

Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards

2014 WINNERS

Marine Fisheries Enforcement Officer of the Year — Officer Justin Lott - Lott patrols the waters of Dare and Currituck counties, whose rich maritime legacy continues with a robust recreational and commercial fishing industry. Lott is known for keeping a keen eye for fishing violations, and has participated in educational and search and rescue operations, as well.

Wildlife Enforcement Officer of the Year — Master Officer Aaron Stronach - Master Officer Stronach is stationed in Polk County, NC and had a 100 percent conviction rate on his wildlife violation cases this year including major illegal baiting and poaching cases.

Business Conservationist of the Year — Biltmore Estate - A model for corporate environmental excellence with its forest conservation work, solar energy, recycling and water conservation.

Conservation Organization of the Year — NC Chapter of The Nature Conservancy - The organization has a long, successful history in NC of protecting land and contributing to the State's gamelands system while working for forest management plans that benefit wildlife.

Natural Resources Scientist of the Year — Ron Sutherland, PhD - A conservation scientist for the Wildlands Network, Sutherland is actively involved in both research and education. He is a tireless voice for the conservation of public resources, and was a leader in efforts to prevent the initial sale of NCSU's Hoffman Forest.

NCWF Affiliate of the Year — N.C. Falconers Guild - This club of falconry enthusiasts is actively involved in legislative issues and wildlife conservation outreach.

NCWF Chapter of the Year — Gaston County PAWS - The Piedmont Area Wildlife Stewards chapter continues to raise the bar as a NCWF chapter powerhouse. From assembling wood duck boxes and osprey nesting platforms to Youth Day functions and support of the Wildlife Resources Commission's enforcement efforts, PAWS makes its mark on conservation.

Hunter Safety Educator of the Year — James G Earp - 2015 marks 10 years of service for Earp, a former District 3 hunter educator of the year award recipient. Last year Earp surpassed more than 500 hours as a volunteer hunter educator, qualifying him as a Master Educator.

Wildlife Volunteer of the Year — Jill Palmer - A tireless leader of the Matthews-based Habitat and Wildlife Keepers (HAWK), Palmer seems to be everywhere: leading kid's nature days, mentoring other activists as they seek wildlife habitat certifications, walking downtown Charlotte streets to monitor injured birds, or working to seek the first Native Plant certifications offered by UNC-Charlotte.

Legislator of the Year — Sen. Harry Brown - As the senior chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Brown has led the effort to restore funding for land and water conservation. Under his leadership, funding for the Clean Water Management Trust Fund and other conservation trust funds has risen every year.

Youth Conservationist of the Year — Henry Long - The rising 8th grader at Raleigh's Exploris School has helped lead efforts to collect data on eastern box turtles, and uses GIS to map turtle movements. He's served on the

school team to measure its landfill wastes and research alternatives, and as a student Green Team leader he tracks the school's energy efficiency.

Conservation Communicator of the Year — Coastal Review Online - Since its launch in 2012 as the only nonprofit news service in Eastern North Carolina, Coastal Review Online has sent its professional journalists out to cover every major environmental or conservation issue on the N.C. coast, from the proliferation of wood pellet plants to the mysterious beachings of dolphins.

Environmental Educator of the Year — Kelsie Armentrout - A teacher at Hilburn Academy in Raleigh, Armentrout has done amazing work using camera traps to connect her students to wildlife through the eMammal program. She is a Kenan fellow and works with researchers at the Museum of Natural Sciences on lesson plans and best practices for using camera traps in the classroom.

Water Conservationist of the Year — David E Hinton - Hinton is the Nicholas Professor of Environmental Quality at Duke University's Nicholas School of the Environment. In the laboratory and classroom, Hinton shapes a new generation of scientists. As an educator and resident of a critical Tar-Pamlico tributary watershed, Hinton demonstrates how science and outreach can shape a community's relationship to the waters that nourish human experience.

Forest Conservationist of the Year — Jim Sitts - The Appalachian Timber Manager for Columbia Forest Products has been a leader in forest sustainability. Sitts' work through Carbon Canopy provides the opportunity to qualified landowners to participate in carbon sequestration projects to fight climate change through the conservation management of working forests. It's the capstone of Sitt's 40-year career for forest conservation.

Land Conservationist of the Year — Harrett Hurst Turner & John Henry Hurst - When the brother and sister sold 290 acres of rare maritime forest land to North Carolina last year, it boosted the size of popular Hammocks Beach State Park in a deal that will also bring back to life a historic camp that will be used for nature education.

Sportsman of the Year — Frank Grainger - Long-time Cary businessman Frank Grainger serves as chair of the N.C. Sportsmen Caucus Advisory Council, and led an effort to raise more than \$100,000 for handicapped lifts and ATVs for the Wildlife Resources Commission to use in its handicapped hunter programs. He championed the Outdoor Heritage Act to focus statewide attention on outdoor activities for younger generations.

Wildlife Conservationist of the Year — Kim DeLozier - DeLozier retired from the Great Smoky Mountains National park in 2010 after 32 rewarding years of service in wildlife management. During his career, Kim's involvement primarily focused on nuisance black bear management, wild hog control, white-tailed deer management, small animal management (skunks, raccoons, bats), and re-introduction efforts for elk, peregrine falcons, river otters, and red wolves. Kim currently works for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation as Conservation Program Manager for the eastern U.S.

Conservationist of the Year — Philip Blumenthal - The consummate behind-the-scenes supporter and out front leader, Blumenthal has worked to shape non-profit organizations from The Nature Conservancy to the Sierra Club, and provide leadership training and financial support to NC's conservation movement as well as establishing the Wildacres Retreat conference center.

Conservation Hall of Fame — Dr. F. Eugene Hester - A lifetime achievement for work on fish and wildlife conservation. Hester held the highest positions in three separate divisions of the US Department of the Interior during his distinguished career.