

Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts: Wisconsin's 2018 Conservation Leaders honored with awards

Posted on Tuesday, Sep 4, 2018

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Mike Carlson, Executive Director
608-251-9131 X13
carlson@gatheringwaters.org

(September 4, 2018 - Madison, Wis.)—Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts will honor the achievements of four land conservation leaders from around the state at its 2018 Annual Land Conservation Leadership Award Celebration. The ceremony will take place at 5:30 p.m. on September 20, 2018, at the Monona Terrace in Madison, Wisconsin.

The land conservation leadership awards recognize individuals, land trusts, and other groups that show outstanding commitment and leadership in helping to protect Wisconsin's special places.

For 2018, Gathering Waters' selection committee chose three individuals and one organization from a competitive pool of independent nominations.

"We're thrilled to recognize the achievements of these remarkable conservation leaders," said Mike Carlson, executive director at Gathering Waters. "This celebration is one of Wisconsin's premier conservation events, bringing together land trust leaders, supporters, and volunteers from all areas of the state."

The award winners have all displayed a commitment and dedication to protecting the places that make Wisconsin a special place to live, work, and play.

- The Land Trust of the Year award recognizes a land trust organization committed to permanently safeguard Wisconsin's natural areas and open lands through leadership, achievements, and community or conservation projects.

The 2018 Land Trust of the Year is Waukesha County Land Conservancy (WCLC). The organization began as an all-volunteer organization in 1992. WCLC safeguards Wisconsin's natural areas through the acquisition and protection of environmentally significant land. During its 25-year history, WCLC has protected more than 2,900 acres and developed a successful internship and volunteer program that engaged over 75 college-student volunteers who provided 7,000 hours within two-and-a-half years. Currently, the organization is working to restore a high-functioning wetland on a 52-acre nature preserve on the Mukwonago River.

- The Conservationist of the Year award identifies an individual or organization that exhibits extraordinary commitment to land conservation in Wisconsin.

The 2018 Awards Selection Committee chose Pat Caffrey of Trempealeau, as the Conservationist of the Year. Caffrey has been an integral part of the conservation community in Wisconsin for more than 40 years. He helped set up many local conservation organizations. With his guidance, Mississippi Valley Conservancy transformed from an all-volunteer organization to an accredited, staffed land trust, with a nine-county service area. Caffrey consistently brings his knowledge, skills, passion, and professionalism to everything he does. He leads conservation efforts through environmental education and his ability to bring individuals and groups together.

- Rod Nilsestuen Award for Working Lands Preservation acknowledges an individual or organization that exhibits a commitment to the preservation of Wisconsin's working lands.

The recipient of the Rod Nilsestuen Award for Working Lands Preservation, Jimmy VandenBrook of Mount Horeb, works to find solutions to conserve valuable land and water resources while addressing challenging issues facing agricultural and natural resources in Wisconsin. Since retiring from the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection, VandenBrook has served as the Executive Director of Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association. Among

other things, he created a task force that conducted a two-year, in-depth study that will provide guidance and direction for working land conservation efforts in the future.

- The Award with a Harold “Bud” Jordahl Distinction honors a nominee involved in extraordinary land conservation projects and accomplishments highly deserving of an award, but do not fit into the other award categories. Past awards have included: the Harold “Bud” Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award, the Harold “Bud” Jordahl Partnership of the Year, the Harold “Bud” Jordahl Stewardship Award, and the Harold “Bud” Jordahl Land Trust Pioneer Award.

This year’s Harold “Bud” Jordahl Lifetime Achievement Award winner is Jan Zimmermann of Madison. Zimmermann has been a dedicated conservationist in both the public and private sectors for 35 years. She strongly advocated for the passage of Dane County’s \$30 million Conservation Fund Referendum, served on land trust boards, and developed creative approaches to secure revenue and implement land acquisition around the state. Zimmermann helped permanently protect lands for Dane County, the Ice Age National Scenic Trail, Greenseams Milwaukee, and Town of Dunn farms. She has created a land legacy for Wisconsin residents and visitors for generations.

Gathering Waters’ award celebration is open to the public. In addition to the awards program, the evening includes a silent auction, bar, heavy hors-d’oeuvres, and desserts. For registration information, visit gatheringwaters.org/awards.

The mission of Gathering Waters: Wisconsin’s Alliance of Land Trusts is to help land trusts, landowners, and communities protect the places that make Wisconsin special.