

## Awards Luncheon June 27, 2011

Members of the Awards Committee are: Rex Amack, Nebraska; Ed Boggess, Minnesota; Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Jeff Vonk, South Dakota; and myself. I want to thank them for their assistance on choosing the winners. We had 14 nominations for the four 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 **Ted Dremel, Wisconsin**; accepting the award for Ted will be Scott Gunderson, Exec Asst for WI DNR

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 **Lloyd Fox, Kansas**; accepting the award for Lloyd is Joe Kramer, Fish and Wildlife Division Director.

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 **Tommie Berger, Kansas**; accepting the award for Lloyd is Joe Kramer, Fish and Wildlife Division Director.

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 **Gus Raeker, Missouri**; accepting the award for Gus is Bob Ziehmer, Director, MO Dept of Conservation

The Past President's Award is given to **Patricia L. Boddy, Iowa** who has served as the MAFWA President for the past year. Pat is changing jobs in a few days she will be the new Director of Environmental Strategies with RDG Planning and Design (given at business meeting).

There are 8 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. These awards go to:

**Dave Graham, Ohio**; accepting for Dave will be Dave Lang

**Scott Hassett, Wisconsin**; accepting for Scott will be Scott Gunderson, Exec Asst for WI DNR

**John Hoskins, Missouri**; accepting for John will be Bob Ziehmer, Director MO Dept of Conservation

**Becky Humphries, Michigan** (Becky will be there)

**Rich Leopold, Iowa**; (Rich will be there)

**David Schad, Minnesota**; accepting for Dave will be Ed Boggess.

**Jeff Ver Steeg, Colorado**; this will be mailed to Jeff.

**Dan Zekor, Missouri**; accepting for Dan will be Bob Ziehmer, Director MO Dept of Conservation

**President Pat Boddy will present the other two awards.**

President's Award – National Archery in the Schools

Special Recognition Award - Iowa Water and Land Legacy

Past recipients of the award are: Tom Young, KY 2003; John Baughman, AFWA 2006; Carol Bamberg, AFWA 2008; and Robyn Thorson, USFWS 2008.

**Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards**  
**Nominations Form 2011**

Award (check only one per form)

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Spirit of the Shack

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Wildlife Biologist of the Year

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Fisheries Biologist of the Year

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

**Nominator information**

Name: Lisa Allen

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: State Forester

E-mail: Lisa.Allen@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573-522-4115, ext 3120

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

I would like to nominate Gus Raeker for the Spirit of the Shack Award. Gus is a Forest District Supervisor for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). In this role, he works closely with other resource disciplines in the agency, including wildlife biologists, fisheries biologists, private land conservationists, and conservation agents. He has shown a great amount of leadership in initiating, leading and implementing large scale projects that involve diverse partners and benefit multiple natural resources (examples addressed in question 2 below). His efforts are successful because he takes a "big picture" approach to natural resource management and has a long term vision of resource stewardship much like Leopold. Yet also like Leopold, he understands that stewardship happens on the ground and involves tireless work, commitment, enthusiasm, partnership and hope for the future. Gus embodies the "spirit of conservation" and has a great appreciation for the long term stewardship required to sustain healthy forest, fish and wildlife populations now and in the future.

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

Gus assumed leadership of the Missouri River Hills Conservation Opportunity Area (COA) team. This COA is the largest block of forested land in Missouri north of the Missouri River. It is also geographically close to the St. Louis metropolitan area, so it is subject to continual development and land conversion pressure. He was the manager of over 7,800 acres of state land in this COA, but also worked extensively with private landowners in this geography. He was successful in obtaining a number of grants from the Ruffed Grouse Society and the National Wild Turkey Federation for landowner cost share practices in this area. He also took the initiative to develop and apply for a competitive grant through the USDA Forest Service aimed at providing funding to pay stewardship fees for conservation easements in Conservation priority areas (with the focus in the Missouri River Hills COA and Priority Forest Landscape). This grant was originally approved for \$190,000 and was the top ranked proposal in the 20 state Northeastern Area. Gus used his creativity to develop this grant proposal and he also managed the grant when it was approved. Unfortunately, the Forest Service later discovered internal regulations that restricted payments of this nature, so funding was partially withheld due to limitations in Federal spending authority. Even so, through Gus's initiative, the grant brought \$71,279 to Missouri and was ultimately responsible for conserving 1,341 acres of forest land valued at over \$1,000,000.

