



**Wisconsin  
Conservation  
Hall of Fame**

March 2009

Volume 15, Issue 1

# New Leaf

*Newsletter of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame*

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Twenty five and Going Strong

When it all started, twenty-five years ago, I doubt that the folks involved had any idea of where the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame would be in 2009. We said that we would encourage the growth and practice of a conservation ethic as a legacy for the people of the state.

I think we've done a pretty good job of meeting the task we assigned ourselves back in '86. With the help of generous contributions from individuals, corporations, the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, and the city of Stevens Point, we built a recognition gallery, a conference room and an historical display describing the growth of the conservation ethic in the state. The facility, located in the Schmeckle Reserve Visitors Center on the UWSP campus has been host to thousands of individual visitors, as well as college, high school and elementary school classes each year. For the last year we have data. Over four thousand people used the conference room alone.

Every year, we have recognized one or more individuals who have significantly contributed to conservation programs, projects, public understanding, and conservation ethic within the state of Wisconsin and the nation. Their names and contributions are memorialized in an annual ceremony where they are inducted into the Hall of Fame. As of this induction, the Hall of Fame has recognized sixty-three individuals from a wide variety of backgrounds, with a wide variety of skills who have worked in a variety of ways to foster concern for the continuing health and well being of the land and its inhabitants.

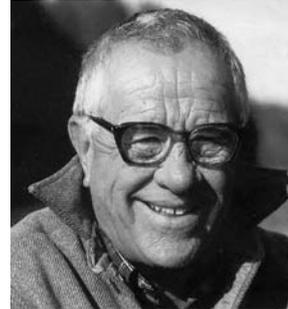
An anniversary is a time to look back, and a time to look forward. We aren't stopping here. Over the next twenty-five years, in addition to continuing to honor folks who have been important in developing the conservation ideal, you can expect to see us enlarging the gallery and historical display, publishing a book on the development of the conservation ideal, and sponsoring annual conferences exploring the history and potential of the conservation ideal in the state.

We can't do this alone. The member organizations of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation can only go so far, we need the help and support of our Affiliate Members to continue to grow and encourage the development of conservation within the state. It's going to be a great ride. Please join us.

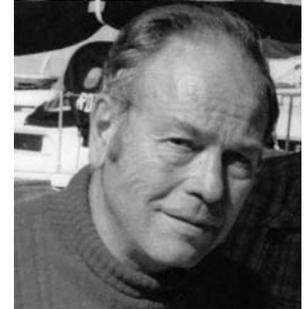
– Gene Roark, WCHF President



*Herb Behnke*



*Martin Hanson*



*Charles Stoddard*

## Herb Behnke, Martin Hanson and Charles Stoddard – Our Newest Inductees

### Ceremonies set April 18, 2009 in Stevens Point

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame this year inducts a pair of citizen conservationists and a longtime public servant who left indelible marks on the environment.

Herb Behnke of Shawano, and the late Martin Hanson of Mellen and Charles Stoddard of Minong are this year's inductees.

Behnke was the longest-serving member of the board that oversees Wisconsin's natural resources. He earned respect in conservation circles for positions he took on behalf of common folks.

Hanson quietly worked behind the scenes on numerous conservation causes, including establishment of the Apostle Islands National Seashore and reintroduction of elk to northern Wisconsin.

Stoddard was involved in conservation for most of his life, as a professional forester, a high-ranking official in the Department of the Interior, an author, and, after retiring, as an environmental activist. He was known for resisting political pressure as he made decisions that affected the environment.

The trio will join 63 other distinguished inductees to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in ceremonies at 10 a.m. Saturday, April 18, at the Sentry Theater in Stevens Point.

Following are biographical sketches of the inductees:

#### **Herb Behnke**

Herb Behnke was born in 1925 on a dairy farm in Lena, the youngest of 10 children.

As a young man, he left the farm to take work at Cooperative Services International, a Shawano-based animal breeding business, where he spent his career and rose to the position of vice president of marketing.

One of his first tastes of citizen engagement came in 1961, when Gov. Gaylord Nelson (a Conservation Hall of Fame inductee) appointed him to the Wolf River Basin Regional Planning Commission. He carried knowledge gained from that service to the natural resources arena, especially in the areas of conservation and land use.

