

Awards Luncheon June 29, 2015

Members of the Awards Committee are: Ed Boggess, Minnesota; Terry Steinwand, North Dakota; Gregory Johnson, Kentucky; Mark Reiter, Indiana; and myself. I want to thank them for their assistance in choosing the winners. We had 19 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 **Gregory Swanson, Indiana**; *award accepted by Greg.*

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 **John Olson, Wisconsin**; *award accepted by Cathy Stepp.*

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 **Paul D. Calvert, Missouri**; *award accepted by Bob Ziehmer.*

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 **Scott Walter, Wisconsin**; *award accepted by Cathy Stepp.*

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 Stream Team

The Missouri Stream Team Program is a citizen-led effort to conserve Missouri streams. Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), the Stream Team Program focuses on education, stewardship, and advocacy for Missouri stream resources. The Program provides supplies and technical assistance to meet the needs of Stream Teams and their diverse individual goals, and also recognizes Team accomplishments through social media, newsletters, certificates,

and awards. Missouri Stream Team is a national leader in volunteer stream stewardship efforts thanks to the creativity and determination of its members and strong agency support.

The success of the Stream Team Program is a great example of how Missourians value conservation of fish, forests, and wildlife, and how the Conservation Department, DNR, and CFM work with citizens to conserve our natural resources. In the last 25 years, the Missouri Stream Team Program has grown to over 5,000 active Stream Teams consisting of an estimated 90,000 volunteers working to conserve Missouri's rivers and streams. Since 1989, Stream Teams have been an impassioned voice for the protection of streams that Missourians rely on for clean drinking water, quality fishing, and first-class recreational opportunities. The Program merits recognition for its achievement in engaging citizens to act on behalf of Missouri streams.

Due to the nature of the Missouri Stream Team Program and the independence of its members, it is difficult to highlight the accomplishments of a single Team or project. However, the accomplishments of the Program as a whole over the last 25 years are remarkable.

While the Program began as a stewardship-oriented endeavor to remove litter from waterways, Teams have expanded their interests and efforts in stream conservation over the last 25 years. A few examples of the 36 types of activities reported by Teams include litter pickups, water quality monitoring, educational presentations, letters to elected officials, riparian restoration, invasive species monitoring, and storm drain stenciling. Recently, rain barrel and rain garden projects to reduce stormwater runoff are becoming more popular, and Teams are finding creative ways to reach their peers and elected officials using social media.

To demonstrate the scope of Program accomplishments, over the last 25 years Teams have reported more than:

- 11,000 tons of litter removed from waterways (2,200,000 pounds);
- 25,000 water quality monitoring trips;
- 270,000 trees planted along streams;
- 17,500 storm drains stenciled with the message *Dump No Waste, Drains to Stream*;
- 2,900 educational presentations given to inform communities, youth, and other groups about watershed issues; and
- 2,305,000 hours committed to the Program since 1989.

Because of the tremendous scope of achievements by the citizens of Missouri fostered by their dedicated sponsors, the Missouri Stream Team Program is worthy of recognition for the Excellence in Conservation Award by the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Award accepted by Bob Ziehmer.

Special Recognition Service Awards are intended to honor any person or group who has made an outstanding contribution to: the wildlife profession; to the general areas of wildlife conservation, management, or science; or to a specific area of endeavor, species, community, ecosystem, region, etc. In addition, any person or group who has made such a noteworthy contribution in a discrete area over the short or long term is

eligible for nomination for a Special Recognition Service Award. We have two of these awards this year.

This award goes to **Sharon M. Schafer**, Michigan; In August, 2009 Joe Kramer announced his desire to step down as MAFWA Secretary/Treasurer after 20 years of voluntary service. Michigan DNR Director Becky Humphries offered her Chief of Office of Budget, Sharon Schafer, as a replacement for the treasurer duties if the functions of secretary and treasurer could be separated. The MAFWA by-laws were subsequently amended to create an office of Treasurer and an office of Recording Secretary. In early 2010, Sharon Schafer assumed MAFWA treasurer functions and Sheila Kemmis accepted the Recording Secretary duties.

As you have seen this morning, both Sharon and Sheila sit at the Director's table fulfilling their very critical functions. However, after over 5 years of faithful and exemplary service as our voluntary MAFWA Treasurer, Sharon has requested to be replaced at the end of this calendar year.

