Dakota, attending meetings, lobbying in the state capital, coordinating river clean-ups and working with the public

at water festivals. He was one of the first members of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' Missouri River Recovery Implementation Committee, which was formed in 2007 to provide advice and guidance about endangered species and habitat restoration. It is hard to find a more committed, passionate and effective advocate for restoration of the Missouri River. Even prior to joining the League, he was an effective journalist and advocate on wildlife and fisheries conservation issues, especially for waterways in the Dakotas, spending a lifetime promoting the League's values, and conserving our natural resources.

Stanford M. Adams Memorial Award for League Leadership

This Executive Board award recognizes the national director or director-at-large for their continued commitment to the duties and responsibilities that come with their position.



Jeffrey R. Deschamps

(Maryland): A Family Life Benefactor member from Laurel, Maryland, Jeff served as a chapter president from 2011 to 2013 and later as Maryland Division president, 2015-2019. At the national level, he served as chair of the Resolution Committee, a

national director and was elected national president in 2016. He served on the Executive Board until 2021. Continuing his leadership and service spanning two decades, Jeff currently edits the newsletter and serves as executive secretary for the Maryland Division.

Hall of Fame Award

Recognizes a member's outstanding accomplishments in furthering the mission and goals of the League.



William Leaman, Sr.

(Maryland): For almost two decades, as a member of the Rockville Chapter, Bill has organized and managed the Izaak Walton League exhibit at the Montgomery County Fair, promoting the League's presence in the community and

conservation mission while marketing membership to an estimated crowd of 225,000 attendees each year.



William N. Legg (New York):

William is recognized posthumously for his legacy with Project Watershed of Central New York, which he founded 30 years ago. That project evolved from a chapter's volunteer stream monitoring effort into a

regionwide clean water program that recruited high school science teachers, representatives from Syracuse University and staff from the Onondaga County Soil and Water Conservation District.

Richard G. Sommer (South

Carolina): Rick's leadership with the League extends across more than four decades, as chapter president and division secretary and later as a national director, regional governor and director-at-large for the past two decades. A

Family Life Benefactor member, he has served on various resource and special committees and he currently chairs the national awards committee.

Conservation Award

Recognizes members' contributions to conservation in the name of the League.



Ilene Altman (Maryland): As a certified master gardener and a member of the Rockville Chapter, Ilene has worked tirelessly to promote the benefits of native plant landscaping.



Raymond F. Besecker (New York): Ray is best known for his work in conservation education to protect Lake Onondaga and organizing fishing tournaments in central New York.



Andrew B. Cooke (Maryland): In an effort to engage more youth in the outdoors, Andrew developed the Rockville Chapter's innovative Juniors Conservation Education Program, hosting multiple interactive, fun, educational, hands-on events throughout the year.



Donald H. Frame (Indiana): Don and his family owned and farmed the land that later became the Frame Family Little Calumet Conservation Area, now owned and protected by the Porter County Chapter. His knowledge

of the watershed has been invaluable in preserving habitat near the East Branch of the Little Calumet River.



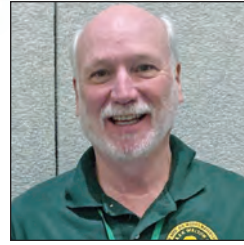
Brian E. King (Maryland): Brian maintains the extensive 13-mile trail system, serves as an advisor on Scout projects and assists the farm manager establishing conservation projects at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter.



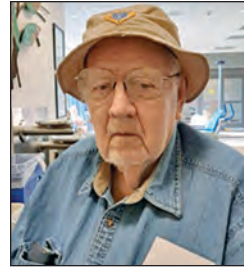
James Shaeffer (South Dakota): As a conservationist, hunter and a member of the Sioux Falls Chapter, James has improved and promoted wild habitat on more than 400 acres by planting trees, native grasses and food plots.



Marilyn R. Spencer (Indiana): Marilyn brings decades of knowledge about songbirds, experience in making bird feeders and education, fostering conservation ethics in children as part of the Porter County Chapter's nature education outreach.



Craig R. Sterle (Minnesota): Craig was a forester for the Minnesota DNR for 32 years. Over many years, he has been a courageous voice for the environment at the W. J. McCabe Chapter. He also served as the conservation director for the Minnesota Division, tackling a variety of environmental, public lands, renewable energy and habitat issues.



Bobby R. Wright (Indiana): For many years, this Griffith Chapter Ike has managed the chapter's lakes, organized fish stocking and youth fishing days, planted and maintained pollinator gardens and organized birdhouse building events with children.

