

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame

Celebrating, Advancing & Sharing Wisconsin's Conservation Legacy



WISCONSIN
CONSERVATION
HALL OF FAME

LEGACY

February 2021 Newsletter

Volume 27, Issue 1

Aldo Leopold Shack - Baraboo, WI

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Patty Dreier

While recently gathering input related to development of our organization's new strategic plan, I had a discussion with someone

who suggested we should further explore our individual and group connections with the Inductees in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame (WCHF). He spoke of untapped opportunities for us individually and for our conservation organizations. "By looking deeper at how Inductees have influenced our lives, places, and organizations in Wisconsin," he said, "we could develop an even greater appreciation for the WCHF and become even better ambassadors for carrying this torch forward."

That got me thinking: How many Inductees did I have personal connections with? How have these people influenced me? How

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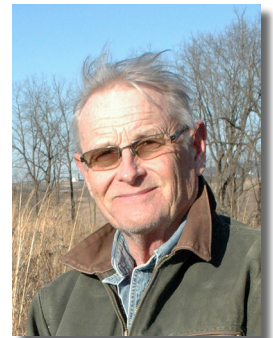
OUR 2021 INDUCTEE - GARY ELDRED

Citizen Scientist and Conservation Activist Extraordinaire

Eldred will be honored during a virtual Induction Ceremony on April 24, 2021. Read Eldred's biography on page 4.

"I had been a hunter, fisherman, and trapper since I was twelve. I deeply enjoyed these outdoor activities and spent as much time as I could pursuing them. In the process, I became a skilled amateur naturalist and developed a strong interest in conservation. While in my mid-twenties, I was fortunate enough to read Aldo Leopold's A Sand County Almanac. That new perspective on nature and conservation, especially the chapters on land ethics, began a subtle transformation of my thinking."

~ Gary Eldred



Gary Eldred

2021 INDUCTION CEREMONY SERIES SET

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame (WCHF) is excited to announce the 2021 Induction Ceremony will be offered virtually. It will be a series of four free Induction Ceremony events held live on Saturday, April 24th. Because the 2020 Induction Ceremony was cancelled due to the pandemic, the 2020 Inductees Stephen Born, Jens Jensen, and Stanley Temple will be honored along with 2021 Inductee Gary Eldred as part of the event series.

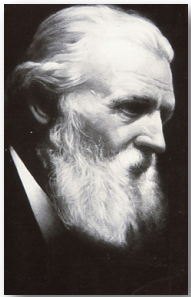
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Saturday, April 24

9:00 am - Stephen Born
11:00 am - Jens Jensen
1:00 pm - Stanley Temple
3:00 pm - Gary Eldred

FROM THE PRESIDENT *continued from page 1*

are their legacies part of my life today and what might this mean for tomorrow?



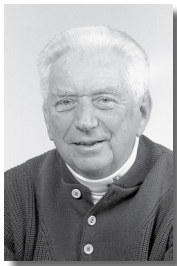
John Muir

In last year's newsletter article as President of the WCHF, I mentioned I gave the induction speech for [John Muir](#) when he and [Aldo Leopold](#) were the first

Inductees into the WCHF in 1985. At the time, I was a University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point graduate student and honored beyond words to be given this opportunity. Thinking about my main lessons from studying John Muir's legacy as part of preparing for his induction ceremony, I would say they can be summed up in a word: Perseverance.

What other lessons have I learned from Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Inductees in my life?

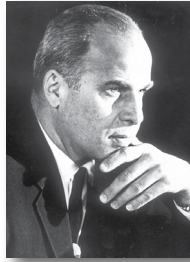
Inductee [Dan Trainer](#) (2006) was my former boss. I was assistant to Dean Dan Trainer at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point College of Natural Resources



Dan Trainer

during grad school. Lucky me, I had an office next to his, so I had the benefit of learning from him every day. My main lesson learned from Dan Trainer: Grand achievements start with a vision and a smile.