Behnke's state natural resources service began when Gov. Warren Knowles (a Conservation Hall of Fame inductee) appointed him to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission in 1967. When the state conservation and resource development agencies were merged to form the Department of Natural Resources in 1968, Knowles appointed Behnke to the newly formed Natural Resources Board.

He served until 1972. He was appointed again by Thompson in 1989 and served until 2006. He chaired the board from 1993 to 1997.

Behnke counts his role in shepherding state land acquisitions among his top accomplishments. The DNR controlled 803,554 acres when Behnke was first appointed. By the time he left the board, that total had more than doubled.

The state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program for land acquisition propelled land acquisitions during his tenure, Behnke said.

*(Continued on page 3)*

***Mark your calendars:  
The 25th annual Induction  
Ceremony will be held  
Saturday, April 18, 2009  
at Sentry Theater,  
Stevens Point.  
See you There!***

## Board of Directors representing member organizations

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- Brenda Lackey**  
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- Tom Muench**  
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Communicators Association
- Paul Lochner**  
Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association
- Roy Kubisiak**  
Wisconsin Conservation Wardens Association
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Water Conservation Association



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**JIM DOYLE**  
GOVERNOR  
STATE OF WISCONSIN

April 18, 2009

Greetings!

On behalf of the State of Wisconsin, I want to welcome you to the annual induction ceremony of the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame. Established to promote the growth and practice of protecting the natural resources of our state, the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame has been recognizing those individuals who have made significant contributions toward these goals for 25 years.

Protecting the environment has long been a priority of mine, and I understand we must carefully conserve our natural resources for our children and grandchildren to enjoy. Our health, economy and communities depend on maintaining a healthy environment, and I will work hard to continue the tradition of conservation that defines who we are in this state.

Wisconsin has long, proud history of environmental advocacy, and I recognize protecting our environment is an enormous task that cannot be done alone. I truly appreciate the work your organization and all the leaders recognized do to protect the special places that define Wisconsin's past and future.

Thank you for all of your hard work, and congratulations to the new inductees!

Sincerely,

Jim Doyle  
Governor

## Lorrie Otto 2009 National Women's History Month Nominee

**Lorrie Otto**, a 1999 Inductee in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame was recently included in the 2009 National Women's History Month nominations.

This year's theme, Women Taking the Lead to Save Our Planet, encouraged the recognition of the important work of women in the on-going "green movement." The 2009 Honorees included scientists, engineers, business leaders, writers, filmmakers, conservationists, teachers, community organizers, religious or workplace leaders or others whose lives show exceptional vision and leadership to save our planet.

"Lorrie Otto, born 1919. Through her passion as a founder and leader of the natural landscaping movement for the last 50 years, Lorrie Otto has educated, inspired and mentored us to see the transformation of our lifeless lawns into natural landscapes as not mere gardening, but as a conservation effort to help restore habitat for a diverse community of species. Her legacy "grows" with each passing season."

For more information go to  
<http://www.wchf.org/inductees/otto.html>  
<http://www.for-wild.org/people/otto.html>

**National Women's History Month** began, when the Education Task Force of the Sonoma County (California) Commission on the Status of Women initiated a "Women's History Week" celebration for 1978. They chose the week of March 8 to make International Women's Day the focal point of the observance. The activities that were held met with enthusiastic response, and within a few years dozens of schools planned special programs for Women's History Week, over one-hun-

dred community women participated in the Community Resource Women Project, an annual "Real Woman" Essay Contest drew hundreds of entries, and they were staging a marvelous annual parade and program in downtown Santa Rosa, California.

In 1979, a member of the groups was invited to participate in Women's History Institutes at Sarah Lawrence College, attended by the national leaders of organizations for women and girls. When they learned about the county-wide Women's History Week celebration, they decided to initiate similar celebrations within their own organizations and school districts. As a group they pooled their efforts to secure a Congressional Resolution declaring a "National Women's History Week." In 1981, Sen. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Rep. Barbara Mikulski (D-MD) co-sponsored the first Joint Congressional Resolution. In 1987, the National Women's History Project petitioned Congress to expand the national celebration to the entire month of March. Since then, the National Women's History Month Resolution has been approved with bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. Each year, programs and activities in schools, workplaces, and communities have become more extensive as information and program ideas have been developed and shared.

