

## AWARD-WINNING IKES

*We had the pleasure of recognizing individuals and organizations from across the country who made a difference in conserving outdoor America – today and for future generations.*

### NATIONAL AWARDS



#### 54 Founders Award

*The League's highest honor is given to someone judged to have made outstanding contributions to the conservation of America's natural and renewable resources.*

##### **Herbert and Charlotte Read (Indiana)**

Conservation "power couple" Herb and Charlotte Read are well known in Indiana and throughout the Great Lakes region. For more than 50 years, they have led efforts to create, expand, and protect the Indiana Dunes

National Lakeshore. In fact, Herb founded the League's Porter County Chapter in 1958 to help with that effort and served as chapter president many times. Charlotte has also served as the chapter's president (as well as numerous other offices) and still serves on the League's Great Lakes Committee.

Today, the national lakeshore comprises more than 15,000 acres of dunes, oak savannas, swamps, bogs, marshes, prairies, rivers, and forests, including 15 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline. The Reads don't see saving the dunes as an isolated cause. They know that the air, water, and land around the lakeshore are intertwined with those dunes. That's why Charlotte also devotes her energies to fighting water pollution and Herb has focused additional efforts on land conservation.

The Reads have received numerous other awards, including the Sagamore of the Wabash Award (the highest award presented by the Governor of Indiana), a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Hosier Environmental Council, and the Paul H. Douglas Award from the Save the Dunes Council.

"In conservation, eternal vigilance is a constant," said Charlotte. Herb agrees, saying that victory can be as fleeting as the shifting sands. With these life-long advocates working to protect Indiana's natural resources, we know those sands will not run out.

### Hall of Fame Award

*Recognizes outstanding accomplishments in furthering the mission and goals of the League.*



##### **Robert Bemis (South Dakota)**

Bob Bemis is a charter member of the League's Kampeska Chapter and has served in every chapter office over the past 35 years. Among his many accomplishments, Bob was at the forefront of re-establishing giant Canada goose populations in eastern South Dakota, which involved rearing and releasing hundreds of geese (which was a huge success). He also helped develop an artificial rearing pond for Crappies, raising young Crappie to fingerling size and releasing them into Lake Kampeska, which created a self-sustaining fishery for area anglers. Bemis was part of a chapter team that studied silt levels on Lake Kampeska to assess area erosion – a project that required hundreds of volunteer hours taking measurements at 2,500 holes drilled in the lake ice. This effort resulted in creation of the locally-led Upper Big Sioux River Watershed Project, which is working to protect and restore surface water quality for Watertown, South Dakota, and the surrounding drainage areas.



##### **Roger Parham (South Dakota)**

A longtime Ike, Roger Parham held many local and state League leadership positions, including president of the Sioux Falls Chapter and South Dakota Division.

For the past 25 years, he followed his passion for improving water quality and served as the Sioux Falls Chapter's Save Our Streams chairman, including designing and acquiring the funds to build an outdoor classroom tailored to the needs of Save Our Streams and several other outdoor programs. A retired teacher, Parham managed an instructional booth and gave seminars on the importance of clean water at the Sioux Empire Water Festival — an annual two-day event for more than 2,000 local fourth graders. He was also involved in matters dealing with water development at the city and conservation district levels. For these efforts and many more, he received the League's national Save Our Streams Award in 2010. In early June, shortly after hosting a successful Creek Freaks Training Workshop, Roger passed away. Marilyn Parham accepted the award on behalf of her late husband.



#### **Philip Ross (Indiana)**

An engineer by trade, Phil Ross believed there was a better way to handle trash than dumping it in a landfill. He researched and advocated for a composting process for solid waste to divert dangerous waste and send the rest to an anaerobic digestion system, allowing unrestricted application of the final product to farmland. He also worked tirelessly to protect drinking water supplies and keep municipal reservoirs clean. Thanks to his work, four water treatment plants were improved, connected to working treatment plants, and/or brought into compliance with state and federal water quality rules. Ross served as president of the League's Hamilton Chapter for 30 years and in other positions at the state and national levels. He remained active in the League until his passing in 2007. Jean Ross, herself a Hall of Fame Award recipient, accepted the award on behalf of her late husband.