I still pinch myself: I was chauffeur for a day for Inductee [Gaylord Nelson](#) (Inducted 1986). Dean Trainer asked me to pick U.S. Senator Nelson up in Oshkosh and bring him to Stevens Point for a campus event at Schmeckle Reserve. I believe he was being inducted into the WCHF the next



Gaylord Nelson

day. How much more cool could it possibly be than to have one-to-one time with the Father of Earth Day? I wrote about this life-changing experience in my book, *Empowered: One Planet at a Time*, published last year to coincide with the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day. My main lesson learned from Gaylord Nelson: Our greatest power lies within.

Through my past work at UWSP's Central Wisconsin Environmental Station, I am fortunate to have personal and professional connections with Inductee [Christine Thomas](#) (2017), Dean Emerita of the College of Natural Resources and Founder of Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW). She and I shared an exchange program of sorts—touring each other's gardens followed by breakfast made by the gardener. Not only have I been witness to her magic in the garden, but I have also witnessed her magic on teams and in classrooms where her energy is a magnet, a beacon for others. One of many lessons learned from Christine Thomas: Even when blazing your own trail, shine the light for others to follow.



Christine Thomas

Inductee [Dave Engelson](#) (2013), "The Father of Environmental Education," was an active Board volunteer like I was for the Ice Age Park and Trail Foundation around 2001. (The organization is now known as the Ice Age Trail Alliance.) For this gal who earned her M.S. in the field of environmental education, Dave was a hero of a whole different kind for

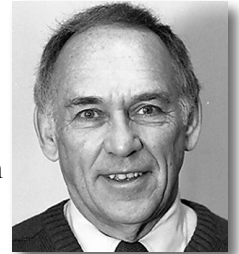
me. We worked together with other volunteers over many months to create an education plan for the Ice Age National Scenic Trail. Beyond this academic partnership in service, Dave and I shared a love of poetry. We participated in poetry writing sessions together and sent nature-inspired poems by mail back and forth to each other. My most important lesson from Dave: As educators, our best comes from having a passion to want to leave the world better.

There is no doubt that all 103 Inductees into the WCHF have changed my world and the organizations to which I belong. They likely changed yours, too. I invite you to trace your own connections.

Recently, I have gotten to know our 2021 Inductee, [Gary Eldred](#). As President, I had the honor of calling him to share the news of his selection for the WCHF. Since that call last November, we have become good friends. I feel honored when we discuss where one who has achieved so much—a conservationist of his caliber—might go next on his journey to leave the even world better. "It's all about the next generation," he says.

Yes, we need to help our next generation of conservationists develop a passion to leave the world even better. It starts by helping them trace their connections to courageous conservation champions who understood the greatest power came from within as they blazed new trails, persevered, then smiled and showed others the way.

Patty Dreier, WCHF President



David Engelson

VIRTUAL INDUCTION CEREMONY APRIL 24, 2021 *continued from page 1*

All four Induction Ceremony events are open to the public. Each will feature speakers sharing the legacy of the conservation heroes being honored. Inductees will speak about their conservation legacy and share their life's work through images and stories.

To learn more, visit wchf.org/2021induction.

2021 INDUCTION CEREMONY SPONSORS

Thanks to our 2021 Sponsors! To learn how you and your organization or business can become a Sponsor, visit wchf.org/2021induction.

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Prairie
Enthusiasts*



2020 INDUCTEES



Stephen Born is a well-known UW-Madison professor who specialized in environmental planning and worked on almost every aspect of water management, the Great Lakes, inland lakes, groundwater, rivers and watersheds, in addition to loving all things trout.



Jens Jensen is a landscape architect of the Upper Midwest who developed public parks, preserves, and private estates, focusing on indigenous plants and the location's ecological features, who also founded the "school of the soil" in Door County known as The Clearing.



Stanley Temple is a UW-Madison professor who studied endangered birds, habitat fragmentation, invasive species and other factors leading to species declines, and now serves as a Senior Fellow with The Aldo Leopold Foundation, researching, writing and speaking about Leopold.