It is with a great deal of gratitude that we wish to honor Sharon. Sharon has not only managed all aspects of our Association's finances, including but not limited to invoicing, payables, grant management, account reconciliation, conference accounting, Federal tax form submissions, financial statement preparation, etc.—she has done so on her own personal time and with great precision. She has passed two professional audits with flying colors.

Sharon, in recognition of your high degree of professionalism and dedicated service to the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, it is my distinct honor to present you with this special recognition award. *Award accepted by Sharon.*

The second award goes to I nominate the **Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) Workgroup** that successfully organized and oversaw the effort to provide sound scientific and biological input and comment to the US Fish & Wildlife Service relative to proposed listing of the NLEB under the Endangered Species Act. The Workgroup with the guidance and support of Chief Zody from Ohio successfully organized and effectively presented state interest and the ultimate outcome was a decision to list the NLEB as Threatened with a 4(d) rule. The listing decision and the 4(d) rule determination allowed for effective consideration of state management considerations. The Directors identified the members of the work group (Mr. Baker, Ms. Crain, Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Norris) and Director Zody to serve as their primary liaison to the group within 2 weeks of the conclusion of the MAFWA meeting. They conducted numerous weekly conference calls and over the course of 3 months, the group identified a location for the Workshop (Minneapolis), developed an agenda and goals for the Work Shop, solicited additional background material, research and data for the Work Shop, identified and invited experts to attend and present at the Work Shop and developed an invitation list. The invitations were sent to all 39 potentially affected state fish & wildlife agencies, state foresters, and regional offices of the USFWS and US Forest Service (USFS). The group had to work through differing opinions and policy positions of not only the state members of MAFWA, but the Northeast and Southeast regional associations and the Northern Area State Foresters and the Southeast State Foresters associations. In addition, the work group had to be cognizant of the ESA listing process and protocols to ensure compliance with the end product coming out of the Work Shop.

In early October, the Workshop was conducted over two and one-half days. The first day consisted of defining the issue and presentations and updates on the latest scientific and biological information available. The remainder of the Workshop consisted of developing recommendations in the form of formal comments to consider for submission to the USFWS. At the Workshop, the group provided insight, leadership and helped facilitate discussions. During breaks and after each day's meetings, the group would meet and discuss, analyze and debate (sometimes vigorously!) the day's results and direction for the next day. Each member of the work group maintained a high level of professionalism and decorum, at times working to develop a consensus and providing Director Zody with timely feedback and questions for the MAFWA leadership. The end result of the work group's efforts were the development of a consensus set of recommendations to the USFWS on the listing of NLEB, to the point that not only MAFWA and SEAFWA signed on to the comment letter, but so did the Northern and Southeastern State Forester associations. This unprecedented effort and collaboration deserves recognition, and the work of the NLEB Work Group has laid a solid foundation for state and regional agencies/associations to work together cooperatively on future potential listing decisions by the USFWS. *Award accepted by Scott Zody.*

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:

Jeff Vonk, 4 years Iowa and 8 years South Dakota. *Award accepted by Jeff.*

Marc Miller, 6 years Illinois. *Award accepted by Wayne Rosenthal.*

Scott Gunderson, 4 years Wisconsin. *Award accepted by Cathy Stepp.*

The Past President's Award is given to **Ed Boggess, Minnesota** 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 Ed Boggess Minnesota) – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Midwest Region, presented to Tom Melius.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2015

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: Indiana Conservation Officer Gregory Swanson
for

Spirit of the Shack

☐

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☐

Excellence in Conservation

☐

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☒

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

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

I proudly nominate Indiana Conservation Officer Gregory Swanson as the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies – Law Enforcement Officer of the Year. Having worked with, and now supervising Officer Swanson it is obvious to me, and hopefully I can illustrate, that he possesses and displays the traits required to be presented this prestigious award. Although this award is specific to 2014, I feel it necessary to point out that Officer Swanson has been very dedicated to the ideals of service to the greater good, sound character, morality, and humility, since the beginning of his career in 1998. From that point on, Officer Swanson has always represented Indiana Conservation Officers in a positive image, through both his energetic interactions with the public and his fair treatment of the public during enforcement actions.