Outdoor Ethics Award

Recognizes individuals, groups, or organizations judged to have done outstanding work in outdoor ethics.



Curt Howard (Maryland): A National Director from the Harford County Chapter, Curt is a longtime hunter education instructor, teaching responsible and ethical hunting and conducting simulation hunts during field day events. He has organized monofilament recovery

days at the Susquehanna River Conowingo Dam and delivered many public presentations on nature, wildlife, hunting and angling topics.



Larry Anderson (Maryland): Larry chairs the hunting ethics and wildlife committees for the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter, ensuring that the members understand and abide by hunting rules and regulations. He also monitors wildlife populations and works to improve habitat on the Chapter's grounds.

Save Our Streams Award

Recognizes outstanding work in environmental education and citizen activism for clean water.



Dan Dutton (Maryland): First exposed to the League's Save Our Streams (SOS) water monitoring protocol, Dan organizes stream monitoring on multiple sites on and near the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter conservation farm in Montgomery County,

Maryland, as part of their Ponds and Streams Program.



Philip Mariscal (Maryland): When Philip, an avid angler, joined the Rockville Chapter, he took over as the chair of their SOS program, recruited and trained additional monitors. He is a regular at the Maryland Water Monitoring Council's Stream

Roundtable and presented his findings to the Maryland DNR Black Bass Advisory Committee.



Friends of the Minnesota Valley (Minnesota): This volunteer group actively collaborates with a

diverse array of community-based organizations and initiatives to protect and improve the Minnesota River watershed. The Minnesota Valley Chapter is the driving force behind the formation of this organization.

Thelma "Pete" Reed Award

Recognizes the member who has volunteered in many conservation projects, educational efforts, community service or chapter leadership development and is not serving as a national leader of the League but is considered an "up and coming" leader.

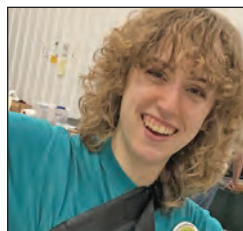


Andrew Wight (Maryland): Andrew has demonstrated leadership in a variety of chapter educational and community outreach events. As first vice president at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter, he has inspired many members to work on

conservation projects, youth engagement, education efforts, community service and family events.

Outdoor America's Future Award

Recognizes the Izaak Walton League youth or student member who has volunteered in conservation projects, educational efforts, community service or chapter leadership development and is considered a young "up and coming" future League leader.



Summer Machnik (Indiana): Summer is a high school senior and a student member of the Porter County Chapter. She has provided leadership at the Discovery Trackers 4-H Club, Calumet Nature Exchange, Pollinator Partnership's Project

Wingspan and the Chapter's Family Nature Night events.



Suryash Rawat (Minnesota): As an elected board member of the Minnesota Valley Chapter, Suryash was a founding member of the Chapter's Green Crew program that combines League activities and Scouting. He spearheaded the formation of a Stewardship Committee at the

Chapter including implementation of Leave No Trace for members, energy-efficient appliances, recycling and sustainable supplies.

Honor Roll Award

Recognizes an individual or organization for outstanding accomplishments in conservation, public education and/or publicity in keeping with the League's goals.



Destiny Boggs (Indiana): As a non-member, Destiny's dedication, energy, organization and fundraising in support of the Huntington County Chapter's annual Teddy Bear Hunt and Family Activities Day merits gratitude from the Chapter and the League's Honor Roll Award.



Grant and Dawn Breithkrentz (Minnesota): The couple is honored for their advocacy for soil health and promotion of agricultural best management practices at the Stoney Creek Farm in Redwood Falls, Minnesota.



Greg Cwalina (Maryland): Greg brings his fly fishing and fly-tying expertise to many public events throughout the state, including those held at the Rockville Chapter in Maryland.



General Mills (Minnesota): This U.S.-based food company takes holistic steps to educate management and production plant employees about sound

farming practices, protection of water resources, biodiversity and reduced waste.



Harford Land Trust (Maryland): This land preservation advocacy organization has played a significant role in establishing conservation easements on more than 12,000 acres and assisted in the acquisition of land added to

the Harford County Chapter's Bosely Conservancy.



Lake Keowee Source Water Protection Team (South Carolina):

Formed by Duke Energy, this non-profit monitors

and protects water quality in this growing region. This coalition consists of seven organizations working to ensure water is safe for drinking, recreation and energy production.



Dr. John Lill and Dr. Martha Weiss (Washington, DC): These ecology professors studied how Brood X cicadas have impacted ecological interactions and the energy flow in the food webs of oak forests at the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter in Maryland.

