

Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame



Aroline Schmitt
Inducted 2019



“And every sportsman must come to realize that game management is a byproduct of land management, and must not take precedence in the thinking of the people..” — Aroline Schmitt

Promoted the principles of sustainable forestry and timber management, before the practice was known by that name.

Was involved with efforts to assure the rights of the Menominee Indians and the protection of the tribe's forest in northeastern Wisconsin during a high-pitched battle over termination of the tribe's reservation status in the 1950s and 1960s.

Worked with other citizens to preserve natural areas in the Flambeau State Forest and to establish a Forest Service Camp at Trout Lake in northern Wisconsin to provide educational opportunities for children.

In 1946, helped the US Forest Service create its Northern Forest Research Center in Rhinelander.

"Mrs Schmitt is a born fighter," Gordon MacQuarrie wrote. "Mrs. Schmitt has called up senators and representatives and governors and alternately pleaded, threatened and heckled. They all respect her. They all know she is a citizen who just asks the opportunity to give more to her community than she takes from it. That's why they listen to her."

Recognized for exemplary conservation work by the Citizens Natural Resources Association, the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation, the Izaak Walton League and many others.

Facts About Aroline Schmitt

Aroline Schmitt

1904-1995

Aroline Schmitt is a good example of how women have been instrumental in leading citizen conservation crusades in Wisconsin and the nation. During the 1940s to the 1960s, she advanced the principles and practice of sustainable forestry, organized and led new conservation organizations, and worked hand-in-hand with many other conservation leaders. Despite health challenges, she fought with tenacity and charisma to advance major conservation policies affecting Wisconsin's natural heritage.

She became a passionate champion for "Forest Conservation" at both the State and national level. Aroline began her conservation work during World War II in what was then a man's world, surveying and cruising timber lands for the US Forest Service in Alaska and the west. She continued in various roles with the Forest Service until 1961. Always promoting the principles of sustainable forestry and timber management, before the practice was known by that name. Schmitt prodded politicians, conservationists and industrial foresters to adopt good forestry practices.

Working with Gifford Pinchot (former Director of the US Forest Service) and others, she also helped organize and served as Executive Secretary for a national conservation organization called "Forests" that advocated for wise forestry practices.

Aroline's Wisconsin conservation efforts occurred from the 1930s to the 1960s. A frequent speaker and advocate for strong resource policy, she was a prolific letter writer and traveled the state to participate in important meetings and legislative hearings. She worked arm-in-arm with conservation luminaries including Aldo Leopold, William Aberg, and Wilhelmine La Budde.

She also helped to organize and lead the Citizens Natural Resources Association and the conservation programs of the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation.

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**About Wisconsin's
Conservation Hall of Fame**
www.wchf.org

Location:

Schmeckle Reserve
Stevens Point, Wis.

Attractions:

Hall of Fame Gallery for the inductee plaques and monographs. Hands-on Conservation History Museum and a classroom/meeting room used by students and non-profit organizations. UW-SP's Schmeckle Reserve provides hiking and wildlife viewing opportunities.

Purpose:

Through the recognition of outstanding state conservationists, Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation encourages the growth and practice of a conservation ethic as a legacy for the people of the State.

Hours:

M-F: 9 am - 4 pm

Sat: Noon - 4 pm

Sun: Noon - 4 pm

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
2419 North Point Drive
Stevens Point, WI 54481

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

Aroline Schmitt

(continued)

Schmitt played a pivotal role in protecting the Flambeau State Forest and its old growth hemlock-hardwood forests, and in the transfer of forested lands to the Wisconsin Conservation Commission (now DNR). She also helped protect the Menominee Tribal Forest by lobbying for the rights of the Menominee Indians during a tense battle over termination of the tribe's reservation status in the 1950s and 60s, and served as a consultant to the tribe until 1971.

She helped establish several conservation facilities in Wisconsin, including the Trees for Tomorrow program in Eagle River, a Forest Service Camp at Trout Lake and the US Forest Service's Northern Forest Research Center in Rhinelander.

Aroline produced a tremendous collection of correspondence including speeches, legislative testimony, letters to the editor, and personal letters with key conservation officials, both nationally and in Wisconsin. Her collected papers, now housed in the Wisconsin Historical Society Archive, are a goldmine of information on Wisconsin conservation issues from the 1940s to the 1960s.

She was recognized for her exemplary conservation work by, among others, the Citizens Natural Resources Association (Silver Acorn Award, 1961), the Wisconsin Garden Club Federation (1956), and the Izaak Walton League (Broughton Award, 1950).

For many years, due to persistent health problems, Schmitt fought her conservation battles from her bed and home office. With tenacity and dedication, Aroline continued to influence conservation policy through her telephone calls, writings, and personal charisma.

Aroline Schmitt's love for Wisconsin's forests had deep family roots. Aroline was born into a wealthy family in Jamestown, New York, in 1904. Her grandfather, however, was a Wisconsin lumberman, who joined in the raid on Wisconsin's timber in the 1800s, before the family moved east. Her mother was a botanist and passed on her love for nature and forests to her daughter.

Trained as a nurse, Aroline moved to Milwaukee in the 1920s to work for a doctor. Her husband, Max Schmitt, worked as a blueprint maker, while also fully supporting her passion for conservation. They lived with their two children in Wauwatosa, but she left Wisconsin in the 1960s for the western states to be with family. Aroline Schmitt left behind. However, an important conservation legacy.