Gus recently completed a career defining project when he led the development of the Missouri Forest Resource Assessment and Strategy (FRAS). The Forestry Title of the 2008 Farm Bill directed states to complete forest assessments and strategies as a requirement to continue receiving financial support from the Forest Service. The FRAS is equivalent to the State Wildlife Action Plan and the completion required a two year time commitment and substantial work by Gus. Gus was chosen to lead this effort from 16 candidates through a competitive interview process. Once selected, Gus hit the ground running. He coordinated with Wildlife staff to assure the FRAS complemented the State's Comprehensive Wildlife Strategy (CWS). He also spent considerable time with Forestry Division leadership to more clearly define the expectations, process and products expected.

Through the process, Gus worked tirelessly to pull together stakeholders including numerous state and federal agencies, NGO's, Associations, environmental groups, landowner groups, individuals and MDC staff. He planned and facilitated six stakeholder meetings throughout the state for over 160 participants. He spent countless hours researching information related to Missouri's forests and related resources and worked closely with many Department staff to develop and refine criteria for the assessment and to

assemble appropriate data sets used in the assessment. During this process, Gus worked closely with USFS State & Private Forestry staff to assure our assessment and strategies met Forest Service guidelines. Gus's passion, knowledge and strategic thinking abilities were recognized by the Forest Service and he was invited to participate at the national level to help define the criteria to be used in developing the FRAS and the process for completing them. To complete the document, Gus wrote extensively. This included a lot of research, consultation and collaboration with MDC staff partners and stakeholders, but ultimately, he had to pull it all together in a comprehensive, yet understandable plan.

The Missouri FRAS has been held up as a model for other states. Gus and State Forester Lisa Allen have been invited to make presentations related to it at several regional and national meetings. {These include: Northeastern Area Planners and Cooperative Forest Management Committee meeting - summer, 2009; Northeastern Area Association of State Foresters - summer, 2009; National Association of State Foresters - Sept, 2010; Society of American Foresters national conference - October, 2010; USFS State & Private Forestry National Leadership meeting - April, 2010; Mark Twain National Forest Leadership Meeting - January, 2010}. In addition to the numerous stakeholder meetings, Gus made presentations to the MDC Expanded Staff, Administration and Division Chiefs, and the Missouri Conservation Commission.

The development of Missouri's FRAS was a collaborative process that required the input and involvement of a lot of individuals, but the majority of the work was done by Gus. He poured his heart and soul into this project and that passion is reflected in the quality of the final product. This document will be a cornerstone for forestry in Missouri for the next several decades. It is difficult to predict the importance of this monumental plan or the impact it will have on the health and sustainability of Missouri's forest resources in the future, but I expect it will be significant and it will be regarded as a watershed document for forestry in Missouri.

In addition to the publication of the actual FRAS document, the September, 2010 **Missouri Conservationist** magazine was dedicated to the Missouri FRAS. Gus wrote five articles for that magazine which provided information about FRAS, but also introduced hundreds of thousands of Missourians to forest management and conservation. It is difficult to imagine any one individual who will have a more significant potential impact on Missouri's forests in the next decade.

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**Nominations Form 2011**

Award (check only one per form)

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Spirit of the Shack

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Wildlife Biologist of the Year

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Fisheries Biologist of the Year

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

**Nominator information**

Name: Mike Mitchener

Organization: Kansas Dept. Wildlife & Parks

Title: Wildlife Section Chief

E-mail: mike.mitchener@ksoutdoors.com

Phone number: 620-672-0796

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

I consider Lloyd Fox as one of the best deer scientists in the Midwest. Since 1995 Lloyd has led the deer management program in Kansas through some of the most trying times sociologically, politically and biologically. Sociologically and politically Lloyd has been the scientist providing the data and leadership to begin the offering of Kansas deer permits to non residents for the first time and monitoring and promoting Kansas as being one of the premier white-tailed deer hunting destinations in the nation.

