George Meyer (1947 - )

As a highly respected and influential Secretary of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR), George Meyer was instrumental in creating and advancing major conservation and environmental policies affecting all of Wisconsin’s natural resources.

His appreciation and respect for the land and its resources began as a youth while growing up on the family farm in New Holstein, Wisconsin. After receiving his B.A. degree in Economics from St. Norbert College and his Law degree from University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1972, he joined the WDNR and eventually advanced to the agency’s top leadership position.

As Staff Attorney (1972-1980), as Enforcement Division Administrator (1980-1993) and as Secretary of the WDNR (1993-2002), Meyer worked on many of the most challenging, and often controversial, policy issues affecting the State including: wildlife management, hunting regulations and chronic wasting disease; parks and outdoor recreation; land use and urban planning; air and water quality; wetland and shoreline protection; urban and agricultural run-off; clean-up and redevelopment of toxically contaminated lands; and the negotiation and implementation of Treaty Rights held by Wisconsin’s Ojibwe Tribes.

During his 30 year career with the WDNR, he often served as the agency’s chief spokesperson with the media and at public, court and legislative hearings. He was respected by all he worked with for his calm demeanor, knowledge of the issues, science-based viewpoint and judgment.

After retiring from the WDNR in 2002, Meyer has continued to advance conservation by serving as the first Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation (WWF), a citizen conservation organization promoting sound resource management through the educational and advocacy programs of 200 affiliated conservation clubs. With his organizing abilities and persuasive talents, he continues to mobilize citizens to fight for Wisconsin’s Conservation Legacy. He has also championed WWF’s conservation education initiatives including its partnership with the Wisconsin Green School Network, the rescue and revitalization of the MacKenzie Education Center in Poyntette and the creation of the Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC), focusing on college and high school students, to assist in the development of future conservation leaders.

For his leadership and contributions to conservation, he has received many awards and recognitions. He was appointed a Visiting Professor at Lawrence University in Appleton from 2002 to 2004 teaching courses in environmental policy and law; he has served in leadership roles in the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies and the Environmental Council of the States; and he serves as a member of the WCHF Board of Governors.

“George Meyer is a tireless advocate for Natural Resources in our state and nation. His talent is in effectively mobilizing people to act on behalf of the resources, and navigating the political system in ways that get things done. Wisconsin could not ask for a better Steward of her land, water, soil, and wildlife.”

— Wisconsin Conservation Leadership Corps

George Meyer has championed, among other conservation education initiatives the rescue and revitalization of the MacKenzie Education Center in Poyntette, Wisconsin.