

Conservationist of the Year**Dick Ludington** ★ Chapel Hill

Ludington opened The Conservation Fund's North Carolina office, and across a storied career has worked to preserve 209,114 acres of the state's most iconic landscapes.

Wildlife Conservationist of the Year**Jeffrey C. Beane** ★ Raleigh

A herpetologist at the N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences, Beane has spent years as an avid researcher, writer, and advocate for North Carolina's reptiles and amphibians.

Sportsman of the Year**Ramon N. Bell** ★ Stokesdale

A devoted leader, teacher and dedicated defender of the sport of archery, Bell has been a long-standing advocate for wildlife management and president of the N.C. Bowhunters Association.

Land Conservationist of the Year**Tim Sweeney** ★ Cary

Sweeney purchased for conservation more than 12,000 acres in McDowell and Rutherford counties. Designated as the Box Creek Wilderness, restoration protects critical wildlife corridors for imperiled species.

Water Conservationist of the Year**Ryke Longest** ★ Durham

As professor of water resources law at Duke University and director of Duke's Environmental Law and Policy Clinic, Longest shapes conversations about water issues from uranium mining to water quality permits to brownfield contamination.

Forest Conservationist of the Year**Commissioner Steve Troxler** ★ Browns Summit

As commissioner of the N.C. Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services, Troxler has been a staunch advocate for conservation of working forests, and was instrumental in improvements to DuPont State Forest and establishing the 8,000-acre Headwaters State Forest.

Environmental Educator of the Year**J. Dan Pittillo** ★ Sylva

A retired professor of biology at Western Carolina University, Pittillo spent half a century educating at the academic, regional, community and grassroots levels, and is still involved in environmental issues across the mountains.

Conservation Communicator of the Year -**Jay Erskine Leutze** ★ Minneapolis, NC

Leutze is the author of *Stand Up that Mountain: The Battle to Save One Small Community in the Wilderness Along the Appalachian Trail*. The book chronicles efforts to shut down an illegal mining operation. Leutze remains a leading voice for investments in public lands.

Youth Conservationist of the Year**Grace Adkins** ★ Fuquay Varina

A national scholar and the youth coordinator for the Cape Fear branch of the Quality Deer Management Association, Adkins serves as the "Rack Pack" coordinator of such outdoor education events geared towards young people.

Legislator of the Year**Ruth Samuelson** ★ Charlotte

Representative Samuelson is the Republican conference leader and a strong proponent of land and water trust funds and practical policies for renewable energy standards.

Municipal Conservationist of the Year**Town of Elkin, NC** ★

Elkin was one of the first and most ardent supporters of the extended urban archery deer option for municipalities.

Wildlife Volunteer of the Year**David M. Pearson** ★ Swansboro

As president of Friends of North Carolina State Parks, Pearson is a tireless advocate for wildlife and habitat funding. He serves also as a member of the state's Sea Turtle Advisory Committee.

Hunter Safety Education Organization of the Year**Pitt County Wildlife Club** ★ Greenville

This club has 19 active hunter safety instructors and three master instructors. Over the last year, Pitt County Wildlife Club taught eight hunter safety education courses and three field days, and also hosts instructor training classes.

NCWF Chapter of the Year**Albemarle Conservation and Wildlife Chapter** ★ Elizabeth City

This energetic chapter procured and planted 10,000 Atlantic white cedar seedlings to help restore acreage in the Great Dismal Swamp National Wildlife Refuge and State Park. It also advocates against detrimental mega-landfills and other large-scale destructive developments.

NCWF Affiliate of the Year**North Carolina Trout Unlimited** ★

NCTU is a strong conservation ally for aquatic habitat protections and funding. It offers "Trout in the Classrooms" programs for schools and established long-term partnership stream conservation projects with South Mountain and Stone Mountain state parks.

Natural Resources Agency of the Year**N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission****Operation Something Bruin** ★ Raleigh

This four-year investigation targeted poachers in North Carolina and Georgia, and uncovered more than 80 wildlife violators and as many as 900 wildlife violations detected. NCWRC played a huge role infiltrating poaching circles.

Conservation Organization of the Year**Delta Waterfowl Foundation North Carolina**

Chapters ★ The last few years have seen impressive growth in the presence of Delta Waterfowl in North Carolina, with the group fighting for hunter access to public waters and posting nationally-ranked fundraising statistics.

Business Conservationist of the Year**The Fork Farm & Stables** ★ Norwood

Founder Jim Cogdell established a world-class working farm and equestrian center that balances crop production with native ecosystems and manages the acreage for wildlife. The business provides hands on learning for youth and sportsmen.

Wildlife Enforcement Officer of the Year**Chad Arnold** ★ Mt. Holly**Marine Fisheries Enforcement Officer of the Year****Chris Lee** ★ Kill Devil Hills

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