## **Conservation Award**

*Recognizes individual member contributions to conservation in the name of the League.*

**Barry Fleming (Maryland):** Barry has been instrumental in the Wildlife Achievement Chapter's tree planting efforts in the Hawlings River watershed — from meeting with county representatives to supervising volunteers installing the trees.

**John Goeman (South Dakota):** A member of the Madison #16 Chapter, John has been a generous contributor to local conservation projects. When he owned KJAM radio station, he went beyond the call of duty to promote the local chapter and its conservation projects.

**Tom Hughes (New York):** A biologist for New York State Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation, Tom includes the Central New York Chapter's Project Watershed stream monitoring and educational materials as part of his education program for summer interns and high school teachers.

**Tom "Coyote" Larson (Indiana):** A member of the Diana Chapter, Tom is active in the effort to create a national wildlife refuge along the Kankakee River and is a board member of the Friends of the Kankakee.



**Ken Lefebvre (Maryland):** Ken has worked to improve energy efficiency at home, in commercial buildings, and at the Wildlife Achievement Chapter. He knows the value of solar and wind power and has used this knowledge to upgrade several chapter facilities, which eliminated the need for a power line weaving through the chapter's wooded property.



**Ryck Lydecker (Maryland):** Ryck has been the "spark plug" for the Rockville Chapter's wood duck program for many years. He plans the outings, coordinates volunteers, and leads work parties along the Potomac River. Last year, he took over coordinating the chapter's National Hunting and Fishing Day event, and with the help of 70 volunteers, opened the chapter property to nearly 400 members of the community.

**Michael Masters, Jr. (West Virginia):** Mike has chaired or been a member of the Berkeley County Chapter's Haunted Trails committee every year. The event is not only the chapter's main fundraiser, it brings the community to the chapter property and provides an opportunity to educate families about local conservation issues.

**Gary Meade (West Virginia):** For several years, Gary has purchased American Chestnut trees with his own funds and planted them at the Mountaineer Chapter as part of the effort to bring this eastern hardwood back to its historic range. He has also transplanted wild flowers to encourage visits by butterflies, hummingbirds, and other native pollinators.

**William Roberts (Maryland):** A member of the Lois Green-Sligo Chapter, Bill devoted his time and expertise to help League staff present Creek Freaks and "Get To Know Your Wild Neighbors" programs at schools near the League's national headquarters.

**William Schlaffer (Virginia):** Bill joined the Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter in 1993 after attending a "fishing rodeo" and has been active ever since, helping out with deer check stations, Great Dismal Swamp clean-ups, and projects on the chapter property.



## Save Our Streams Award

*Individuals, groups, and/or organizations that have done outstanding work in environmental education and citizen activism for clean water.*

### Central New York Chapter (New York):

Members have been running a volunteer stream monitoring program since the chapter was chartered in 1989. The program engages middle-school, high-school, and college students as well as adult volunteers in monitoring water quality and conserving local streams. More than 1,200 students and adult volunteers participate in the program each year. Chapter members maintain a water quality database with chemical, biological, and physical data for streams in a five-county region. Since 2000, this data has been included in the state's "Water Resources Status Report." Chapter leaders are also working to restore tributaries to Onondaga Lake, including making habitat improvements to restore brown trout populations, and are using the project to educate local fifth- and sixth-grade students.

**Harry Kidder (Virginia):** The League has been a leader in citizen stream monitoring for nearly 50 years, teaching

volunteers how to measure stream health based on the macroinvertebrates found in the water. Now

we're looking at ways to engage the next generation of citizen monitors. Our vision is to develop tools to make the monitoring process more accessible, improve results, and allow data to be gathered and shared more easily. Harry Kidder donated his time and technical expertise to help develop a bug ID app for mobile devices. He also worked with League staff to develop technical specifications for a photo-recognition version of this app.



**Sandy Royce (Ohio):** The Cincinnati Chapter is located on the banks of the Little Miami State and National Scenic River, so the river's health has a direct impact on the chapter's conservation and outdoor recreation activities. Sandy Royce has led the chapter's water quality monitoring for more than a decade, ensuring monthly water quality monitoring is completed and results reported to the Saturday Stream Snapshot program. This program, co-sponsored by the Cincinnati Chapter, is working to improve water quality in and around Ohio's lower Little Miami River.

