

Midwestern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
2007 Awards Nominations Form

Award (check only one per form)

☐

Spirit of the Shack

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Fisheries Biologist of the Year

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Wildlife Biologist of the Year

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Marion Conover

Organization: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Title: Bureau Chief, Fisheries

E-mail: Marion.Conover@dnr.iowa.gov

Phone number: 515-281-5208

Person nominated for award:

Name: Don Bonneau

Organization: Iowa Department of Natural Resources

Title: Research Section Supervisor, Fisheries

1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:

Don Bonneau has distinguished himself through his 38 year career as a leader for fisheries conservation both within the state of Iowa and regionally as well. His greatest contributions have come recently and are a result of his vision for the future and dedication to using sound science for making decisions.

Don was the leader within the Department who laid the ground work for funding a new Lake Restoration Program. His vision was to tie water quality, economics, and quality of life issues to lake restoration. He initiated a 5-year study of 127 public lakes that assessed the water quality, technical feasibility of restoration, potential economic benefits, use by lowans and local interest and

involvement. The results of this study led to a prioritization of 35 candidate lakes for restoration.

A comprehensive \$4 million dollar restoration project at 140-acre Lake Ahquabi led by Don was used as an example of return on investment from well planned projects. Payback in terms of recreation benefits took only two years. As example, fishing increased over three-fold. This success story along with the science based prioritization of lakes has resulted in a state funded lake restoration program at a level of \$8.5 million annually in fiscal years 2007, 2008 and 2009. These are new and additional dollars from the state general fund. Local dollars have contributed an additional \$5 million to the program. The 3-year lake restoration project status includes seven completed projects and 15 in progress.

A shift in Iowans attitudes toward outdoor recreation is occurring as a result of the information gathering led by Don and the success of comprehensive lake restoration projects. The projects target critical watershed areas and in-lake problems resulting in lasting water quality improvements and greater recreation opportunities. Don's leadership has shown citizens there is more to Iowa than corn, beans, hogs and cattle. It is because of this informed and engaged public that we receive the annual funding commitment from the legislature.

2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.
 - A. Don has been active in the North American Lake Management Society (NALMS) as a board member. Largely through his efforts the 21st Annual NALMS Conference in Chicago this April included for the first time a partnership with fisheries interests. The conference theme was Building Partnerships for Improved Fisheries and Lake Water Quality. Sponsors of the conference included the American Fisheries Society, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. The program included presentations from water quality and fisheries experts

from around the country. The meeting resulted in a better understanding of the connection between water quality and fishing opportunities.

- B. Don authored a position statement that was adopted by NALMS at their Chicago meeting. The statement listed five positions with the most meaningful one being “Work with all interested stakeholders to develop support for reauthorization and funding of Section 314, Clean Water Act – the Clean Lakes Program.” A strong federal partner will greatly enhance states efforts to clean up their lakes.
- C. The Lake Restoration Program in Iowa was relocated into the Fisheries Bureau in May, 2007. Don provided rationale for this and it was elevated up the chain and accepted. This move has led to efficiency of program operation and stronger buy in of fisheries staff.
- D. Don and the Bureau Chief of Fisheries worked on a plan to more fully engage fisheries management biologists in watershed improvements. Position descriptions were rewritten with 25% time given to work in priority watersheds. This description of work is carried forward in individual performance plans. The result has been that fisheries managers are now measuring fewer fish and spending more time working with watershed partners to improve practices above priority lakes.

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Ron Dent

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Resource Science Division Chief

E-mail: Ron.Dent@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573-522-4115, X3168

Person nominated for award:

Name: John H. Schulz

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Resource Scientist

Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:

John's professional objective is to affect meaningful change in resource management through development of reliable knowledge and the implementation of conservation policy at local, regional, and national scales. John has shown unparalleled initiative towards meeting his goal throughout his 20+ year career with the Missouri Department of Conservation. Although he has dealt with varied issues over his career, most notably are his research and leadership in the Mourning Dove Harvest Management Strategy and lead toxicosis and non-toxic shot issues.

