

Wisconsin Invasive Species Council Invader Crusader Awards

Each year, the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council honors Wisconsin citizens and organizations for their significant contribution to prevent, control or eradicate invasive species that harm Wisconsin's lands, waters and wetlands.



Recipients of the 2023 Invader Crusader Awards Horicon Marsh on June 7, 2023

Congratulations to the 2023 Invader Crusader Award Winners!

Professional Individual Category

- **Jaime Osterom:** Jaime has taken an active approach in preventing introduction of aquatic invasive species through her dedication to education, innovative species control, and leadership at the Ace Hardware Pet Department in Wausau. She promotes a learning environment for both staff and customers, and effectively communicates NR 40 regulations to both audiences.
- **Matthew Wallrath:** Through Matt's work with the Upper Sugar River Watershed Association and the South Central Invasives Partnership, he has helped inform thousands of people on the impacts of invasive species, control methods, and ecology in general. He works tirelessly to make a difference both on the ground and in the classroom and his impact has reached across the state.
- **Mic Armstrong:** Through Mic's work for the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Monroe County Invasive Species Working Group, he has brought together many local, regional, and state agencies and organizations for the purpose of controlling and monitoring invasive species. His knowledge of ecology, invasive species, and the nursery industry has been an invaluable asset to all who work with him.

Volunteer Individual Category

- **Jim Giffin:** Jim has made a lasting impact on Lake Minnesuing, a 432-acre lake with 6.6 miles of shoreline in Douglas County. He has secured 12 different grants to fund invasive species control efforts on the lake and garnered cooperation from many neighboring landowners and organizations. He has brought together a community around the lake to promote invasive species control and monitoring, as well as native landscaping and restoration.
- **Nancy Gloe:** For over two decades, Nancy has reared and distributed Purple Loosestrife biocontrol beetles to great effect. Through her efforts she has eradicated this species at one site and has documented substantial reductions in her new work area along the Glacier Drumlin Trail at Scuppernong Creek. Her enthusiasm and experience have made her a knowledgeable teacher and partner.
- **Richard “Dick” Ballou:** As founder of the Cedar Lake Buckthorn Project in Barron County, Dick has spent the last 15 years securing grants, organizing workshops, and spreading the word on how and why controlling Buckthorn is important. He has been an effective and motivating teacher, inspiring many local landowners to take action on their own properties.

Professional Group Category

- **Melinda Myers LLC:** Known across the state and beyond for gardening education, Melinda and her team have reached thousands with their webinars, blogs, and more. Melinda goes above and beyond to educate gardeners on invasive species and promote an interest in further learning in those she reaches.
- **Mequon Nature Preserve:** The MNP reaches tens of thousands each year with their outreach and educational efforts. They teach others about native and invasive species and other ecological information that fosters curiosity and further learning. Their small staff of seven make the most of their efforts by recruiting volunteers and interns to manage nearly 500 acres of native habitat.

Volunteer Group Category

- **Friends of the Manitowoc River Watershed:** The FMRW hosts events every year that bring in hundreds of attendees. In addition, they coordinate invasive species removal projects and beach clean-up days which have led to thousands of pounds of invasives and garbage being removed each year.
- **Silverwood Park Volunteers:** The SPV's have demonstrated outstanding dedication in their efforts to remove invasives. Since 2018 they've worked together to nearly eradicate buckthorn, honeysuckle, and burning bush on 57 acres. Through their weekly workdays and hosting Operation Fresh Start crews, they've made a difference in the park and in the lives of students.
- **Wehr Nature Center:** Through weekly volunteer days, local school outreach, and workshops Wehr Nature Center has educated hundreds of individuals on invasive species management. Their work has positively impacted critical habitat for rare species and brought local community members into nature.

Special Recognition Category

- **James Hughes:** Jim is being recognized for his service as a representative of the Wisconsin Dept. of Transportation on the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council. His appointment to the Council began in 2015 and lasted until his retirement in 2022. Jim was a State Highway Maintenance Engineer who oversaw the management of the State Highway Roadsides Network and the Dept. of Transportation's Invasive Species Program.
- **Julie Fox:** Julie is being recognized for her service as a representative of the Wisconsin Dept. of Tourism on the Wisconsin Invasive Species Council. Her appointment to the Council began in 2016 and lasted until her retirement in 2023. Julie was a Regional Tourism Specialist who served as a field representative to connect, assist, and support the tourism industry. Previously, she worked as a Natural Resources Educator in the DNR and informed the public on a variety of topics, including invasive species.

Previous Award Winners

2022

- Eric Boettcher
- Jeanne Scherer
- Jim Elleson
- Chris Acy
- Robert "Bob" Stroess
- Friends of Lapham Peak Unit, KMSF
- Paw Print Park Pack
- Paul Tusler
- The Hansen Family

2021

- Eric Boettcher
- Anne Pearce
- Bret Shaw
- Anne Mawicke
- Timothy Richert
- Jeff Steele
- River Revitalization Foundation
- Wild Rivers Invasive Species Coalition
- Chiwaukee Prairie Preservation Fund
- Friends of Hackmatack NWR
- Peter Dargatz & Nature Kindergarten Class
- Tara Bergeson
- Kelly Kearns

2020

- Bob Wakeman
- Natalie Dutack
- Cisco the Dog & Chris Hamerla
- Marian Farrior
- Michele Jasik
- Golden Sands RC&D
- John Eron
- Margaret Smith
- Georgia Gomez-Ibanez
- John Moyles

2019

- Maureen Ferry – Wisconsin DNR
- Emily Heald – North Lakeland Discovery Center
- Aldo Leopold Foundation
- Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa
- Wis. DATCP Nursery Inspector Team
- Rod Sharka
- Douglas Frazer
- Michael Vahldieck
- VanBuecken
- Woodland Dunes Barberryans
- Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration

2018

- Katelin Anderson
- Tim Gerber
- Brad Herrick
- Johnson's Nursery – Menomonee Falls
- Ruth Marshall
- Milly Thissen
- Jim Reinartz and Jill Hapner
- Friends of Festge Park

2017

- Christa Schaefer
- Jeff Epping
- Jared Urban
- Robert and Dorothy Moe
- Pam Nelson
- Daniel Pawlak
- Mark Acherman
- Friends of the Eau Claire Lakes Area & Town of Barnes AIS Committee

2016

- Debra Feirer
- Fritz Funk
- Fred and Mary Kueffer
- Valerie Stabenow
- Tim Campbell
- Michelle Nault
- Brock Woods
- Lower Chippewa Invasive Species Partnership
- Mequon Nature Preserve Restoration Rangers
- Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance
- Mike Fort

2015

- Sherry Speth
- Paul Molzina
- Jamie Kosloski
- Christal Campbell
- Kaycie Stushek
- Friends of MacKenzie Center
- Florence County Lakes & Rivers Assoc.