

NEWSROOM -

Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame announces its 20th annual induction ceremony

Three new inductees for ceremonies April 24 in Stevens Point

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame holds its 20th annual induction ceremony Saturday, April 24. This year's inductees are a world-renowned educator, an internationally known waterfowl expert and a working-class citizen activist.

Laurence Jahn, Charles Van Hise and Leo Nickasch are the three new inductees for 2004, named by the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation Board of Directors. The board is comprised of representatives from 23 conservation organizations in the state.

Tributes to the inductees will be given at 10 a.m. at Sentry Theater, located at the Sentry Insurance Headquarters, 1800 North Point Drive. A 9 a.m. coffee will precede the program. A luncheon at noon in The Restaurant of Sentry Insurance Headquarters concludes the day's activities. Luncheon reservations cost \$10 and can be made by calling 715-346-4992, the telephone number for the Schmeckle Reserve Visitors Center, where the Conservation Hall of Fame is located. Reservations can also be made by calling Bill Horvath, Conservation Hall of Fame executive secretary, at 715-341-4021.

"This year's inductees are fitting for our 20th annual ceremony," said Earl Spangenberg, president of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation. "Their accomplishments span most of the 20th century, and their contributions to the cause of good conservation are enduring."

Charles Van Hise (1857-1918) was born in Fulton, Rock County. A geologist, teacher and president of the University of Wisconsin in Madison, he espoused sustainability at a time when many believed resources were inexhaustible. His contributions to the conservation cause, including a pioneering textbook, were in part overshadowed by his brilliance as an educator and educational administrator. He encouraged all who own and oversee natural resources to serve as their trustees, assuring that they remain for future generations. "Conservation means the greatest good to the greatest number for the longest time," Van Hise wrote in his 1910 book, "The Conservation of Natural Resources in the United States." It remains one of the most important conservation readings. Among his predictions: Global warming, caused by the burning of fossil fuels. He was particularly concerned about loss of soil fertility. He also persuaded the state Legislature to fund the University of Wisconsin Extension, devoted to both academic and vocational adult education and outreach.

A native of Jefferson, Laurence Jahn (1927-2000) worked as a wildlife biologist with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to improve management of migratory waterfowl and aquatic habitat. Hunting regulations, including quotas, were developed under his tenure in Horicon. He provided keen insight on natural resource management and wrote numerous publications on the subject. Jahn went on to join the Wildlife Management Institute as a Wisconsin field representative, eventually becoming president of the Washington, D.C.-based organization. His persistent efforts resulted in new policies to maintain and restore wetlands. Jahn helped shape changes in agricultural programs to reduce and prevent soil erosion, improve water quality and enhance wildlife habitat. His efforts also led to strengthened management of

flood plains, shorelands and watersheds. He was instrumental in creating innovative conservation provisions in the 1985 Farm Bill, considered landmark legislation for conservation on private lands.

Leo Nickasch (1914-1989) was born in Appleton. He became known as "Mr. Trees" to scores of elementary school children in the Neenah-Menasha area because of his efforts to promote Arbor Day in schools there. A maintenance mechanic for Kimberly-Clark Corp.'s Lakeview Mill, he became involved through his union's Conservation Committee. He successfully lobbied for a state law requiring the DNR to provide seedlings to all fourth-grade classes that request them for Arbor Day planting. He also lobbied to create state demonstration forests and helped establish the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station, which is run by UW-Stevens Point and used by numerous school groups. Nickasch encouraged conservation education at the elementary school level, hoping to empower youths to protect the environment for the rest of their lives.

The new inductees bring to 51 the number of people memorialized in the Conservation Hall. Located at Schmeckle Reserve in Stevens Point, it includes interactive displays and information on Wisconsin's conservation history and conservation leaders. Its purpose is to educate and inspire people with information about how resource conservation has shaped our environment and our lives. The surrounding nature reserve has extensive walking trails and is a link in the Stevens Point area's 25-mile Green Circle Trail.

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