MOVING THE WCHF FORWARD

Several projects are underway to move the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame ahead:

- **Strategic planning.** A planning process began last fall with a survey of member organizations. The planning effort continues through the Executive Committee with a goal of having a three-year plan to the Board of Directors for adoption by July. Stay tuned for updates.
- **Maximizing the use of technology.** Beyond virtual meetings, the WCHF continues to move its business to the cloud. While the WCHF looks forward to in-person gatherings again someday, it recognizes opportunities to reach wider audiences using virtual platforms. In addition to a series of four virtual induction ceremonies to be held this year on April 24, the WCHF is building capacities for member organizations to pay their dues online and receive electronic receipts. The WCHF has published its first electronic newsletter (this one!). Anyone can make an online

donation at wchf.org/join-donate.

- **Enhancing the technical review process and adopting streamlined nomination policies.** Last June, the WCHF pilot tested a new technical review process. Through a technical review, a team from the Executive Committee verifies the completeness of nomination packets. This allows several sets of eyes and uses standard forms to ensure nomination materials heading to the Board of Governors are complete. This is part of a streamlined process approved by the Board of Directors to streamline and further standardize the nomination process.
- **Expanding outreach to celebrate Inductees.** A project to digitize nominee and Inductee files has provided the opportunity to enhance the Inductee pages on the WCHF website. The WCHF will continue to illustrate the contributions of the WCHF Inductees by adding images, videos and documents to their pages as resources allow.

GARY ELDRED (1947–)



Gary Eldred at the Schurch-Thomson Prairie (TPE owned), 2020. Photo by Tim Eisele.

Entirely as a volunteer and teaching himself along the way, Gary Eldred has dedicated most of his life to the effort of identifying and protecting prairies. He is unique in being self-educated about prairie habitats and rare prairie species. Eldred has been instrumental in preserving and re-establishing thousands of acres of prairies in Wisconsin.

While working seasonally on a state-owned bike trail in Green County in 1974, Eldred became exposed to the fieldwork of parks, forestry, wildlife activities and to the protection of endangered and threatened prairie plant communities. During his free time, he would travel around Green County hunting and fishing. Eldred discovered numerous small, isolated tracts of rare plant communities along the way.

In 1980, Eldred was hired as a Natural Resources Assistant at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' Wilson State Nursery in Boscobel, Wisconsin. The position, which later evolved to Forestry Technician, would span his 28-year career. It paid the bills, but importantly, it was only part-time. This gave him ample time to commit to his passion – locating

and preserving Wisconsin prairie remnants.

Fortunately, Eldred had a group of seven friends equally dedicated to the task. Each crew member brought different skills sets, knowledge and diverse ideas to the project. Together, they became the initial prairie aficionados of Green County. In 1976, they were instrumental in securing the site named Muralt Bluff Prairie which was bought by Green County. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources classified it as a State Natural Area, the first such site initially protected by a county government. Thus, began the subtle transformation of Eldred's thinking. A tally of protected prairie acreage began to grow that year, too. By 2014, eleven prairie remnants totaling 170 acres had been protected under Eldred's leadership.

Eldred's grassroots work became a conservation organization. In 1987, the local group that he founded incorporated into a nonprofit organization dedicated to educating about, protecting and restoring prairies and savannas. Networking by Eldred brought in two other nearby prairie groups and led to a change of name to The Prairie Enthusiasts (TPE). As of 2020, TPE has nearly 1,400 members and eleven chapters in Wisconsin, Illinois, and Minnesota. It owns and manages over 2,100 acres and has worked with landowners to protect over a thousand acres of prairie through conservation easements. And the number of prairie acres protected continues to grow.

For nearly 50 years, Eldred has been a passionate prairie advocate and conducted surveys of eleven counties in Wisconsin and three in Iowa. Sometimes driving every road in a county to look for prairie remnants, Eldred has gone door to door to educate private landowners about prairie remnants and pique their interest in saving the rare ecosystem. In some instances, it took years to gain landowner support for restoration and preservation efforts

“What is impressive about Gary is his willingness to act, to step forward and lead, and his all-out commitment to conserving the remaining prairie ecosystem of the upper Midwest. He is mostly self-taught on prairie ecology, and he had no formal training in group organizing, leadership, or environmental education. Yet, he moved forward with remarkable accomplishments.”