## Outdoor America's Future Award

*Recognizes a youth or student member with the potential to become a future League leader.*

**Dakota Halper (Indiana):** How many teens would voluntarily sit through an all-day board meeting discussing League business? Dakota Halper says she likes to learn about the outdoors and the Izaak Walton League. She also enjoys mentoring youth in outdoor sports. Dakota volunteers as a Girl Scout archery instructor and is involved with League's MAC Wagon (Mobile Archery Clinic), a pilot program that takes archery into Indiana and Illinois communities to get youth outdoors — and get the League name out to the public. Local Ikes expect her to be president of a chapter in the next few years.

## Robert C. O'Hair Award

*Recognizes outstanding youth programs and includes a gift of \$250.*

### Small Chapter (<500 members)

**Porter County Chapter (Indiana):** The chapter's Family Nature Nights at five area elementary schools are each attended by upwards of 250 students and family members. The program has grown as the chapter added presenters on issues ranging from the Indiana Dunes and recycling to gardening and water use. This year, the chapter added suction-cup archery to pique youth interest in archery, and members hope to incorporate outdoor archery soon. Teachers at other schools have started asking for the program, and in the coming year the chapter will add five new schools.

### Large Chapter (>500 members)



### Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter

**(Maryland):** For almost a decade, the chapter has partnered with Poolesville High School's Global Ecology Program, which provides an interdisciplinary approach to studying environmental issues. The chapter provides a three-hour "Interpretive Walk in the Woods" each November for approximately 80 freshmen. Topics range from plant and wildlife habitat to soil erosion, trash, and trees. Each spring, the chapter recognizes outstanding senior conservation projects from this program with \$1,000 scholarships for up to six students or student teams.

## James Lawton Childs Award

*Recognizes outstanding conservation programs and includes a gift of \$500 from the IWLA Endowment.*

### Small Chapter (<500 members)



**Porter County Chapter (Indiana):** Chapter members raised \$370,000 in grants to purchase 60 acres along the East Branch of the Little Calumet River. This area provides access to the river as well as a "classroom" for outdoor education. Chapter members are restoring wetlands, prairie, and forest habitat (including a recent planting of more than 700 trees) and working with Indiana University to reintroduce brook trout to nearby streams. The chapter is also involved in flood control and wetland mitigation on the West Branch of the Little Calumet River. Several members are key advocates for a new national wildlife refuge in the Kankakee River watershed.

## Honor Roll Award

*Recognizes outstanding accomplishments in conservation, public education, and/or publicity in keeping with the League's goals.*

**Friends of Lake Keowee Society (FOLKS) (South Carolina):** Over the past year, FOLKS conducted two clean-ups of the lake's 300-plus-mile shoreline, marshalling more than 100 boats and hundreds of volunteers. FOLKS volunteers monitor water quality in the lake as well as source streams and educate livestock owners on how to keep streams clean. At its headquarters, FOLKS installed rain gardens, buffer plantings, green roofs, and rain barrels. ([www.keoweefolks.org](http://www.keoweefolks.org))

**Erin Morris (Ohio):** Through the nature exploration division of the Cincinnati Parks Board, Erin Morris has educated thousands of youth and revamped a program called Nature Next Door that engages inner-city youth outdoors. Erin helped the League's Hamilton Chapter re-create its Young Ikes program, working with chapter members to develop programs that would engage youth. She also planned the Ohio Division's youth conference, held in conjunction with the division's three-day state meeting, and raised funds through private donations to cover all the youth conference costs.