Patrol, obviously, is a primary aspect of being an Indiana Conservation Officer. In this realm, Officer Swanson goes above and beyond. A review of Officer Swanson's 2014 cases shows the level of dedication he has to the protection of Indiana's natural resources. While most citizens were at home enjoying Thanksgiving Day with their families, Officer Swanson was on patrol. As a result, he was able to respond to two separate complaints of deer being shot from public roadways in his area of assignment. After locating suspects and completing thorough investigations, charges were filed in each instance.

The second example occurred while Officer Swanson was heading home on a cold December night. Around midnight, he observed a spotlight on the White River, he approached the area on foot and for the next 3 hours he followed the boat as the occupants illegally shot furbearers. At times Officer Swanson had to run distances of ½ mile to obtain a better vantage point. He was ultimately able to approach the boat as it was coming to shore. The unsuspecting violators were amazed when Officer Swanson was able to recite some of their conversations during the past several hours. This is a prime example of a case that highlights the lengths that he will go to protect our natural resources.

Often, the public is unaware that an Indiana Conservation Officer's scope extends well beyond fish and wildlife investigations. In October of 2014, Officer Swanson had the unfortunate task of investigating the molestation of a child at a DNR Property. While investigating a crime of this nature there are many difficult, time-consuming, specific tasks that need to be completed. Carrying out those tasks while treating the victim and their family in a professional, dignified manner, with compassion, is not an easy task. Because of his hard work and thorough investigation, a solid case was presented to the Prosecutor's Office.

In addition to Officer Swanson's contributions to the public and our natural resources he provides an invaluable amount of leadership and support to members of his own department, as well. He is a member of the ICO Dive Team and a Defensive Tactics/Use of Force Instructor. In addition he has served as a Drill Instructor during ICO Recruit School Training in 2006, 2009, 2014 and will again as Senior Drill Instructor during the 2015 training. This position is crucial to the development of potential candidates

hoping to join the ranks of ICO's. Due to the passion and dedication of Officer Swanson, it's safe to say that those that have graduated this training on his watch truly deserve their position as Indiana Conservation Officers. In April of 2014, Officer Swanson's co-workers voted him as their Peer Support Officer for District Five. In short, the officers in District Five felt he would be the most trustworthy, understanding, and helpful person to turn to during their times of need.

Finally, I cannot speak of Officer Swanson without mentioning his military service as a member of the Indiana Army National Guard having served a tour of duty in Iraq in 2006 and a tour of duty in Afghanistan in 2012. On May 21, 2012 the armored truck he was riding in was attacked. The driver of the vehicle was killed, and all four passengers were injured. Officer Swanson sustained shrapnel wounds, and as a result was issued the distinguished Purple Heart award. Officer Swanson later in a display of selflessness gave his award to the family of a World War II veteran whom was also injured during combat, but was never presented the very much deserved medal. To further demonstrate Officer Swanson's military accomplishments he won the 2009 Indiana Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Best Warrior Competition, the 2009 Regional Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Best Warrior Competition and went on to earn runner up in the National Non-Commissioned Officer of the Year Best Warrior Competition.

In summary, I would like to say I am thankful to have an Officer such as Greg Swanson as a member of my department. He provides an example to all of what an Indiana Conservation Officer SHOULD be. He is hard-working, thoughtful, reliable and an asset to both his community and the State of Indiana.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2015

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: John Olson, WI for

☐

Spirit of the Shack

☒

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☐

Excellence in Conservation

☐

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☐

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Midwest Association Fish and Wildlife Agencies – 2015

Award: Wildlife Biologist of the Year

Nominee: John Olson

Title: Furbearer Ecologist

Member State: Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources

Nominator: Tom Hauge

Title: Wildlife Bureau Direction, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

John Olson has been a biologist with the Wisconsin DNR for over 40 years, much of that time filling the role of furbearer specialist. He has done a lot for Wisconsin's furbearer management program. He has overseen the evolution of the Wisconsin Cooperative Trapper Education Program—the strongest Trapper Ed program in the country—and facilitated a strong partnership between the Wisconsin DNR and the Wisconsin Trappers Association.