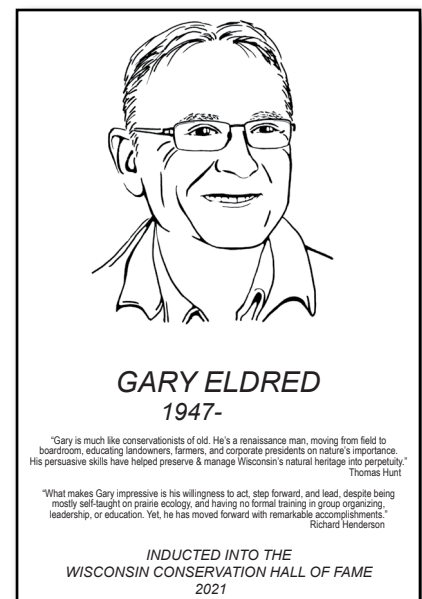
*~ Richard Henderson, TPE
Board of Directors*

on those lands. Many times, Eldred led work parties to restore those very places. His motivation came from deep commitment to Aldo Leopold's principle of ecological conscience to “save the parts.”

Eldred has led field trips and negotiated the purchase of prairies (through ownership or conservation easement) to ensure long-term preservation. He has worked with a variety of landowners, farmers, and corporate entities to share the importance of native landscapes.

Eldred has taken his love of prairies to pen and paper, drawing accurate,

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GARY ELDRED *continued from page 4*

exceptionally beautiful illustrations of native and endangered and threatened prairie plants. The sale of his extraordinary artworks has supported prairie protection efforts. Eldred also wrote stories and booklets about the wondrous world of native landscaping and rare plant communities.

Wisconsin has perhaps never known a more dedicated and passionate volunteer for its prairies than Gary Eldred.

“Gary is much like conservationists of old. He is a renaissance man – artist, writer, scientist, organizer, and leader. He moves seamlessly from field to boardroom, educating landowners, farmers, and corporate presidents on the importance of nature. His skills of persuasion have helped preserve and manage Wisconsin’s natural heritage into perpetuity.”

*~ Thomas C. Hunt, Director of Science,
Applied Ecological Services*



Eldred in the Iris Drive Prairie in Crawford County, WI. Circa 2020. Photo by Steve Hubner.

GOING DIGITAL!

Having to communicate virtually over the past year provided the WCHF the opportunity to transition all of our outreach to digital format. Along with our internal communications going online, our newsletters and event invitations will be emailed and posted to our website rather than being printed and sent via postal mail. This sustainable shift reduces resource use by eliminating printing, ink and paper. The WCHF embraces the opportunity to reach a wider audience as more people access information on their devices. Watch for future updates on how you can stay connected to the WCHF as we make this transition.

WCHF REVISES NOMINATION PROCESS

Is there someone you feel should be inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame? The process for nominating an individual has been updated to help you. The new Nomination Application makes it easier for nominators to organize information and ensure necessary pieces are not forgotten. It also ensures the nominations received are consistent in format and content.

Nominations are accepted from January 1 – May 31. In June, nominations undergo a technical review process. When the WCHF Board of Governors meet in August, they recommend five nominees move forward to the Board of Directors for consideration of induction. The Board of Directors select between one and

three Inductees at their November meeting. The annual Induction Ceremony is held in April.

A complete nomination includes a biography, letters of support, a photo and background information. Nominations are reviewed based on a set of Standards and Criteria adopted by the WCHF Board in 1991. The standards consider the breadth of contribution, ties to Wisconsin and areas of impact.

Anyone can submit a nomination for consideration. Just

be sure to use the new Nomination Application format. Questions? Visit: wchf.org/nominate, email wchfame@gmail.com or call Schmeckle Reserve at 715-346-4992 and ask for the WCHF Administrative Assistant.



WCHF Hall of Fame Gallery at Schmeckle Reserve

YOUR DONATIONS MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Individual donations are critical to the success of the WCHF. In the past year, donations supported the update to the WCHF nomination application process and digitizing hundreds of historical nominee and Inductee documents and images. In the coming year, donations will allow us to continue to expand our digital outreach by providing more frequent news updates and enhancing our Inductee web pages by adding photos and documents to celebrate their achievements.

