

Dept. of Natural Resources: Natural Resources Board Honor awarded to John Pohlman

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MADISON, Wis. – The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced Property Planner John Pohlman was awarded the 2022 Rebecca Wallace Memorial Award. Pohlman received the award at the Wisconsin Natural Resources Board (NRB) meeting on Wednesday, Feb. 22, 2023.

This prestigious award honors DNR employees who improve relationships with external partners and organizations on environmental quality issues or staff mentoring. The NRB created the award as a memorial to DNR employee Rebecca Wallace, who lost her life, along with her husband, in an automobile accident in 1997. Wallace was an 18-year DNR employee known for her dedication to her work and her ability to bring people together to solve problems.

Pohlman started his career with the DNR in 1996 and he has been involved in many influential planning projects ever since. Pohlman is well-known for his work in mentoring staff, ability to connect with the public, and aptitude to find solutions.

Although “property planner” by title, John is a trained conservation biologist. He has dedicated his career using sound science in department decisions, incorporating both ecology and sociology for sustainable management of Wisconsin’s public properties.

“John promotes the perspective that we own and manage DNR lands for the people of Wisconsin,” said Paul Cunningham, DNR Fisheries Ecologist and John’s colleague. “He often advises staff involved in property planning that ‘master planning is a contract with our publics, the public trust, and future generations regarding how we

manage over 1.6 million acres of state property.’”

Pohlman has led many statewide property planning projects that now serve as guideposts for directing the department’s mission of protecting and improving a healthy, sustainable environment for future generations.

Some of his notable accomplishments include: Sauk Prairie State Recreation Area Master Plan, Rib Mountain State Park Master Plan, Forestry Management Plans, multiple Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans, and the Land Legacy Report, which identifies Wisconsin’s places believed to be most important to meet the state’s conservation and recreation needs over the next 50 years.

Many of Pohlman’s team members respect him as a mentor and seek him out for guidance and advice. They describe Pohlman as someone who is always encouraging new ideas, instilling confidence in others to share their thoughts, and continually creating a positive working atmosphere.

“John has a near-encyclopedic knowledge of Wisconsin geography, natural resources, and how people choose to recreate on their public lands. However, it is John’s ability to connect with members of the public and his DNR colleagues that allows him to build meaningful relationships and leads to better planning processes and better outcomes for our public lands,” said Phil Rynish, DNR Property Planning Section Manager.

Visit the DNR’s website for more information on the [NRB](#) and the [DNR’s Property Planning program](#).