Trapping is a controversial topic. Though most citizens support regulated trapping in theory, the understanding of trapping itself is very low among the majority of the public. John works hard to counter that by educating everyone he can on the importance of trapping to furbearer management. Not only does he educate the public through the continued development of the trapper education program and through outreach presentations, but he also educates wildlife staff so they can better relate trapping to the general public. John developed a 5-day intensive "Fur School" program that teaches wildlife professionals about furbearer management and the importance of trapping to furbearer management. This course covers a wide berth of topics related to trapping, including population modeling, research, ethics and responsibility, BMPs, disease, etc. and incorporates a lot of hands-on components including in-the-field trap setting and proper pelt handling. Attendees are always enthusiastic, though tired, at the end of the program and leave with a better understanding of trapping and furbearer management. These programs have now been developed by AFWA into regional programs, with Fur Schools occurring in Kentucky, New York, and Idaho to date and more in development. John also developed the University Fur School program, a shorter 3-day version of the agency Fur School program during which students learn about traps, responsible trapping, BMPs, ethics, and why trapping is important to furbearer management. Participants spend a large portion of the time participating in hands-on activities such as setting traps and learning to skin and flesh harvested animals. John's program teaches students about respectful use of harvested species and why harvest is critical to management. Currently, two universities, University of Wisconsin-Madison and University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, and one college, Northland College, participate in this program. These students are future wildlife professionals, and John helps build their core knowledge so they can be effective in their future efforts.

John Olson has been an integral part of preserving our trapping heritage for decades. As chair of the U.S. Furbearer Conservation Technical Working Group, John has helped shape national furbearer conservation policy, engaged federal agencies on national furbearer management, and helped inform implementation of

the Convention on Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora (CITES) as it relates to furbearers such as bobcat and river otter. John has gained a unique perspective on the importance of scientific management of furbearing animals, along with an understanding of the laws and regulations associated with trapping in the United States. He also has engaged with partners around the world as a representative of the observer U.S. Delegation to the Joint Management Committee. The U.S. Delegation attends the meetings in order to maintain compliance with the Agreed Minute related to humane trapping between the U.S. and the European Union. He understands the need to maintain our commitments under the Agreed Minute, including the development of best management practices for trapping (BMPs) in the United States. John has been involved in BMP development since the beginning of the program in 1997, and he led the BMP efforts for many years as chair of AFWA's Trap Research Committee. Wisconsin was one of the first states to sign on to the BMP project, and under John's oversight and strong cooperation with the Wisconsin Trappers Association, has tested many traps through the BMP program. John was a partner in the development of the existing 21 BMP documents, and this summer is assisting with arctic fox efforts. He is a strong advocate for BMPs wherever he goes. He rarely has a trapping discussion without bringing BMPs into the discourse.

John has been a touchstone in furbearer management not only in Wisconsin, but nationally, for many years. He is a strong leader, an advocate for sound science, and skilled at building strong relationships with key partner groups to preserve and enhance furbearer management, wherever he goes. I appreciate your consideration of John Olson for the Wildlife Biologist of the Year award. He truly deserves it.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2015

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: ____Paul D. Calvert____ for

☐

Spirit of the Shack

☐

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☐

Excellence in Conservation

☒

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☐

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Brian D. Canaday

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Fisheries Division Chief

E-mail: brian.canaday@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573-522-4115 *3174

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

It is my pleasure to nominate Mr. Paul D. Calvert for the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Fisheries Biologist of the Year Award.

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

Paul D. Calvert has made many significant contributions to the conservation of Missouri's natural resources for 20+ years. He is well known for his expertise in entomology and often works with other professionals and the general public to assist in identification of insects and related invertebrates, especially spiders. In this role, he has worked through the Stream Team program to enhance training to increase the expertise and efforts of Missouri's numerous water quality monitors. He has also worked one-on-one to train both MDC staff and Stream Team participants in the identification of aquatic invertebrates.

He worked to develop landowner incentive programs during MDC's early Streams for the Future efforts. Through this partnership with regional field staff and cooperating agencies, MDC assisted streamside landowners in enhancing and protecting stream resources. Many current MDC private land programs evolved from his early efforts in this arena.

He spent over ten years as Stream Services Program Supervisor, coordinating the efforts of MDC's Stream Unit. His efforts were instrumental in growing the Stream Team program to become the largest of its kind ... a program now encompassing more than 90,000 members and which is emulated by resource agencies across the United States and around the world. He also led efforts to staff and implement the unit's stream technical program which now performs stream related research and offers expertise,

consultation and training to MDC staff, Stream Team members, landowners and partner agencies from across the United States. His leadership and supervision provided oversight while allowing his staff the freedom to excel in their areas of expertise.