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

Lloyd as the ever the watchful and forward looking biologist saw the need to begin surveillance for CWD in Kansas. Lloyd has spent much time and effort to see that a program for surveillance was started on a shoestring budget and carried on for a number of years until the APHIS CWD surveillance grant program was started. Lloyd's efforts in this arena have paid off in the Kansas CWD surveillance program ramping up to a statewide program and having in place a contingency plan for Kansas once CWD actually was found in northwest Kansas. Lloyd's tireless efforts in this arena enabled KDWP to be able to hire a wildlife disease coordinator position in order to more efficiently and effectively have the CWD surveillance program ran in Kansas.

Lloyd is always cognizant of passing his knowledge and passion for science and the outdoors on to students and peers, and co-workers. Lloyd also participates in the Conservation Leaders for Tomorrow program.

Lloyd participates in several important committees such as the Midwest deer and turkey work group, the Midwest wildlife health committee, the western mule deer work group, and regularly attends training with the Southeast Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study.

A recent example of Lloyds desire to promote and provide understanding of the deer resource occurred during a controversial deer cull in a large urban park in the Kansas City Metro area. Lloyd worked with the park officials to develop a plan for the cull, despite his efforts to stay in the background, was placed in the media's eye and performed with his typical professional style. In fact Lloyd was not satisfied with only performing this function for the Department. He developed a process to perform necropsies on over 300 deer from the cull to do a herd health check. Lloyd brought in a vet from SCWDS to assist, and developed projects with Kansas State University parasitologists to look at ticks and other endo and ectoparasites and Emporia State University to do blood work.

Lloyd's excellent work was recently recognized in his receiving the 2010 KDWP Wildlife Section award and the 2010 Fisheries and Wildlife Division award for his dedication to the natural resources of the State of Kansas.

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Fisheries Biologist of the Year

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

**Nominator information**

Name: Doug Nygren

Organization: Kansas Dept. Wildlife & Parks

Title: Fisheries Section Chief

E-mail: doug.nygren@ksoutdoors.com

Phone number: 620-672-0793

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

I would like to nominate District Fisheries Biologist Tommie Berger as a candidate for the 2011 Fisheries Biologist of the Year Award. Tommie is effective and efficient in all aspects of his job; this nomination, however, is founded primarily on his outstanding efforts regarding a special project on Sand Creek, also known as the Kanopolis Seep Stream.

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

The Dept has maintained a put and take trout fishery in the seep stream below the KANR dam since 1986. In 2007, Tommie began work on a habitat enhancement proposal for this 1.3 mile stretch of stream. He worked with numerous COE, NRCS,

KDWP personnel and others to plan and complete these enhancements. It took several years, but with persistence, he was able to see the project through. Several grade control structures were built which provide ponds, plunge pools and riffle areas; extensive erosion control work was completed; lunger structures, vegetation plantings, and instream habitat structures were installed. The project was completed this fall, and he was able to document survival through the summer for both brown trout and rainbows.

A couple of months ago, there was message from an angler through "contact us" – this message sums it up pretty good – it says:

*"I wanted to thank those responsible for the upkeep and changes to the Kanopolis stream. My boys and I fish there frequently and truly enjoy the experience. The area is clean and well kept and the water conditions are great this year. We travel out of state every year to trout fish, but the Kanopolis stream provides us a great trout stream 30 minutes from our home. My boys and I are making memories they will have their entire lives and hopefully pass on to their children. Please keep up the great work."*

Tommie has dedicated a great deal of time and effort to this important cooperative project. This work has generated widespread interest and could have implications for other stream enhancement efforts throughout the country. His achievements with this effort are certainly worthy of special recognition through the 2010 Fisheries Section award.