## Stanford M. Adams Memorial Award

*Recognizes a National Director, Director-at-Large, or Regional Governor who has shown extraordinary commitment to his or her duties and responsibilities.*

**Ray Zehler (Ohio):** Ray Zehler is a legend in the Izaak Walton League — and not just because he can do more pushups than most people half his age! Ray has served at every level of the League, including Hamilton Chapter president, Ohio Division president, national director for Ohio, and executive director of the Ohio Division, for which he represents the Ohio Division at meetings across the state. He helped acquire the Hamilton Chapter's property and managed construction of the chapter house. He also served multiple terms on the Izaak Walton League of America Endowment's board of directors. Ray has been active in conservation causes across the state. He was one of the key players advocating for the Environmental Fund for Ohio (later renamed EarthShare of Ohio), served on the first Butler County Litter Control and Recycle Committee, and has served on the Butler County Solid Waste District board since 1989.

## Thelma "Pete" Reed Memorial Award

*Recognizes a member who has volunteered many hours at the local or state level in conservation projects, educational efforts, community service, or chapter leadership development and is considered an "up and coming" future leader.*

**Jeri Crist (Maryland):** Jeri Crist is working to engage youth in conservation and the outdoors through the Rockville Chapter's Jr. Youth Conservation events. She coordinates five programs each year that are geared toward children ages 5-12 (but are open to the whole family). Participants are a mix of chapter members and youth from the community. Programs include woodland hikes, stream monitoring, fishing, geode cracking, and a fall hike and marshmallow roast. Events frequently attract 30-80 participants.

## Special League Leader Recognition

*At this year's convention, we also recognized two League leaders for their efforts to either re-charter, reorganize, or revitalize a chapter. These outstanding Ikes invested their time (and often money) to help other chapters grow.*

**Jerry Schlekeway (South Dakota):** Jerry was instrumental in revitalizing the Day County Chapter, which won this year's Best Chapter Membership Recruitment and Retention Award, and reorganizing the Yankton Area Chapter. He was successful because he not only traveled to the chapters to attend meetings, he also worked with chapter leadership to plan meetings and community outreach. Sadly, Jerry passed away less than two weeks before convention. His wife Ginny attended the awards luncheon to accept the award in his honor.

**Jack Johnson (Iowa):** Jack has been instrumental in the reorganization and eventual re-chartering of the Woodbury County Chapter. He worked extensively with former chapter membership officer Wade Brown to recruit members from the nearby community and encourage new members to take on leadership roles. Jack also recruited leaders from other chapters in Iowa and South Dakota to attend chapter functions and share their expertise with new chapter leaders. The chapter was successfully re-chartered and held a re-chartering event in May 2015.







## DEFENDERS CHAPTER ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

At our Membership Awards breakfast, 40 chapters took home the League's Defenders Chapter Achievement Award, including eight chapters that received this award for the first time (but we're confident it's not the last!). To receive the award, chapters must meet criteria in five of the following six categories: membership, financial contributions, education, conservation, youth involvement, and communications. These groups showcase the depth of the conservation commitment across the Izaak Walton League.

Austin Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 Berkeley County Chapter\* (West Virginia)  
 Bethesda-Chevy Chase Chapter (Maryland)  
 Bill Cook Chapter (Wisconsin)  
 Brown County Chapter (Wisconsin)  
 Bush Lake Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 Central New York Chapter (New York)  
 Des Moines Chapter (Iowa)  
 Dwight Lydell Chapter (Michigan)  
 Elgin Chapter (Illinois)  
 Frederick #1 Chapter (Maryland)  
 Fredericksburg-Rappahannock Chapter (Virginia)  
 Grand Island Chapter (Nebraska)  
 Hamilton Chapter (Ohio)  
 Harford County Chapter (Maryland)  
 Mid-Shore Chapter (Maryland)  
 Jaques Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 Kampeska Chapter (South Dakota)  
 Lincoln Chapter (Nebraska)  
 Lois Green-Sligo Chapter (Maryland)  
 Loudoun County Chapter (Virginia)  
 Minnesota Valley Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 Mountaineer Chapter (West Virginia)  
 New London Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 New Ulm Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 Owatonna Chapter (Minnesota)  
 Rockville Chapter (Maryland)