Paul provided direction and leadership to the Stream Stewardship Trust Fund for more than a decade. This In-Lieu Fee stream mitigation program allows for mitigation dollars to be used on-the-ground to enhance, protect and improve stream resources. In this role, he partners with state and federal agencies, field staff, landowners and county and state personnel to help implement a program of national significance. As a result, nearly 100 projects benefitting Missouri streams have been completed under his leadership and guidance.

Currently he serves as a Fisheries Field Operations Chief for the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC). In this role, he has responsibility for Fisheries Division program implementation across central and north Missouri and in Kansas City. This includes management, outreach and hatchery operations. Under his leadership, staff is successfully implementing expanded angler recruitment programming, reaching thousands of young anglers; leading the nation in efforts to culture and recover a number of aquatic species of conservation concern, including paddlefish, pallid sturgeons and Topeka shiners; and enhancing sport fishing opportunities for a variety of reservoir and Missouri River and Mississippi River species.

Scientist, professional, leader, mentor and friend are just some of the words that can be used to describe him. He has earned the respect of other professionals, landowners and co-workers, and our natural resources benefit every day from his past and ongoing efforts.

It is my pleasure to nominate Paul D. Calvert for the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Fisheries Biologist of the Year Award.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2015

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: Scott Walter, WI for

☒

Spirit of the Shack

☐

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☐

Excellence in Conservation

☐

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☐

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Midwest Association Fish and Wildlife Agencies – 2015

Award: “Spirit of the Shack” Achievement

Nominee: Scott Walter

Title: Upland Wildlife Ecologist

Member State: Wisconsin, Department of Natural Resources

Nominator: Tom Hauge

Title: Wildlife Bureau Direction, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

Dr. Scott Walter is a passionate person. He approaches everything he does with an enthusiasm and dedication that is impressive even by wildlifer standards. With degrees from Beloit College and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Scott has assisted with wildlife research at Beloit College, Harvard University, and the U.S. Forest Service. Scott is a strong advocate for sound science influencing management decisions, and believes that habitat conservation is critical to the continued preservation of our wildlife.

Scott spent a portion of his career educating students at University of Wisconsin Richland Center. He inspired his students to be professionals in whatever career they chose, and many of them have gone on to become biologists, technicians, and conservation wardens. He even engaged non-science students who needed to take a general biology class. One student said of him “I didn’t really want to take a lab science class, but it was actually my favorite class ever. He is a real good teacher that takes time to help when you ask. I would take a class with him again.” Another relayed: “Hands down the best teacher I’ve ever had (and I’m not just counting college). I learned more about science in general in four months with him than I learned in 4 years of high school. It’s a hard class, but you get so much out of him.” He has a demeanor that is relatable and approachable, but a vast knowledge and philosophical mind that makes him very much a reflection of the legacy of Aldo Leopold.

After working as a professor for a number of years, Scott became the Upland Wildlife Ecologist for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. He leads the management of Wisconsin’s turkeys, pheasants, grouse, and prairie chickens, among other small game species. He engages a multitude of user groups related to all of these species to ensure a balance between regulated harvest of the species and maintaining healthy populations. He worked with sharp-tailed grouse hunters to set zero-permit quotas when research showed populations were declining. Conversely, he has worked to liberalize turkey season structure and harvest quotas as turkey populations have increased and expanded greatly throughout Wisconsin. Wisconsin’s turkey

hunters are among the happiest in the state, and Scott has a strong relationship with the National Wild Turkey Federation and other partner groups with an interest in turkey management.

Besides the enormous obligations of managing upland wildlife species, Scott also serves as the Wisconsin DNR's Farm Bill coordinator. He works with Pheasants Forever and other partner groups to keep Wisconsin's Farm Bill Biologists engaged with landowners to improve habitat for all of Wisconsin's wildlife. Scott is integral in obtaining grants, including funds for Wisconsin's strong Voluntary Public Access program, which has provided countless recreational users, from deer hunters to mushroom hunters, trappers to snowshoers, with access to recreational land to which they otherwise would not have had access. He regularly attends AFWA and other regional and national meetings to work on both upland wildlife issues and discuss the implementation of Farm Bill programs, both very labor-intensive topics.