Ohio Valley Forestry Fellowship (Ohio): As an advocate for increasing the size and diversity of Ohio's tree canopy, the Forestry Fellowship has distributed hundreds of thousands of tree seedlings statewide.



Upstate Forever (South Carolina): Located in northwestern South Carolina, this land trust promotes sound land stewardship practices, including protecting urban green spaces and promoting water quality.

Shooting Sports Award

Presented to individuals, groups or organizations judged to have done outstanding work to promote shooting sports.



Apollo Archery Program (Maryland): This archery program introduces and instructs current and former members of the U.S. Armed Services and their families to the sport at the League's Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter.



Bob Brino (Virginia): For more than 30 years, Bob has managed and built up the Arlington-Fairfax Chapter's trap and skeet facilities, introduced and trained many new shotgunners, helped coach a local collegiate team at George Mason University and he ran "Crush 'n

Clays," which raised more than \$400,000 to benefit St. Jude Children's Hospital.



Richard Deviers (Virginia): Richard is well known locally as an avid recreational and competitive shooter in his part of Virginia. He was the driving force to convert an old hayloft to an indoor smallbore shooting range at Rockingham-Harrisonburg

Chapter used for youth training programs.



Mountaineer Chapter Shooting Sports Program (West Virginia): Using their facilities, the Mountaineer Ikes partner with like-minded organizations to host recreational shooting, education and training events, including the National Shooting Sports Foundation's First Shots and National Shooting Sports Month.



Rick Stell (Indiana): At the Huntington County Chapter, Rick has long volunteered and organized many military firearms demonstrations and fun shooting events, called “Veterans Range Days,” affiliated with various local veteran organizations.



Sandy Taylor (Pennsylvania): Sandy is a range safety officer at the Oil City Chapter and she runs the Chapter’s handgun competition. She was instrumental in the creation of a successful Ladies Only Handgun program and formed a YMCA

women’s pistol league that has served the community for years.

Arthur R. Thompson Memorial Award

Recognizes division accomplishments in conservation.



West Virginia Division: In collaboration with the six chapters, the West Virginia Division contributes to conservation across the state through a college scholarship program, support for the West

Virginia Conservation Camp and streamside litter cleanup efforts with installation of nearly 100 fishing line disposal containers.

James Lawton Childs Award

Recognizes chapter accomplishments in conservation.



Minnesota Valley Chapter (Minnesota):

The Chapter is well known locally for its Elm Tree Restoration Project. The Chapter also established the Green Crew (a co-ed Scouting Venturing Crew Unit with conservation mission) and held a

two-day Earth Day tree planting event. Other efforts include invasive species removal, water quality testing and trail restoration.



Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland): The Chapter lives up to the motto on its entrance sign, “Conservation Is Our Mission,” by managing invasive species, an American chestnut tree farm,

water monitoring, pollinator gardens, bird counts and habitat improvement. The Chapter is also engaged in roadside clean-ups, fish and wildlife management, soil conservation, interpretive nature trails and wildlife research studies.

Robert C. O’Hair Award

Recognizes outstanding chapter youth programs.



Porter County Chapter (Indiana):

For years, the Chapter’s top priority has been working with local youth including Family Nature Night events, engaging young people in bat monitoring, pollinator habitat projects, removing

invasive plants and hosting a Gnomes Day Out Fairy Festival. The programs have exposed hundreds of children to the outdoors, promoting awareness about wildlife habitats and waterways.



Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland):

This Chapter has sponsored multiple Scout units and allowed them to use a dedicated Scout campsite area. They held a kid-friendly interpretive walk-in-the-woods event, an archery seminar for beginner youth, a trout

fishing derby and support for the Poolesville High School global ecology classes for nature studies.

Best Chapter Newsletter

Based on appearance, originality, timeliness and news coverage, including national and state news and community conservation.

Ike’s Newsletter: Published by the Dwight Lydell Chapter (Michigan), this informative newsletter includes articles that highlight chapter events related to local, state and regional natural resources conservation issues. Contributions on nature and outdoor recreation, including color photographs, are welcomed by the editor. It is mailed and emailed on a regular basis and posted online on the chapter website.

Best Chapter Website

Based on appearance, originality, timeliness and news coverage.

Rockville Chapter (Maryland): This website (www.iwlar.org) is informative, colorful and easy to navigate. Information about the Chapter and the League is readily accessible. The website profiles chapter activities, spells out membership requirements and includes a calendar loaded with their many events.

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

In an effort to continue to promote member recruitment and retention, we recognize several chapters and one division that successfully grew their membership over the past year.

