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

continued on page 2

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

continued on page 3

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.

Saturday, April 24
9:00 am - Stephen Born
11:00 am - Jens Jensen
1:00 pm - Stanley Temple
3:00 pm - Gary Eldred
are their legacies part of my life today and what might this mean for tomorrow?

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 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 Schmeeckle Reserve. I believe he was being inducted into the WCHF the next 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.

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
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.

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 Governors.

- **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.
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 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 maps, and writing reports. He has produced a number of studies and reports on prairie ecology and management. He has worked with a variety of landowners, farmers, and corporate entities to share the importance of native landscapes.

“Gary is much like the conservationists of old. He’s a Renaissance man, moving from field to boardroom, educating landowners, farmers, and corporate presidents on nature’s importance. He has been instrumental in preserving and re-establishing thousands of acres of prairies in Wisconsin.”

~ Richard Henderson, TPE Board of Directors

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

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 Schmeeckle Reserve at 715-346-4992 and ask for the WCHF Administrative Assistant.
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.

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

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 VanBuicken
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  Schmeeckle 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 thriftent.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

Other Directors

- **Stan Temple, Senior Fellow**
  - Aldo Leopold Foundation

- **Lisa Pearson, President**
  - Citizens Natural Resources Association

- **Mark Redsten, President and CEO**
  - Clean Wisconsin

- **Greg Dahl, Vice-President**
  - Dane County Conservation League

- **Jeff Maletzke, State Chairman**
  - Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Chapter

- **Mike Carlson, Executive Director**
  - Gathering Waters

- **Mike Wollmer, Executive Director**
  - Ice Age Trail Alliance

- **Richard Beilfuss, President and CEO**
  - International Crane Foundation

- **Gerald Ernst**
  - Izaak Walton League of America, Wisconsin Division

- **Tony Wilken Gibart**
  - Midwest Environmental Advocates

- **Don Gilbert**
  - Musky Clubs Alliance of Wisconsin

- **David Clutter, Executive Director**
  - Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin

- **John Bates**
  - The Nature Conservancy of Wisconsin

- **Rich Wentzel**
  - The Sierra Club, John Muir Chapter

- **Jan Harms**
  - Society of American Foresters, Wisconsin Chapter

- **Patrick Murphy**
  - Soil & Water Conservation Society, Wisconsin Chapter

- **Linn Beck, State Chairman**
  - Trout Unlimited - Wisconsin Council

- **Scott Craven**
  - The Wildlife Society – Wisconsin Chapter

- **Joseph Passineau**
  - Wisconsin Association for Environmental Education

- **Bob Juracka**
  - Wisconsin Audubon Council

- **Peggy Farrell, Director**
  - Wisconsin BOW – Becoming an Outdoors-Woman

- **Alan VanRaalte**
  - Wisconsin County Forests Association

- **Carl Schwartz**
  - Wisconsin Society for Ornithology

- **Matt Kruger, Director**
  - Wisconsin Land & Water Conservation Association

- **Peter McKeever**
  - Wisconsin Society of Ornithology

Tina Van Zile
- 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.