Not only does Scott support Farm Bill programs, obtain grant money, and facilitate habitat preservation through his work, but he also enacts those programs on his own property in southwestern Wisconsin, where his 7-generation family farm is enrolled in habitat conservation programs. He initiated a program called the Elk Creek Landowner Cooperative to educate landowners on the fundamentals of forest and wildlife management, and has served as advisor to several conservation groups, including the Valley Stewardship Network, the Richland Center Land Use Committee, and the Kickapoo-Griffith Land Use Committee. He considers education to be critical, and has given numerous presentations throughout his career to relate science and management to the public and to advise groups regarding effective habitat management.

While an avid hunter and a novice trapper, he believes the experience of hunting and trapping is more important than the harvest. He has a strong ethic and he tries to convey it to others in a relatable and engaging manner. He is an amazing representative for wildlife and habitat conservation and I appreciate your consideration of Scott Walter for the "Spirit of the Shack" Achievement award.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2014

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: Missouri Stream Team for

☐

Spirit of the Shack

☐

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☒

Excellence in Conservation

☐

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☐

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Brian Canaday

Organization: Missouri Department of Conservation

Title: Fisheries Division Chief

E-mail: Brian.Canaday@mdc.mo.gov

Phone number: 573/522-4115 ext. 3174

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

The Missouri Stream Team Program is a citizen-led effort to conserve Missouri streams. Sponsored by the Missouri Department of Conservation, the Missouri Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and the Conservation Federation of Missouri (CFM), the Stream Team Program focuses on education, stewardship, and advocacy for Missouri stream resources. The Program provides supplies and technical assistance to meet the needs of Stream Teams and their diverse individual goals, and also recognizes Team accomplishments through social media, newsletters, certificates, and awards. Missouri Stream Team is a national leader in volunteer stream stewardship efforts thanks to the creativity and determination of its members and strong agency support.

The success of the Stream Team Program is a great example of how Missourians value conservation of fish, forests, and wildlife, and how the Conservation Department, DNR, and CFM work with citizens to conserve our natural resources. In the last 25 years, the Missouri Stream Team Program has grown to over 5,000 active Stream Teams consisting of an estimated 90,000 volunteers working to conserve Missouri's rivers and streams. Since 1989, Stream Teams have been an impassioned voice for the protection of streams that Missourians rely on for clean drinking water, quality fishing, and first-class recreational opportunities. The Program merits recognition for its achievement in engaging citizens to act on behalf of Missouri streams.

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

Due to the nature of the Missouri Stream Team Program and the independence of its members, it is difficult to highlight the accomplishments of a single Team or project. However, the accomplishments of the Program as a whole over the last 25 years are remarkable.

While the Program began as a stewardship-oriented endeavor to remove litter from waterways, Teams have expanded their interests and efforts in stream conservation over the last 25 years. A few examples of the 36 types of activities reported by Teams include litter pickups, water quality monitoring, educational presentations, letters to elected officials, riparian restoration, invasive species monitoring, and storm drain stenciling. Recently, rain barrel and rain garden projects to reduce stormwater runoff are becoming more popular, and Teams are finding creative ways to reach their peers and elected officials using social media.

To demonstrate the scope of Program accomplishments, over the last 25 years Teams have reported more than:

- 11,000 tons of litter removed from waterways (2,200,000 pounds);
- 25,000 water quality monitoring trips;
- 270,000 trees planted along streams;
- 17,500 storm drains stenciled with the message *Dump No Waste, Drains to Stream*;
- 2,900 educational presentations given to inform communities, youth, and other groups about watershed issues; and
- 2,305,000 hours committed to the Program since 1989.

Because of the tremendous scope of achievements by the citizens of Missouri fostered by their dedicated sponsors, the Missouri Stream Team Program is worthy of recognition for the Excellence in Conservation Award by the Midwest Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies.

Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Awards

Nominations Form 2015

Award Categories (check only one per form)

I want to nominate: Northern Long-eared bat conference planning committee for

☐

Spirit of the Shack

☐

Wildlife Biologist of the Year

☒

Excellence in Conservation
**(awarded special recognition
award)**

☐

Fisheries Biologist of the Year

☐

Law Enforcement Officer of the Year

Nominator information

Name: Ed Boggess

Organization:

Title:

E-mail:

Phone number:

Nominee information:

Northern Long-eared Bat Workgroup

Jennifer Norris, Ohio Division of Wildlife
2045 Morse Road, Building G, Columbus, Ohio 43229
(614) 265-6304

Rich Baker, Minnesota DNR
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155
(651) 259-5073

Dan Kennedy, Michigan DNR
P.O. Box 30444
525 W. Allegan
Lansing, MI 48909-7944
Office: 517-284-6194

Erin Crain, Wisconsin DNR
Director, Bureau of Natural Heritage Conservation
Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
(608) 267-7479

Scott Zody, Chief, Ohio Division of Wildlife
2045 Morse Road, Building G, Columbus, Ohio 43229
(614) 265-6304

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

I nominate the Northern Long-eared Bat (NLEB) Workgroup that successfully organized and oversaw the effort to provide sound scientific and biological input and comment to the US Fish & Wildlife Service relative to proposed listing of the NLEB under the

Endangered Species Act. The Workgroup with the guidance and support of Chief Zody from Ohio successfully organized and effectively presented state interest and the ultimate outcome was a decision to list the NLEB as Threatened with a 4(d) rule. The listing decision and the 4(d) rule determination allowed for effective consideration of state management considerations.

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

In late June, 2014 at the Midwest Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (MAFWA) annual meeting, the Executive Committee, led by Director Keith Creagh of Michigan, directed that a work group be established to organize and conduct a workshop on the potential listing of the Northern Long Eared Bat (NLEB). The NLEB was under consideration for listing under the Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), and the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) had just announced an extension to the Comment Period for the listing.

The Directors of Michigan, Minnesota (Ed Boggess), Wisconsin (Scott Gunderson) and Ohio (Scott Zody) volunteered to provide staff and resources to get the work group organized. Due to the comment period ending in the late fall and the USFWS under a hard deadline of April 2, 2015 to determine a listing decision, the group had a very brief window of opportunity to complete the assigned tasks.

The Directors identified the members of the work group (Mr. Baker, Ms. Crain, Mr. Kennedy and Ms. Norris) and Director Zody to serve as their primary liaison to the group within 2 weeks of the conclusion of the MAFWA meeting. They conducted the first of numerous weekly conference calls amongst themselves and at times, including Ollie Torgerson, the Executive Director of MAFWA, who would provide the necessary resources for the Work Shop.

Over the course of the next 3 months, the group identified a location for the Workshop (Minneapolis), developed an agenda and goals for the Work Shop, solicited additional background material, research and data for the Work Shop, identified and invited experts to attend and present at the Work Shop and developed an invitation list. The invitations were sent to all 39 potentially affected state fish & wildlife agencies, state foresters, and regional offices of the USFWS and US Forest Service (USFS).

The group had to work through differing opinions and policy positions of not only the state members of MAFWA, but the Northeast and Southeast regional associations and the Northern Area State Foresters and the Southeast State Foresters associations. In addition, the work group had to be cognizant of the ESA listing process and protocols to ensure compliance with the end product coming out of the Work Shop.

In early October, the Workshop was conducted over two and one-half days. The first day consisted of defining the issue and presentations and updates on the latest scientific and

biological information available. The remainder of the Workshop consisted of developing recommendations in the form of formal comments to consider for submission to the USFWS.

At the Workshop, the group provided insight, leadership and helped facilitate discussions. During breaks and after each day's meetings, the group would meet and discuss, analyze and debate (sometimes vigorously!) the day's results and direction for the next day. Each member of the work group maintained a high level of professionalism and decorum, at times working to develop a consensus and providing Director Zody with timely feedback and questions for the MAFWA leadership.

The end result of the work group's efforts were the development of a consensus set of recommendations to the USFWS on the listing of NLEB, to the point that not only MAFWA and SEAFWA signed on to the comment letter, but so did the Northern and Southeastern State Forester associations.

This unprecedented effort and collaboration deserves recognition, and the work of the NLEB Work Group has laid a solid foundation for state and regional agencies/associations to work together cooperatively on future potential listing decisions by the USFWS. I am pleased to submit the NLEB Work Group consisting of Rich Baker, Erin Crain, Dan Kennedy, Jennifer Norris, and Director liaison Scott Zody for consideration and recognition.