John has been primarily involved with research aimed at improving regional and national mourning dove harvest management decisions. He has been instrumental in the development of a harvest management decision-making process for doves resulting in the on-going development of the Mourning Dove Harvest Management Strategy process including the interim strategies of both the Central and Mississippi Flyway Councils. John serves in a leading role in his collaboration on the national pilot wing survey project and estimation of unbiased age ratios and in collaboration on the development of a national long-term operational mourning dove banding plan with operational and logistic details. His

integration at the national level serves as a model for others, and his continued focus and leadership in developing a national strategy for dove management has paid dividends as others in leadership roles are lending further support to the approach.

John has published results of his research on lead and mourning doves in 5 peer-reviewed publications and presented his results at multiple symposia. He has collaborated with MDC Wildlife and Protection divisions on a non-toxic shot regulations package for Missouri. Most impressive is his work to provide technical and strategic leadership at the national level on lead poisoning in terrestrial and aquatic systems. Most recently he attended the Wildlife Society executive board meeting to facilitate adoption of the joint American Fisheries Society and TWS technical review of Pb poisoning in wildlife and attended the Lead and Fish & Wildlife Working group and provided a summary presentation on the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference Pb Symposium. John's extensive knowledge and critical thinking abilities have led others in the profession to frequently rely on John for his valuable insight and vision regarding departmental and national direction on this highly contentious issue.

In summary, as wildlife professionals we do the difficult work of building reliable information used for reducing the uncertainty in the outcomes of management and policy directions, and John's tremendous volume of work reflects this objective. His talents as a creative thinker are essential in helping our profession move forward in many areas of conservation, and are recognized both locally and nationally. John is truly an asset to the profession.

Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award.

Professional Interstate Committee Participation:

- Central Flyway Webless Game Bird Technical Committee (member)
- Central Management Unit (CMU) Dove Technical Committee (chair)
- Central Flyway WMGBR Research Review Subcommittee (chair)
- National WMGBR Research Review Committee (chair)
- National Mourning Dove Task Force (co-chair)
- Eastern Management Unit Mourning Dove Technical Committee (member)
- AFWA Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group (member)
- AFWA Lead and Fish & Wildlife Working Group (member)
- AFWA Mourning Dove Lead Toxicosis Working Group (member)
- AFWA – MSUGB Webless Funding Priorities Task Force (member)
- Midwest Pheasant Study Group (member)
- Northcentral Section of The Wildlife Society (President 2004)

Awards: In 1999 John received the Wildlife Division Achievement Award for national leadership in mourning dove conservation issues.

Active Professional Memberships:

- The Wildlife Society (TWS)
 - Missouri TWS Chapter (Chapter President 2000)
 - North Central Section TWS (Section President 2004)
- Sigma Xi Honorary Scientific Research Society (National and MU)

American Ornithologists Union
Association of Field Ornithologists
The Wilson Ornithological Society
Cooper Ornithological Society
Wildlife Disease Association
Missouri Academy of Sciences

Publications: John has published 41 manuscripts in peer reviewed journals including the following focused on lead toxosis and dove harvest strategies:

