

**Awards Luncheon
June 23, 2014**

Members of the Awards Committee are: Ed Boggess, Minnesota; Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Jeff Vonk, South Dakota; Mark Reiter, Indiana; and myself. I want to thank them for their assistance in choosing the winners. We had 18 nominations for the five main awards.

Award winners are:

The Law Enforcement Officer of the Year award is given to the individual who in the past year has shown superior leadership, initiative, and dedication in their duties. This person should personify achievement, public service, education, and above all natural resource conservation. This award goes to **Robert Stroess, Wisconsin**; award accepted by Scott Gunderson.

The Wildlife Biologist of the Year award is given to the individual who has shown an unparalleled initiative towards the better understanding of wildlife and their conservation. This award goes to **Andy Lindbloom, South Dakota**; award accepted by Jeff Vonk.

The Fisheries Biologist of the Year award is given to the individual who has shown an unparalleled initiative towards the better understanding of fishes and their conservation. This award goes to **Randal Claramunt, Michigan**.

The Spirit of the Shack award is given to the individual who exemplifies the ideals of the great conservationist and educator, Aldo Leopold, and who has contributed to conservation in a superior way. This individual should epitomize stewardship and dedication to fish and wildlife conservation. This award goes to **Ray Eisenbrener, Illinois**; award accepted by Marc Miller.

Excellence in Conservation award is given to the agency that has shown excellence in conservation through a specific project. Each member agency would select one project completed in the awards year that exemplifies the goal of fish and wildlife conservation. This award also has perpetual plaque.

The Missouri Department of Conservation for its leadership implementing the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation's National Fish Habitat Initiative - Project at Table Rock Lake and Lake Taneycomo.

The NFHI project provided a unique opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of habitat structures that were installed in Table Rock Lake. Four different evaluation techniques to determine fish and angler use of the habitat structures began in 2009. Electrofishing surveys of habitat treated coves showed that fish can be attracted locally to habitat structures for spawning but habitat structures are not likely to congregate fish

from other areas of the lake. Underwater SCUBA surveys of bass and crappie species were conducted on five of the main types of structures installed in Table Rock Lake (hardwood trees, cedar trees, pine trees, stump fields and rock piles). During these surveys, largemouth bass were observed on all of the structure types and observed most often on hardwood structures. Crappie species were observed on all structure types except rock piles and most often on cedar trees. Finally, two types of angler surveys were utilized to determine angler use and opinions of installed habitat structures in Table Rock Lake. A roving-roving creel survey was used to determine if angler catch rates were improved as a result of habitat placement, as well as to assess angler opinions of the habitat project. A web-based survey was also conducted to determine opinions from the general angling public about the installed habitat structures and the NFHI project. The information gained through both surveys indicated anglers do support installation of habitat structures in Table Rock Lake and also feel that the installed habitat structures in the lake improved their fishing. This combination of information was used to determine that the habitat structures installed in Table Rock Lake generally employed the most effective techniques and materials for fish and angler use. The Table Rock Lake NFHI project builds upon a long-standing public/private partnership in southwest Missouri to improve and restore fish habitat in Table Rock Lake, Lake Taneycomo and their watersheds through cover augmentation, watershed management and other water quality related projects. The MDC, NFWF, BPS, AGFC, USACE, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Southwestern Power Administration, TRLWQ, various non-government organizations, angler groups and private citizens all worked cooperatively to fund the project and ensure the success of this project.

This project was an excellent opportunity to act proactively to maintain and enhance fish habitat in and around two of the Midwest's most popular sportfisheries. This project has proven to be a national example of sustaining and improving reservoir sportfish populations through large-scale habitat improvements. Results from this work have been widely shared with our conservation partners, the public and other professionals. The results and lessons learned from this effort will help shape the future of fish habitat management across the nation for many years to come. Award accepted by Tim Ripperger.

Sagamore of the Forest, Fields and Streams –

“A sagamore is the head of northeastern Native American tribe. The word is generally synonymous with sachem, although sometimes a sachem is considered a chief of the first rank, and a sagamore one of the second rank. Sagamore can also refer to great man among the tribe to whom the chief would look for wisdom and advice.” This honor is bestowed on any Director or upper level staff member that has contributed significant service to MAFWA. To qualify for this recognition, recipients must provide 4 years of service to MAFWA, have a 75 percent meeting attendance and serve on one or more committees. This award goes to: **Joe Kramer, Kansas** for 25 years of service to MAFWA (1990-2014) (with 16 of those acting as Secretary/Treasurer 1993-2009); and **Jon Gassett, Kentucky** for 8 years.

(Have a slide presentation for Joe Kramer)

The Past President's Award is given to **Keith Creagh, Michigan** who has served as the MAFWA President for the past year. Keith will receive this award at the business meeting on Wednesday.

President's Award – (presented by Keith Creagh, Michigan) – Great Lakes Fishery Commission, presented to Bob Lambe