

Conservationist of the Year

Michael Leonard ★ Winston-Salem

A ninth-generation North Carolinian, attorney Mike Leonard has devoted countless volunteer hours on behalf of conservation. He has helped raise millions of dollars, and helped land trusts conserve over 266,750 acres in six states, including 120,000 North Carolina acres.

Wildlife Conservationist of the Year

Chris McGrath ★ Leicester

Recently retired with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, wildlife biologist Chris McGrath has been instrumental in field research, public outreach, and policy advocacy on behalf of North Carolina wildlife, in particular nongame and endangered species.

Sportsman of the Year

Greg Hurt ★ Raleigh

Greg Hurt has progressed from a rank-and-file member of the Coastal Conservation Association to chapter president, committee chair, and CCA-NC president. He was instrumental in the passage of SB 82, which prohibits commercial menhaden boats in North Carolina state waters.

Land Conservationist of the Year

Arthur Dick ★ Greensboro

Arthur and Desiree Dick have extensively managed their 1,828-acre Rockingham County farm, Willow Oaks Plantation, which stretches along the Dan River just east of Eden, NC, since 2001. Quality Deer Management is their guiding ethic.

Water Conservationist of the Year

Joe Hightower ★ Raleigh

Dr. Joe Hightower, assistant unit leader of NCSU's NC Cooperative Fish and Wildlife Research Unit, has worked extensively in fisheries research. His work on the Roanoke River is credited with supporting the resurgence of the watershed's vast striped bass population.

Environmental Educator of the Year

Eric Landon McDuffie ★ Durham

Eighth-grade science teacher Eric McDuffie has used his years of work experience as a fisheries biologist to inspire youth at C.W. Stanford Middle School in Hillsborough. He successfully spearheaded the drive for a \$355,000 Clean Water Trust grant to improve water quality.

Conservation Communicator of the Year

Dan Kibler ★ Winston-Salem

A founding contributing writer for North Carolina Sportsman magazine, Dan Kibler is now managing editor of that title. He has covered outdoor news in the Tar Heel State for more than three decades, bringing clarity to some of the most complex wildlife management issues.

Youth Conservationist of the Year

Molly K. Paul ★ Raleigh

In 2006, Molly Paul established Raleigh Aquatic Turtle Adoption to "re-home" pet turtles—often non-native species—to prevent them from being released into the wild. The effort has now grown to include habitat preservation, fund-raising, and environmental education.

Legislator of the Year

Fingers Crossed for 2013 ★

In the wake of one of the most wildlife- and environmentally hostile General Assembly sessions of the last half-century, no legislator was singled out for heroic effort. NCWF hopes that next year's session will herald a new generation of conservation leaders.

Municipal Conservationist of the Year

Catawba County Recycling & Waste Reduction Program ★ Newton

Catawba County earned the top spot in the state recycling rankings, in large part due to its Regional EcoComplex and Resource Recovery Facility. This innovative network of companies and operations matches waste streams with the need for materials.

Wildlife Volunteer of the Year

Anne Steinert ★ Charlotte

Anne Steinert has volunteered an average of 800 hours a year over the last 10 years for the Carolina Raptor Center. A master level rehabilitation volunteer, Steinert assists in surgery, bakes bread for the staff every Friday, and transports injured birds from all over the county.

Hunter Safety Education Organization of the Year

Cumberland County Wildlife Club ★ Fayetteville

CCWC began offering hunter education classes in 1992. The number of instructors has now grown to seven, and a half-dozen hunter education courses are offered each year. Three of the group's instructors have volunteered more than 1,000 hours to the state program.

NCWF Chapter of the Year

Lake Norman Wildlife Conservationists ★ Morrisville

LNWC has taken the lead in conservation efforts in the Lake Norman community all around the lake, not just in its immediate area of Morrisville. In the past 18 months, the group has certified its entire community as a Community Wildlife Habitat with the National Wildlife Federation.

NCWF Affiliate of the Year

Friends of Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge ★

This highly active non-profit groups supports the work of the Pocosin Lakes NWR, and has

worked tirelessly over the last year to fight plans to site both a massive chicken production factory and enormous wind farm near the borders of one of the nation's premier refuges.

Natural Resources Scientist of the Year

Sara Mirabilio ★ Manteo

From flounder and oyster fisheries to seafood marketing to sustainable development for coastal communities, Sea Grant researcher Sara Mirabilio works for an environmentally and economically healthy coastal environment.

Natural Resources Agency of the Year

North Carolina Forest Service ★

2011 was a historic year for the North Carolina Forest Service due to emergency response duties such as wildfires, tornadoes and hurricanes, in addition to its responsibilities guiding North Carolina landowners and citizens in modern forest management practices.

Conservation Organization of the Year

NC Chapter—National Wild Turkey Federation ★

To date the North Carolina chapter has spent nearly \$3 million for state habitat and outreach projects, including helping to acquire over 81,000 acres of public lands. Over the past year the state chapter has provided over \$42,000 to fund youth programs.

Business Conservationist of the Year

Mast General Stores ★ Valle Crucis & more

From its first store opened in 1883, Mast General Stores now operates eight locations, and plows funding and energy back into local communities through the purchase of green power, innovative recycling initiatives, employee incentives for reducing carbon footprints, and donations to a host of charities.

Wildlife Enforcement Officer of the Year

Lieutenant Todd E. Radabaugh ★ Rocky Point

A 22-year veteran with the Wildlife Resources Commission, Lt. Todd Radabaugh has initiated deer hunts for youth and injured veterans, overseen hunter safety activities, led statewide efforts to curb boating while impaired, and has trained other officers throughout the country.

Marine Fisheries Enforcement Officer of the Year Officer

Daniel Ipock ★ Washington

A Beaufort County native, Daniel Ipock now protects the fisheries resources of the waters where he grew up. Since joining the Division of Marine Fisheries in 2008, Ipock has worked with recreational and commercial anglers alike, especially in the protection of shellfish waters.