

Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame



Joseph Hickey
Inducted, 2002



"Conservation means more than preserving a few species of wildlife. It means the wise use of all the natural wealth of a great continent so that other generations of Americans can benefit by its resources and enjoy the same opportunities that we do today." —Hickey

Facts

About
Joseph Hickey

Worked to have Aldo Leopold's *Sand County Almanac* published

Contributed research that led to the ban of DDT in Wisconsin as well of the rest of the United States

Taught Wildlife Management at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Joseph Hickey 1907-1993

Joseph J. Hickey was a kid from the South Bronx who made his mark in conservation here in Wisconsin.

Almost from the moment he arrived in the state in 1947, Hickey would play a key role on conservation issues and environmental matters here. One of his first contributions was to organize efforts to have "Sand County Almanac" published in 1949, the year after colleague Aldo Leopold's death. Leopold had recruited Hickey for a faculty position at UW-Madison.

Among his many conservation contributions, Hickey played an important role in helping to unravel the connection between declines in bird populations and the effects of chlorinated hydrocarbon pesticides such as DDT.

Hickey's research on the ecological effects of DDT was pivotal in the eventual ban of the pesticide, first in Wisconsin, then in the United States. There was a cost for being an outspoken critic of popular agriculture. "As a professor in the country's largest college of agriculture, Joe was severely censured by spiteful college admin-

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(Publication of this fact sheet made possible with assistance from Krause Publications, Iola, Wisconsin)

**About Wisconsin's
Conservation Hall of Fame**

Location:

Schmeckle Reserve
Stevens Point, Wis.

Attractions:

Displays, information on Wisconsin's conservation history and leaders. Schmeckle Reserve, owned by the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, provides hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Purpose:

To educate and inspire people with information about how resource conservation has shaped our environment and our lives.

Hours:

M-F: 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.
Sat: Noon - 4 p.m.
Sun: Noon - 4 p.m.

Support: The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame is funded solely by contributions. Donations are tax deductible and may be sent to:

WCHF Foundation Inc.,
Schmeckle Reserve,
UW-Stevens Point,
Stevens Point, Wis. 54481
715-346-4992.

Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame
Honoring our state's rich conservation history

Joseph Hickey

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istrators."

Environmental groups, however, embraced him and frequently recognized his contributions with awards and citations.

It all started with birds for Hickey. As a teenager, he joined the Bronx County Bird Club in New York. Also in the club were a couple of Hickey's lifelong friends: Roger Tory Peterson and Allan Cruickshank.

Another birding colleague, biologist Ernst Mayr, encouraged Joe to become more scientific in his pursuit of birds. Hickey followed the advice, returned to night school at NYU and resumed undergraduate studies, in biology.

As his master's thesis, Hickey wrote "A Guide to Bird Watching." It was published immediately by Oxford University Press and is still in print. Rather than a field guide, it is an instructional manual for people who want to pursue various aspects of birding, from banding to song identification.

Hickey earned a Guggenheim Fellowship to pursue his doctorate at the University of Michigan. His thesis project involved analyzing what has been described as "a virtually unexploited gold mine of bird-banding data accumulated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service." His dissertation, "Survival Studies of Banded Birds," was published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1952 and reprinted in 1972.

Leopold invited him to return to the University of Wisconsin-Madison to become second professor in the university's Department of Wildlife Management. Leopold died a few months later, and Hickey was appointed head of the department in 1948.

It was then that he undertook the "Sand County Almanac" project, culminating in a 1949 publishing.

Hickey was also an acclaimed teacher at UW-Madison.