- Schulz, J. H., V. G. Thomas, J. J. Millspaugh, G. E. Potts. 2008. Consideration for a national mourning dove nontoxic-shot regulation. *Journal of Wildlife Management*: In Prep.
- Schulz, J. H., X. Gao, J. J. Millspaugh, and A. J. Bermudez. 2007. Experimental lead pellet ingestion in mourning doves (*Zenaidura macroura*). *American Midland Naturalist*:177–190.
- Schulz, J. H., R. A. Reitz, S. L. Sheriff, and J. J. Millspaugh. 2007. Attitudes of Missouri small game hunters toward further nontoxic shot regulations. *Journal of Wildlife Management*:628– 633.
- Schulz, J. H., P. I. Padding, and J. J. Millspaugh. 2006. Will mourning dove crippling rates increase with nontoxic shot regulations? *Wildlife Society Bulletin* 34:861–865.
- Schulz, J. H., J. J. Millspaugh, A. J. Bermudez, X. Gao, T. W. Bonnot, L. G. Britt, and M. Paine. 2006. Experimental Acute Pb Toxicosis in Mourning Doves. *Journal of Wildlife Management* 70: 413–421.
- Schulz, J. H., D. Otis, J. Roberson, T. Hines, M. Rabe, T. Sanders, and D. D. Dolton (anonymous authors). 2005. Mourning dove national strategic harvest management plan. U.S. Department of Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C., USA.
- Bales, B. D., S. L. Sheriff, J. H. Schulz, and D. A. Shipes. 2002. The impact of the harvest information program on state-level survey capability and reliability. Pages 69–72 in J. M. Ver Steeg and R. C. Elden, compilers. *Harvest Information Program: Evaluation and Recommendations*. International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, Ad Hoc Committee on HIP, Washington, D.C., USA.
- Sheriff, S. L., J. H. Schulz, B. D. Bales, M. T. Moore, P. I. Padding, and D. A. Shipes. 2002. The current reliability of harvest information program surveys. Pages 51–68 in J. M. Ver Steeg and R. C. Elden, compilers. *Harvest Information Program: Evaluation and Recommendations*. International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, Migratory Shore and Upland Game Bird Working Group, Ad Hoc Committee on HIP, Washington, D.C., USA.

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Gene Gardner

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Wildlife Diversity Chief

E-mail: gene.gardner@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573-522-4115, ext. 3353

Person nominated for award:

Name: Dennis Figg

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy Coordinator

1. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:

Over the past 25 years, Dennis Figg has dedicated his career to the stewardship of fish, forest and wildlife conservation in Missouri. As one of MDC's first Natural Heritage Biologist, he focused his energy and enthusiasm on threatened and endangered species recovery, gaining him a promotion to Endangered Species Coordinator. He guided the growth and development of Missouri's Natural Heritage Database. In 1996, he was promoted to Natural History Programs Supervisor and, in 2000, he became a Chief in the Natural History Division. In this position of influence, he was a champion for integration of biodiversity elements into all MDC programs. Just one of his great successes included co-founding the Grasslands Coalition with Arthur Benson and the MO Prairie Foundation, still today a very influential force in grasslands conservation and recovery efforts for the greater prairie-chicken.

In 2003, Dennis Figg was appointed by Director John Hoskins to lead MDC through an almost overwhelming task of development of Missouri's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy (CWS). Dennis approached this challenge with enthusiasm and conviction. After more than two (2) years of hard work, Missouri's CWS emerged as a solid framework of conservation partnerships upon which many significant conservation actions are built. Dennis' vision, planning, and initiative as the Department's leader in this effort culminated in the successful development of our CWS; it is heralded by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, AFWA and other organizations as one of the best State Wildlife Action Plans in the nation. Dennis' reputation in this success is recognized nationwide, resulting in invitations to participate or facilitate many important regional and national initiatives (e.g., working groups, technical committees, training efforts, and symposia). This fact is perhaps best evidenced by AFWA requesting Dennis be assigned to their Washington, DC, office from September – October, 2007, which was approved by Assistant Director John Smith.

Dennis loves to share the outdoors with people. If you have ever been on a field trip with Dennis you know his enthusiasm and energy is catching...but he is hard to keep up with! He also likes to write frequently about plants, insects, birds, bats and other wildlife that are not familiar to many people. It was Dennis' enthusiasm, dedication, and dynamic leadership abilities that resulted in the development of Missouri's successful State Wildlife Action Plan. This habitat stewardship approach will guide Missouri's comprehensive conservation actions for many generations. Dennis' personal sacrifice of long days spent working on details, giving hundreds of presentations, attending countless meetings, and long trips out-of-state are a testament to his conviction that good conservation can be achieved in Missouri. The Missouri Conservation Commission stated, "Missouri's CWS approach to conservation planning uses ecologically-based assessments and existing plans to integrate conservation action for 'all wildlife.' The hopeful outcome of Missouri's CWS is healthy landscapes that produce diverse wildlife into the future. It is a strategy for conserving our wildlife heritage in all its many forms – with partners." I believe Aldo Leopold would be appreciative of what Dennis has contributed to Missouri's strong conservation stewardship.

2. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

- As a result of Dennis' vision, Missouri was praised by NatureServe as one of only four states that effectively addressed the needs of plant species of concern in their State Wildlife Action Plans.
- Dennis received two letters of commendation from Robyn Thorson, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Regional Director, for 1) his contributions to the Strategic Habitat Conservation workshop held in the USFWS Midwest Regional office; and 2) his representation of Midwestern states in the USFWS Region 3 Leadership Summit in Indianapolis, IN.
- Dennis takes every opportunity to advise students about careers in conservation and natural resources (e.g., St. Louis University Career Day).
- Dennis regularly provides training and assistance to MDC staff, other state and federal agencies, and partner organizations to promote their engagement in CWS implementation.
- Dennis gave closing remarks to the Society for Conservation Biology Conf.
- He hosted a land protection meeting for Peter Szabo, a representative for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. As a result, the DD Board authorized \$12.5 million in grants to the Midwestern states, with \$1 million going to Ducks Unlimited, Inc., for land protection in the Mingo and Confluence Conservation Opportunity Areas in Missouri.
- Bill Uihlein, Chair-Lower Mississippi River Joint Venture, commended Dennis for his efforts to successfully attain a \$146,000 grant from National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for a bi-state bottomland forest restoration project between Tennessee and Missouri.
- Dennis was invited to participate in MAFWA State Coordinators meeting to identify cross-state and regional priority projects with Midwestern states.
- With support from Ollie Torgerson, Dennis was instrumental in the MAFWA Executive Committee voting to formally establish the MAFWA Wildlife Action Plan Technical Working Committee. He is also a member of SEAFWA WAP Technical Working Group and the SE Ad Hoc CWCS Committee.
- At the request of AFWA, Dennis represented the State Wildlife Action Plan strategies by speaking at the national meeting of the Isaac Walton League.
- Dennis was a member of the Steering Committee and gave presentations at the One Year Later Meeting for CWS state coordinators at the National Conservation Training Center, WV.
- He is a member of the AFWA working group that developed the National Synthesis project.
- Dennis is a member of the National Council for Science in the Environment – Wildlife Habitat Policy Research Program (WHPRP) and was asked to analyze the priorities, obstacles, and opportunities for implementing U.S. State Wildlife Action Plans, and helped develop research questions to address global climate change. Dennis also serves on the Advisory Board for the WHPRP.
- Dennis will be assisting the NE Area Assoc. State Foresters develop their portion of the National Comprehensive Forest Resources Plan (equivalent effort to CWS) during their July 13, 2008 Annual Meeting.

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Information from person making the nomination:

Name: Colonel Robert Milligan

Organization: Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Title: Director

E-mail: robert.milligan@ky.gov

Phone number: 502-564-7109

Person nominated for award:

Name: Conservation Officer Jeff Finn

Organization: Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources

Title: Wildlife Crimes Investigator-Internet

2. Provide a brief (one page or less) overview explaining why the individual meets the criteria for the award:

CO Jeff Finn is a twenty four veteran of the KDFWR Division of Law Enforcement. He has previously been honored as Kentucky's Conservation Officer of the Year for his outstanding work in law enforcement and public relations.

In 2006, Officer Finn was given the assignment of forming an Internet Crimes Unit to help combat the illegal sale and trade of wildlife which is a \$10 billion a year worldwide business. Because of his expertise Officer Finn has become a clearinghouse for other fish and wildlife agencies in the U.S. and Canada. Officer Finn established a working relationship with internet providers and that relationship has proved invaluable in allowing Officer Finn to assist

officers from thirty five states with securing information from internet providers for their cases. He has assisted officers in Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Saskatchewan, Ontario and Manitoba. He also works on a continuing basis with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and has assisted officers in other states in gathering information on individuals using the internet for their illegal sale and trade of wildlife resources. Among those state wildlife agencies Officer Finn has assisted are: New Mexico, Arizona, New York, Florida, Idaho, Iowa, California, Montana, South and North Dakota, Nevada South Carolina, Texas, Louisiana, and New Hampshire.