When you donate you become a member of a community which believes natural resource conservation is a worthy cause!

Visit wchf.org/join-donate to contribute online or to find information about our mail-in option.

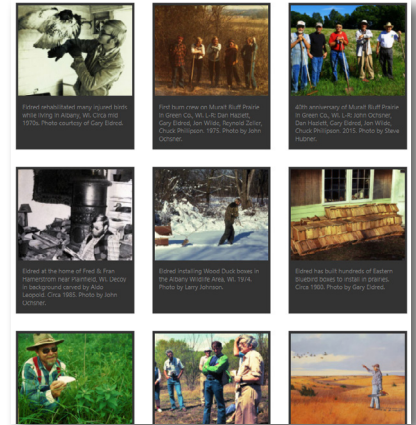
YOUR DONATIONS IN ACTION

Individual and organizational donations enabled the WCHF to organize and digitize 30+ years of nominee and Inductee files. We are half way through this two-year project. The next steps are to complete insufficient nomination packages and to enhance the web pages of our 100+ Inductees by adding images, videos and documents.



UWSP Wildlife Biology student, Ashley King, spent nearly 120 hours organizing files then digitizing photos and documents.

WCHF is still fundraising for this project. We have reached 62% of our \$9,000.00 goal. A large in-kind donation from Schmeckle Reserve helped our dollars stretch further than planned as we saved on equipment costs and student wages.



Inductee photo galleries added to the WCHF website provide a visual story of conservation successes.

WITH GRATITUDE, WCHF THANKS ITS 2020 DONORS

Affiliate Members

Amanda Bell	Richard Hemp	Charles Long	Leo & Sue Nickasch	Annemarie Sawkins
William Beuscher	Ron Hensler	Diane Lueck	Joe Passineau	Ruth Schmidt
Jim & Sunshine Buchholz	Michael John Jaeger	Charlotte Lukes	Lewis & Vicki Posekany	Carl Schwartz
Patty Dreier	Jens Jensen	Bill Lunney	Lois & Steve Raether	Lillian Spangenberg
Tim Eisele	Bob Juracka	Marco Mascitti	Nancy Rafal	Stanley Temple
Cliff Germain	Donald Klecker	George Meyer	Kathleen Redmond	Donna VanBuecken
Claire Hackmann	William "Biff" Kummer	Ed Moberg	Sarah Reeve	Jane Wiley
Thomas & Linda Hansen	Gretchen La Budde	Bruce Neeb	David Riechmann	

Other Gifts

Citizen's Natural Resource Association Jerald & Marilyn Knuth – Thrivent Choice Dollars

Other Support

Bill Cook Chapter of the Izaak Walton League Schmeckle Reserve Sentry World Stevens Point Area Convention & Visitors Bureau Trout Unlimited - Wisconsin Chapter Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

MORE WAYS TO CONTRIBUTE TO WCHF

Thrivent Financial

The Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. is listed in the Thrivent Choice online catalog. When eligible Thrivent members direct Choice Dollars® to WCHF, Thrivent reviews the recommendation and makes an electronic deposit in our bank account the following month. For more information view thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/32433.pdf

IRA Contributions

If you are age 70 ½ or older, consider directing your required annual IRA distribution to the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame Foundation, Inc. Qualified individuals can contribute up to \$100,000 from their IRA directly to a charity. Doing so lowers your personal taxable income, thus lowering your overall tax burden. Speak to your financial advisor for details.

BOARD OF GOVERNORS TRANSITIONS

The WCHF Board of Governors is independent from the WCHF Board of Directors. The five-member Board of Governors are the first people to review nominations and make recommendations to the Board of Directors for Induction. The Governors have the challenging role of identifying which nominees best meet the WCHF Standards and Criteria for Induction. Their considerations include, but are not limited to, a nominee's ties to Wisconsin, the breadth of the nominee's contributions and the range of natural resources affected within the context in which the nominees lived.

Governor Jane Wiley served since 2016. She transitioned from her role in late spring 2020 when she moved out of state. Jane had been a member of the DNR Natural Resources Board

appointed by Governor Jim Doyle and served 2007 – 2015.