For more information about National Women's History Month go to  
<http://www.nwhp.org/whm/history.php>

– Donna VanBuecken,  
Wild Ones Executive Director

## 2009 Inductees (continued from page 1)

"We acquired some great properties," he said, Chippewa, Flambeau and Willow flowages as examples. "Those things were all possible through the Stewardship Program, and if we hadn't had those dollars, those lands would all be developed. I was involved in looking at those projects, inspecting them and recommending them."

Behnke also took pride in looking out for the interests of the state's hunting and fishing community. "I never really listened much to special interest groups. To me, it was the common men and women who loved to hunt and fish, and what they wanted," he said in a 2008 Conservation Hall of Fame interview. "I believed in the science of wildlife management tempered with public input. We need to fit the public's interest into the science," he said.

He had an independent streak, too. He took a strong stand against deer baiting and opposed making the DNR secretary a governor's appointee. That put him at odds with Gov. Tommy Thompson, who had appointed him to the Natural Resources Board in 1989.

Behnke remains active in various conservation and civic causes, including serving on the board of the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin and several wildlife groups, and is a professional auctioneer.

### Martin Hanson

Martin Hanson lived in a secluded retreat in northern Wisconsin for most of his life. But for a man who preferred the backwoods to board rooms, he earned quite a reputation. Newspapers in major cities like Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Louis took note of his passing in October 2008. "Martin Hanson, a lover of the outdoors, worked quietly at the grass-roots level for environmental causes," wrote the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

In addition to his passion for conservation, Hanson had a strong interest in politics. He numbered the late U.S. Sen. Gaylord Nelson (a Conservation Hall of Fame inductee) among his closest friends.

Born in 1927 in Oak Park, Ill., he was one of three children born to a Chicago furniture manufacturing family. Their father, also named Martin, purchased more than 1,200 acres of cutover land in Ashland County. It eventually became home to all the Hanson children.

Brother Louis was one-time chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin and helped assure the election of politicians like Nelson and U.S. Rep. David Obey.

Hanson is credited with playing a key role in protecting the Apostle Islands of Lake Superior as the Apostle Island National Lakeshore, an effort begun under President John F. Kennedy (JFK) in September 1963 and completed seven years later. Hanson served as JFK's guide aboard a helicopter as the president toured the islands upon invitation of Nelson. Hanson is said to have secured the President's interest in the project when he pointed out to JFK, who was an accom-

plished sailor, that the Apostles provided prime sailboat waters.

Hanson continued to work quietly at the grass-roots level for environmental causes, reading everything he could about his subject, then attending town and county meetings to secure the support of local public officials. He was a generous financial supporter of many of those causes.

Hanson advocated for and financially supported reintroducing elk into the North Woods. He also opened up his Mellen property to researchers from University of Stevens Point. He was a supporter of Northland College's Sigurd Olson Institute for Environmental Studies, and he helped lead the effort to endow the Gaylord Nelson Chair at the University of Wisconsin's Gaylord Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies.

Hanson was ever an outdoors lover. In 1956, he killed a 550-pound Alaskan brown bear that stood as a world record among bow hunters for two years. He and Louis also rounded up some Dall sheep in Alaska for the Lincoln Park Zoo in Chicago.

He was an accomplished wildlife filmmaker, capturing thousands of hours of rare footage of animals ranging from polar bears and bobcats to beavers and cormorants.

While Hanson often worked behind the scenes, he also provided key leadership to causes. He was named the first chair of the Wisconsin Council for Resource Development and Conservation, serving from 1962-72. He also served as Rep. Obey's home secretary for 13 years.

### Charles Stoddard

Milwaukee native Charles Stoddard was involved in conservation for most of his life. He worked as a professional forester, a public official near the highest levels of government, an author and an environmental activist.

Stoddard was a key figure in one of the first major large-scale water pollution battles in the nation. The Reserve Mining Company controversy over the pollution of Lake Superior drew attention all across the country.

Born in 1912, Stoddard was educated in Milwaukee public schools and earned bachelor's and master's degrees in forestry at the University of Michigan.