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Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

**Nominator information**

Name: Carl Mesman

Organization: Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Title: Conservation Warden Supervisor

E-mail: carl.mesman@wisconsin.gov

Phone number: 920-295-8029

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

Ted is exactly what you want all of the wardens on the force to be. Trustworthy, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Great Sense Of Humor, Dedicated, Professional, Intelligent, and Honorable. The Wisconsin Warden Challenge Coin best describes Ted's professional and personal life. "Doing The Right Thing, At The Right Time, In The Right Way, For The Right Reason". Ted exemplifies all of these. Ted carries himself and conducts himself in a professional manner and sets the utmost example to the public and to the other DNR staff. Ted not only expects this from himself but also expects the best effort from all other LE and DNR staff that he works with and assists them achieving this. Ted is very humble and his primary concern is the successful completion of an investigation or project and not in his resulting personal accolades. Ted is very quick to offer credit for each person's involvement in a case or project. Ted recognizes the importance of complimenting these efforts and takes the time to send these thanks through emails and copying their supervisors. It may seem like a minor thing to do but the person receiving these see them as being very important. Ted has always been the consummate professional in his dealings with the sportsmen, students, businesspersons, elected officials, educators, the law enforcement community and the general public. Ted can be counted on to have a positive attitude toward his performance and the performance of

the DNR. Ted is always enjoyable to work with and extends himself to assist in projects as a warden as well as personally. Ted is highly committed to his career as a Conservation Warden that includes taking advantage of opportunities for self-improvement. In addition, he looks for innovative ways to contribute towards the improvement of the entire warden service.

Ted has taken the lead in complex investigations and utilizes the IC Concepts to assign wardens to roles in the investigation utilizing their strengths to maximize their effectiveness.

Ted has routinely been at the forefront of embracing technological advances and is willing to take part in testing of new equipment. Though all of Ted's program is exceptionally strong it is in the area of Investigative Skills where Ted shows his greatest skills include interviewing, evidence detection, evidence collection, documentation/report writing, and organizational skills. Ted is one of the premier interviewers and investigators in the state and has been asked to be on multiple investigative teams throughout the state. Though Ted is often asked to be part of these teams Ted continues to contact other wardens and teams to volunteer to be part of an investigation. Ted has been a key covert warden to assist the Special Operation Unit and was the primary source of information leading to a successful completion of a major wildlife poisoning case.

To be able to devote his best efforts to his profession he must be secure in his family life. Ted has struck a healthy balance between work and his personal life. When Ted varies his work hours and days to address the needs of the station and immerses himself into his work and his phenomenal results show his passion for Conservation Law Enforcement, public relations and education. Lucky is the recruit that has Ted as an FTO. Ted not only has exceptional field warden skills but is able to teach these skills to recruits. Ted gives the recruits a wide range of exposure to warden duties as well as arranging for the recruit to work with other wardens and other DNR staff. Ted carries a keen observation of recruit performance and points out accomplishments as well as areas needing improvements. His instruction is constructive comments and not destructive criticism. The recruit sees and ability to improve and also the reason for the need to. Ted passes on his knowledge of Natural Resources and Outdoor Recreation by being a trainer at the Warden Waterfowl Enforcement School, Learn To Hunt Turkey for 5 years, Learn To Deer Hunt for Disabled Hunters for 4 years, Deer Hunt For King Home Veterans, and being an instructor at the DNR Hunting Heritage Conference.

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

### **Specific Projects:**

- **Turkey Learn To Hunt:** Ted has assisted in organizing a turkey learn to hunt event in Waupaca for the past five years and in 2009 took the lead role for this event. Ted contacts landowners, gives a firearm safety presentation and hunting techniques. Ted also meets with the hunters on the hunt days.
- **Learn To Hunt for Disabled Hunters** Ted has organized a Learn To Hunt event for disabled novice hunters for three years at Hartman Creek State Park. Exceptional effort in working with other Department staff and Disabled Advocacy groups to put this hunt on. No greater reward as a warden can occur than to see how the world of outdoor

recreation can be opened to someone who has only seen barriers to it in the past. This LTH was named in the DNR's Diversity Award nomination.