Silverton Chapter (Oregon)  
 Sioux Falls Chapter (South Dakota)  
 Sportsman's Chapter (Maryland)  
 Sunshine Chapter (South Dakota)  
 Tiffin-Seneca County Chapter (Ohio)  
 W.J. McCabe Chapter (Minnesota)  
 Walter J. Breckenridge Chapter (Minnesota)  
 Warren County Chapter (Iowa)  
 Warren County Chapter (Virginia)  
 Wayne County Chapter (Ohio)  
 Wildlife Achievement Chapter (Maryland)  
 Will Dilg Chapter\* (Minnesota)  
 York Chapter #67 (Pennsylvania)

### KEY

\* First-time recipient

## THANK YOU SOUTH DAKOTA IKES

Many thanks to members of the League's South Dakota Division and Sunshine Chapter, who were wonderful convention hosts and provided an exceptional experience for all our attendees. We are deeply appreciative of their many hours of volunteer service that made this year's convention such a success.

## MEMBERSHIP AWARDS

### Best Chapter Member Recruitment and Retention Award

*Recognizes the chapter that carried out the most effective membership recruitment and retention program during the previous year.*

#### Day County Chapter (South Dakota)

The Day County Chapter was re-charted at the conclusion of World War II but struggled to grow its membership. Over the past two decades, chapter membership did not grow beyond 20 members. Chapter leaders realized it was time for a change.

Members invested a considerable amount of time, money, and volunteer labor to fix up the chapter house, including revamping the lower level to accommodate youth BB gun and archery events. Chapter leaders worked with Jerry Schlekeway, president of the South Dakota Division at the time, to plan chapter meetings that featured outside speakers and League leaders, which they hoped would draw community members to attend meetings — and join the chapter. Local media outlets helped spread the news about the re-vitalized chapter and promoted the work that the League was doing at the state and national levels. Chapter members approached businesses in town and across Day County seeking support for the chapter's efforts and looking for like-minded conservationists and outdoorsmen and women. After 18 months, the chapter has grown to 104 members — and plans to keep growing!



### John C. Gregory Memorial Award

*Awarded to the division with the highest membership increase.*

**Wisconsin Division:** net gain of 53 members



### Membership Achievement Award

*Recognizes the chapters with the largest numeric and percentage increase of all League chapters.*

#### Greatest Percentage Increase

**Day County Chapter (South Dakota):** 313 percent increase

#### Greatest Numeric Increase

**Dragoon Trail Chapter (Iowa):** net gain of 90 members

### Membership Merit Award

*Recognizes chapter growth based on membership categories that allow chapters to be ranked with chapters of a similar size.*

#### 50 and Under Member Class

**Day County Chapter (South Dakota):** 313 percent increase

**Mount Healthy Chapter (Ohio):** net gain of 32 members

#### 51-250 Member Class

**Seward County Chapter (Nebraska):**

45 percent increase

**Clinton County Chapter (Iowa):** net gain of 62 members

#### 251-500 Member Class

**Tiffin-Seneca County Chapter (Ohio):** net gain of 31 members/7 percent increase

#### 501 and Over Member Class

**Dragoon Trail Chapter (Iowa):** net gain of 90 members/11.5 percent increase

### Best Chapter Newsletter

*Based on appearance, originality, timeliness, and news coverage, including national and state news and community conservation.*

#### Small Chapter (<500 members)

**Suffolk-Nansemond Chapter (Virginia)**

#### Large Chapter (>500 members)

**Alexandria Chapter (Virginia)**

### Best Division Newsletter

*Based on appearance, originality, timeliness, and news coverage, including national and state news.*

**Maryland Division, Maryland Waltonian**

### Best Web Site

*Based on appearance, originality, and news coverage.*

#### Rockville Chapter

(Maryland), <http://iwlar.org/>  
**Virginia Division,**  
<http://va-iwla.org/>



## 2016 NATIONAL CONVENTION

### “Get to the Point!”

July 19-22, 2016

Holiday Inn and  
Convention Center

Stevens Point, Wisconsin

Great speakers, informative workshops, and networking opportunities — you will find all this and more at next year's IWLA national convention in Stevens Point, Wisconsin.

In addition to the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, the city is home to “The Green Circle,” a 26-mile hiking and biking trail that winds through forests, over wetlands, and along rivers. It is one of the first in the nation to encircle an entire community. You'll also find a unique outdoor sculpture park, local breweries, and world-class outdoor recreation.