Best Chapter Membership Recruitment and Retention Award

Recognizes the chapter that carried out the most effective membership recruitment and retention program.

Caldwell Chapter (Idaho): The Chapter markets itself as a safe environment for recreational use of firearms for member events and other events open to the public. A motivated membership committee successfully marketed the chapter and benefits of League membership during their many organized public trapshooting events. Their concentrated recruitment efforts paid off as the Chapter grew from 38 to 162 members during a 12-month period in 2023.

John C. Gregory Award

Awarded to the division with the highest numerical increase in members.

Iowa Division: With a net increase of 129 new members in 2023.

Membership Achievement Awards

Recognizes chapters with the largest percentage increase and net gain in membership.

Greatest Percent Increase and Greatest Net Gain:

Caldwell Chapter (Idaho) with a 326% increase and a net gain of 124 members.

Membership Merit Awards

Recognizes membership growth based on chapter size.

50-and-Under Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain:

Caldwell Chapter (Idaho)

51-to-250 Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain:

Minnesota Valley Chapter (Minnesota)

251-to-500 Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain:

Bill Cook Chapter (Wisconsin)

501-and-Over Member Class for Percent Increase and Net Gain:

Dragoon Trail Chapter (Iowa)

110-Percent Awards

These chapters grew by 10 percent or more in 2023.

Florida

Mangrove

Georgia

Greater Atlanta

Idaho

Caldwell

Illinois

Wabash

Indiana

Alexandria

Huntington County

Michigan City #7

Iowa

Keokuk County

Louisa County

Mahaska County

Maquoketa Valley

Ottumwa

Rice Lake

Wapsi Valley

Maryland

Frederick #1

Mid-Shore

Sportsman's

Minnesota

Cass County

Minnesota Valley

Prairie Woods

Rochester

Wapashaw

Will Dilg

Nebraska

Crete

Thayer County

Ohio

Anthony Wayne

Central Ohio

Mount Healthy

Wadsworth

Pennsylvania

Harry Enstrom

South Dakota

Rapid City

Virginia

Christiansburg-Montgomery

West Virginia

Monongalia County

Mountaineer

Zip Little

Wisconsin

A. D.

Sutherland

Beloit

Bill Cook

Wyoming

Charles E.

Piersall

Defenders Chapter Achievement Awards

The following chapters received this annual recognition for their 2023 contributions to the League's mission through successful programs, promoting membership, education, conservation, youth involvement, community outreach and the principles of philanthropy.

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| Arlington-Fairfax (Virginia) | Elgin (Illinois) | Mid-Shore (Maryland) | W.J. McCabe (Minnesota) |
| Austin (Minnesota) | Frederick #1 (Maryland) | Minnesota Valley (Minnesota) | Walter J. Breckenridge (Minnesota) |
| Berkeley County (West Virginia) | Fredericksburg- Rappahannock (Virginia) | Mountaineer (West Virginia) | Warren County (Iowa) |
| Bethesda-Chevy Chase (Maryland) | Grand Island (Nebraska) | New London (Minnesota) | Warren County (Virginia) |
| Bill Cook (Wisconsin) | Hamilton (Ohio) | New Ulm #79 (Minnesota) | Wayne County (Ohio) |
| Brown County (Wisconsin) | Kampeska (South Dakota) | Owatonna (Minnesota) | Wes Libby-Northern Lakes (Minnesota) |
| Bush Lake (Minnesota) | Lincoln (Nebraska) | Prairie Woods (Minnesota) | West Central (Iowa) |
| Cass County (Minnesota) | Linn County (Iowa) | Rochester (Minnesota) | Wildlife Achievement (Maryland) |
| Central New York (New York) | Lois Green-Sligo (Maryland) | Rockville (Maryland) | Will Dilg (Minnesota) |
| Des Moines (Iowa) | Loudoun County (Virginia) | Sioux Falls (South Dakota) | York #67 (Pennsylvania) |
| Dwight Lydell (Michigan) | McCook Lake (South Dakota) | Sportsman's (Maryland) | |
| | | Sunshine (South Dakota) | |
| | | Tiffin-Seneca County (Ohio) | |



Keep up with Trends Affecting Our Woods, Waters and Wildlife: Subscribe to “Conservation Currents”

Stay up to date on conservation news, issues and work by the League. Take advantage of a free subscription to the League's email newsletter “*Conservation Currents*.” Go to iwla.org/morenews.

No organization has done more than the Izaak Walton League to defend woods, waters and wildlife. We've carved out a unique role, promoting conservation and community science locally while advocating for strong state and national policies to protect natural resources.