He served in Washington, D.C., for a decade, including a stint as director of the Interior Department's Bureau of Land Management, from 1963-66. When Harold "Bud" Jordahl Jr. (Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame inductee) left the position of Upper Midwest Regional Coordinator for Interior Department in 1967, Stoddard saw an opportunity to get out of Washington and closer to his family's land near Minong.

Stoddard soon found himself in the middle of a major environmental battle. A preliminary report from the state of Minnesota's natural resources agency was submitted to him regarding the Reserve Mining Company in Silver Bay,

Minnesota, along the north shore of Lake Superior. The report indicated that Reserve Mining Company was dumping up to 67 thousand tons of taconite tailings a day into Lake Superior. Stoddard coordinated development of a formal Interior Department study, which confirmed the findings.

Reserve Mining and Minnesota elected officials sought to suppress the report. Confident the report would stand the test of scrutiny, Stoddard leaked it to the press. A furor resulted, but Stoddard was ultimately vindicated by the federal courts, which ruled that Reserve was polluting Lake Superior with potentially injurious asbestos-type fibers. Reserve was fined more than \$1 million and shifted its taconite wastes to an on-land disposal site.

Stoddard's early career was marked by a variety of practical forestry experiences mingled with public policy. He was a forest economist with the U.S. Forest Service, Lake States Region. His duties included analysis of the timber requirements of forest industries in the lake states from 1936-40.

As BLM director, Stoddard advocated for better conservation practices on the public lands, including less clear cutting of forestlands in the West and increasing the grazing fees charged to ranchers to the federal government for the privilege of grazing their cattle on public lands.

While in the U.S. Navy during World War II, he identified a new species of tropical tree in the Solomon Islands of the South Pacific. He authored a book entitled "Looking Forward: Planning America's Future," published in 1982. Stoddard called for reforms in government and economic policies to move the nation toward what he called a "conservator society," which would conserve and protect natural resources for generations to come. He also authored a forestry textbook that was still in use in some educational institutions more than 40 years after its first printing.

"He was a driven person when it came to conservation and looking out for the public interest in our natural resources," said his son Glenn, an environmental attorney in Wisconsin. "He loved the outdoors and he devoted his life to conserving natural resources for future generations."

— Bill Berry, WCHF Historian

## NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT:

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**PHONE: 715/341-4127**

*This press release also available on the web at*  
**[www.wchf.org](http://www.wchf.org)**

*For digital photos, contact:*  
**Donna VanBuecken at**  
**[dvbaccentnl@new.rr.com](mailto:dvbaccentnl@new.rr.com)**

## A note from your Executive Secretary

A reminder that as of 2007, your donation to the Hall of Fame makes you an "Affiliate Member." Your affiliate membership is an annual membership, not a perpetual one. Each year, we will be sending a membership form with the New Leaf or with the Induction Announcement. The membership form serves as your renewal notice if you want to continue your Affiliate Membership. Thanks for your continued support of the Hall of Fame.

— Earl Spangenberg, WCHF Executive Secretary



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## **— Member Organization Profiles —**

### **Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association**

The Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association (WWOA) works to educate Wisconsin's private woodland owners about sustainable forest management. WWOA has more than 2300 members throughout Wisconsin and the United States. WWOA's educational efforts include their quarterly magazine Woodland Management, 4 day annual meeting, workshops, field days, conferences, website ([www.wisconsinwoodlands.org](http://www.wisconsinwoodlands.org)) and their 14 local chapters. WWOA provides opportunities for woodland owners to learn more about natural resource management from professionals and each other. WWOA is a member of the National Woodland Owners Association.

### **Wisconsin Section - American Water Resources Association**

The Wisconsin Section of the American Water Resources Association provides an interdisciplinary forum for people concerned with the conservation, development, management and utilization of water and related resources together with their environmental aspects to meet, discuss and exchange ideas. The section holds annual meetings at which oral presentations and poster sessions explore aspects of water resources management and research in the state. The section also maintains a web site (<http://www.awra.org/state/wisconsin/>) to facilitate communication within the state and nationally.

**Become part of Wisconsin's conservation history by contributing to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation with your membership.**  
*Help commemorate those who labored in years past to ensure the future of Wisconsin's abundant and diverse natural resources. Keep alive the ideas and ideas of those who foresight preserved our environment.*

My tax-deductible donation is enclosed:

- Sponsor (\$25)
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*Thank you!*