Officer Finn was a founding member of the Kentucky Conservation Officer's Association (KCOA) and served on its executive board. He started a publishing company in order to continue publishing the association's magazine when the original publisher opted out of the contract. His publishing company also publishes for Louisiana and South Carolina game warden associations. Officer Finn also maintains the KCOA website and has recreated most of the law enforcement report forms in electronic format that allow for electronic submission by our officers.

3. Please list and/or describe specific projects, work or accomplishments relevant to the award. Please limit your information to one page.

Examples of Officer Finn's investigations have resulted in the arrest of an individual charged with the illegal sale of turkey beards over the internet, an individual charged with illegal taking of eight turkeys over the limit, an individual illegally selling over \$19 thousand dollars worth of antlers, the identification of an individual using government equipment to sell over \$74 thousand dollars worth of antler, the federal arrest and prosecution of a company selling and shipping live piranha and the identification of three other companies using the internet to engage in similar activities. Officer Finn provided assistance to our Special Investigations Unit during the recent seven state investigation into illegal coyote and fox trade. His investigations have also identified individuals involved in interstate sell of reptiles- snakes-which is an ongoing investigation.

Officer Finn originated the idea of locating information centers, used to educate sportsmen and sportswomen and the general public about fish, game and boating laws and conservation issues, in high traffic areas such as Wal-Marts, courthouses and sporting stores around the state.

Officer Finn is an instructor for the Southeast Association of Wildlife Investigators, and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement Academy.

Currently Officer Finn is assisting Tennessee, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri investigating individuals who have purchased resident hunting and fishing license in multiple states by claiming residency. To date, several hundred persons have been identified.

Conservation Officer Jeff Finn epitomizes the commitment, dedication and professionalism that is necessary to be an effective "Game Warden" in today's society. While maintaining the traditional values and sense of mission Officer Finn readily embraces change and seeks ways to improve the ability of our officers to more effectively and efficiently carry out their mission. He has a progressive attitude and a willingness to move beyond his comfort zone for the benefit of this department and its officers.

Thank you for considering Conservation Officer Jeff Finn for this award.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

2008 President's Award

Presented to the

Colorado Chapter of the Nature Conservancy

The Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies has an award called the President's Award. It is given each year by the MAFWA President to an individual or organization that the President wishes to acknowledge (usually in the President's state). Recognizing the need for a comprehensive vision to address the critical challenges Colorado faces as a state, the Colorado Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, along with 4 other leading Colorado conservation organizations, announced on April 23 (2008) a collaborative and far-reaching conservation vision to preserve in perpetuity Colorado's iconic landscapes.

The TNC and its many partners envisions a Colorado in which our finest working farms and ranches, unique wildlife habitats, world-renowned recreational landscapes, scenic vistas and open spaces are permanently protected for current and future generations.

Setting Priorities

Through the partnership, **24 landscapes across Colorado encompassing over 700,000 acres** have been selected as conservation priority landscapes. The landscapes were selected based on five key attributes of value to Coloradans:

- wildlife habitat/biologically significant lands
- working farms and ranches
- recreational areas
- scenic vistas
- community separators.

Colorado arguably has some of the finest landscapes in the world and while we are a leader in landscape conservation with over 2 million acres of private land protected statewide, some of the richest, most beautiful acreage in our state remains unprotected. With Colorado's population estimated to grow by 100,000 each year, the demand for land development to serve the influx increasingly threatens these treasured farmlands, natural lands, and open spaces that make Colorado, Colorado.

The Nature Conservancy has long been a valued partner of state fish and wildlife agencies across the Midwest. The relationship between the Colorado Chapter of The Nature Conservancy and the Colorado Division of Wildlife epitomizes that relationship. When it comes to protecting the most important wildlife habitats in Colorado, the TNC and the Division of Wildlife are typically of one mind.

In recognition of its track record of natural resource conservation in Colorado and especially for its unflagging dedication to the continued preservation of Colorado's wild landscapes, it is my pleasure to present the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies' 2008 President's Award to the Colorado Chapter of The Nature Conservancy.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Colorado State Director, Charles Bedford, is Director of Conservation Initiatives, Tim Sullivan.