Christine Thomas was appointed to complete Jane's three-year term on the WCHF Board of Governors through 2022. Governor Thomas is no stranger to the WCHF; she was inducted in 2017. Christine retired as dean of the College of Natural Resources at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point in 2020 and is professor emerita in natural resources. In addition to her past role as a university educator, Thomas developed the Becoming an Outdoors-Woman program, designed to teach women outdoor skills.

Alan Haney served on the WCHF Board of Governors for nine years, retiring from this role in 2020. He is dean emeritus and professor emeritus of forestry in the College of Natural Resources at the University

of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. He now devotes his energy to writing, consulting, forest management, and occasional lectures.

Jane Severt succeeds Alan Haney and begins her 3-year term in 2021 having shadowed the Board of Governors at their 2020 meeting. Governor Severt retired from her position as Executive Director of Wisconsin County Forests Association in October of 2019, a position she filled for 12 years. Jane previously served on the WCHF Board of Directors.

Governors Christine Thomas and Jane Severt join George Meyer, Bill Berry, and Tim Eisele as Governors serving in 2021. For full biographies of all the WCHF Governors, visit wchf.org/board-of-governors.



The WCHF Governors at their outdoor, physically distanced meeting in August 2020.
L-R: Tim Eisele, Christine Thomas, George Meyer, Alan Haney, Bill Berry, Jane Severt. Photo by Patty Dreier.

A SAND COUNTY ALMANAC FEBRUARY – GOOD OAK

“There are two spiritual dangers of not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.”

~ Aldo Leopold

SAVE THE DATES

WCHF Virtual Induction
Ceremonies

April 24, 2021

WCHF Nominations Due

May 31, 2021

WCHF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive Committee Members

Patty Dreier (President)

Ice Age Trail Alliance

Amanda Bell (Vice President)

American Water Resources Association - WI Section

Jerry Knuth (Secretary)

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation

Gina Miresse (Treasurer)

Midwest Renewable Energy Association

Patrick Durkin (At Large)

Wisconsin Outdoor Communicators Association

Ed Harvey (At Large)

Wisconsin Conservation Congress

Diane Lueck (At Large)

UWSP College of Natural Resources

Marco Mascitti (At Large)

Wisconsin Wildlife Federation - Conservation Leadership Corps

Tom Rudolph (At Large)

Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association

Donna VanBuecken (At Large & Past President)

Wild Ones Natural Landscapers Ltd. - Fox Valley Area Chapter

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Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

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Wisconsin Tribal Conservation Advisory Council

Bruce Ross, Executive Director

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

Tracy Hames, Executive Director

Wisconsin Wetlands Association

Steve and Lois Raether

Wisconsin Woodland Owners Association

Board of Governors

Bill Berry**Tim Eisele****George Meyer****Jane Severt****Christine Thomas**

Administrative Assistant

Sunshine Buchholz

JOIN WCHF

If your conservation organization would like to join the WCHF as a member, please contact Sunshine at wchfame@gmail.com or call 715-346-4992. New members are considered on an annual basis.

WCHF Welcomes Our Newest Organizational Member Wisconsin Waterfowl Association

Waterfowl hunters typically progress through identifiable stages. First, they set about acquiring the knowledge and skills needed to successfully harvest ducks and geese. They grow to become advocates for the wetlands and policies that support their outdoor passion.

And finally, they seek to ensure future generations can benefit from similar outdoor experiences. The 7500-member Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA) was established in 1984 to support waterfowl hunters in all aspects of this trajectory.

WWA, through its state-wide network of volunteer chapters and with its small staff and volunteer board, fulfills three missions: (1) Restoring hydrology to disrupted or impaired wetlands; (2) Advocating in legislative and policy issues important to waterfowling; and (3) Educating both novice and experienced waterfowlers on all things waterfowl. In its 36-year history WWA has restored over 15,000 acres of wetlands, educated tens of thousands of waterfowlers, and enjoyed a track record of successful representation on issues important to the state's 60,000 waterfowlers. For more information visit wisducks.org.