- **Deer Hunt For King Home Veterans:** Ted organized a deer hunt for two veterans residing at the King Veterans Home. Coordinating with a local deer farmer Ted was able to allow two elderly men another opportunity, possibly their last, to go deer hunting. Both were able to harvest a deer and both they and their families expounded on their gratitude that they were able to participate in the hunt.

**Work/Accomplishments:**

- **Special Operation Unit:** Ted has become a primary resource for the SOU. Ted has shown to be an excellent covert warden and has been used on many cases needing this talent. One of the cases where his involvement was key to the success involved a poisoning case in the NOR that involved wide spread use of a poison that killed indiscriminately animals from the smallest mouse to bear, wolves and eagles. In 2010 this case moved to overt investigative with a cooperative on scene investigation and interviews by our department and the USFWS. Due to the sensitivity of this case few details can be relayed at this point. SOU Supervisor Brian Ezman gave these observation of Ted's capabilities in undercover investigations:

- Warden Dremel's role was instrumental in the development and documentation of evidence of federal laws being violated by the large agricultural business that was being investigated. Warden Dremel spent considerable amount of time assisting with the investigation while continuing to perform his full workload as a Field Conservation Warden. Warden Dremel sacrificed time away from his family due to the travel and work demands of the case. Warden Dremel's personality, demeanor, and effective communication style played a key role in the successful outcome of the case. His talents are unique and highly sought after. Warden Dremel was able to adapt to a very different type of work environment during the course of the investigation (compared to his work environment as a field warden) which resulted in his ability to obtain critical pieces of intelligence that produced strong irrefutable evidence of crimes that were committed. Warden Dremel demonstrated the ability to think "on the fly" to consider documenting elements of violations involving both federal and state law under high pressure circumstances

- **Shooting Accident/Self Inflicted/Intoxicated Possession of Firearm:** Ted assisted the Waupaca Sheriff Dept. in the investigation of a shooting incident that was originally reported as a hunting accident. Ted determined it was a self inflicted injury that was not hunting related but did result from intoxication of the victim. Ted continued the investigation to provide the Sheriff Dept. with the needed information for their case.

- **Fatal Hunting Incident:** Ted was the lead Investigator and coordinator for a Fatal Hunting Accident Investigation. This investigation was not an issue of who had shot a member of the hunting party as this was already known. The emphasis on the case involved the interaction with the family (as it was grandfather shooting grandson) and determining how this accident occurred. Ted's talents came in focus at the accident scene through the assignment of tasks, Incident Command measures and empathy to the family members. The final report was exceptional.

- **Timber Theft Case:** Ted was the primary investigator in a wide spread illegal timber harvesting practices by loggers in the mid Wisconsin area. Ted worked directly with the Forestry Investigator in this case. Ted conducted the primary interviews, drafting subpoenas for records and putting the investigative reports together. The

forestry staff learned how to conduct these types of investigations through Ted's example.

- **Iola Thrill Kill Investigation:** this case was multi faceted involving field investigations, interviews of complainants, evidence collection, prediction of future locations of violations, surveillance and interview of suspects. This case started as a complaint of dead deer being found in the area fields and shots being heard at night. Numerous nights were worked overlooking fields and decoys were used. Ted was able to focus these efforts through tracking of additional information he received. The final result of the surveillance was having the suspects shooting at a deer in a field that Ted was sitting and watching. The rest of the case's success was the result of Ted's interview abilities. The final count was 19 deer killed and 20-25 shot and wounded.
- **Deer Killed By Snowmobile Thrill Kill Investigation:** this case held the attention of the state and across the nation. The case involved 5 deer being intentionally run down by snowmobiles. There was little information available other than the deer lying in the field. Ted worked with the Waupaca Sheriff Dept., the snowmobile community, the media and the public to quickly gather information to bring this case to a point where search warrants were issued for suspect's homes. Great organizational skills to get interview and evidence collection teams together for the service of these warrants. Ted's best performance again came as the result of his interview ability of the subjects involved. The final result was 3 persons being arrested for felony animal cruelty as well as DNR charges. This all occurred in one week for a case that may have never have been solved.