

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update



February 2023

YCC delegates and mentors,

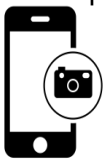
I enjoy this time of year, as I am caught between living in the moment, enjoying winter activities and adventures while also planning, dreaming and counting the days until spring.

February is a great month to work on habitat projects for wildlife. If you monitor nest boxes outdoors, now is a great time for yearly maintenance. It is also a perfect time to construct new nest boxes. There are many plans online for bluebird or wood duck boxes. The *Outdoor News* holds a yearly “wood duck challenge” encouraging youth to build and install wood duck boxes in suitable habitat. Learn more: <https://www.outdoornews.com/wood-duck-challenge>

Some of our migratory birds will start appearing soon. Have you spotted any yet? It’s too early to truly tell how the rest of winter will play out, but if Jimmy the groundhog is right in his predictions, we will have at least 6 more weeks to enjoy winter activities.

~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

We want to feature YCC delegates in our monthly newsletters. Email or text outdoor pictures of yourself to: kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov or 715.299.0925



Visit the [WCC Facebook site](#)



Outdoor Adventures



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson Co. participated in late season goose hunting.



Gabby, Lowell and Gavin enjoyed their family tradition of shooting trap on New Years Day.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co. tried his skill at spear fishing in Minnesota. He was successful, spearing his first northern!



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson Co. spent a sunny, mild January day hunting for rabbits with her dad, (WCC delegate and mentor) Lowell.



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

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Welcome

We are excited to welcome a new delegate to the YCC:

Emma, Chippewa County



Photography & Writing Contest

Each year, the DNR's Office of Great Waters holds a photo contest and writing project. These contributions are presented in the annual "Wisconsin's Great Waters" calendars. Each calendar is a unique collection of photos from our photo contest, creative writings submitted by Wisconsin authors and descriptions of stewardship projects. The calendars, photos and writings clearly show that Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and the Mississippi River are among Wisconsin's most scenic and beloved natural resources.

How do you connect with and value our Great Waters? Share your best photos and writings of Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and the Mississippi River in the [2023 Wisconsin's Great Waters Photo Contest and Writing Project](#). The top photos and writings will be featured in the next Great Waters Calendar.

Looking for inspiration? Check out the [2022 Photo Contest and Writing Project winners](#). Is your talent writing? Help get the word out about how great Lake Superior, Lake Michigan and the Mississippi River are - either with creative writing or with a description of stewardship efforts you are proud of. The submission deadline is April 1, 2023.



Virtual Ice Fishing Contest



The YCC committee and Friends Into Spooner Hatchery (FISH) invite all YCC delegates to join in an ice fishing contest using the Fishdonkey app. Any kind or size of fish, caught anywhere could be recognized. Even if you catch nothing at all you can follow the leader boards to see how the rest of the group is doing. **This contest runs until March 5th. You can sign up anytime during the contest period.**

Categories:

Largest Northern Pike, Largest Walleye, Mixed Bag, Stringer of 5 Northern Pike, Stringer of 5 panfish, Wild Card Any Other Fish

Download the FishDonkey App on your phone or smart device. (You do not need cell reception to record fish – they can be recorded on the app and uploaded when you have wifi or cell reception). Search for the contest: "YCC Ice" <https://tourney.fishdonkey.com/#/tournament/10779/details>

- Prizes (still to be determined) will be given to the top positions of each leaderboard category.
- All fish entered in the tournament will be photographed, measured, and recorded with the FishDonkey app. Each entry must include a picture of the fish on a measuring board or with measuring tape AND a selfie with the fish. All entries must be photographed through the camera setting in the FishDonkey app. (please read rules for additional details related to measuring your fish).
- **Please read through all rules and information on the contest page.**
- Categories and leaderboards will update throughout the contest so check the leaderboards through your app to follow the tournament progress.
- Awards are presented on the basis of length as determined through the mobile app and verified by tournament judges. The categories, species, and official rules can be found in the FishDonkey app.
- A big thanks to Larry Damman for organizing the YCC contest and to the Friends into Spooner Hatchery for sponsoring the tournament.



2023 YCC Ice Fishing Event, Shawano Lake



Conservation Warden, Clark Delzer shared information about ice safety and fishing regulations prior to heading out to the lake.



YCC delegates gathered with mentors, friends, and family for a great weekend on the ice. Fishing information and instruction was shared by mentors and peers alike. At the end of the day, the group gathered at a local camp and Ken VanDenPlas, of the Walleyes for Tomorrow program shared a presentation describing efforts to improve local walleye populations. The collective catch of the day was cleaned, prepared and served for the pot luck dinner.



YCC INDIVIDUAL FOCUS OPPORTUNITY

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE!

We would like to help you create an individual focus opportunity based around your interests, skills, and goals.

Now is the time to start thinking about your plan and goals for this year. Each YCC delegate is encouraged to choose a conservation topic, outdoor skill, or leadership project they would like to focus on.

Your focus opportunity can be as big or small as you want. It can span one day or several months.

Watch your email for additional information outlining the focus opportunity process and timeline.

Each month the newsletter will feature a project idea for one of the focus opportunity categories:

- Individual Study
- Leadership
- Skill Building
- Career Exploration

Read more about an idea for leadership



PROJECT IDEA! - LEADERSHIP

Become a Junior Volunteer Instructor

Have you completed DNR safety courses? Would you like to help instruct classes?

The Junior Instructor program is a great way for youth to get involved, plus gain skills like public speaking and confidence.

A Junior Volunteer Instructor needs to be between the ages of 12 and 17 and have successfully completed a safety course within the designated education program. The Junior Volunteer Instructor needs to be sponsored by a local certified instructor. The junior volunteer instructor and sponsor complete the junior volunteer instructor application and submit it to their local DNR Outdoor Skills Trainer (OST). Junior volunteer instructors can assist the instructor in the program, but cannot instruct on their own.



Application for Junior Volunteer Instructor: <https://dnr.wi.gov/files/pdf/forms/8500/8500-143.pdf>



YCC alumni, Blake served as a Junior Volunteer Instructor. He is pictured demonstrating tree stand safety.

SHARE YOUR VOICE - SUBMIT A CITIZEN RESOLUTION

An important part of serving as a YCC delegate is learning about the process by which Wisconsin's natural resource policy is determined. Participating in the [Wisconsin Spring Hearings](#) is one avenue for citizens to share their voice.

Writing and submitting a citizen resolution is another opportunity to act as a conservation advocate.

Do you have any new ideas related to conservation you would like to see be implemented in Wisconsin, or any current regulations that you feel should be modified?

Authoring a citizen resolution is your chance to bring up a new idea or concern. Please talk with your mentor and other WCC delegates in your county about guidance for drafting a resolution. The process of submitting a resolution is fairly straightforward, however, it is important to think through your concern, and include all necessary criteria for submitting a resolution (see details on right).

Learn about resolutions written in 2022: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>

Additional information will follow with specific details on how to submit resolutions for 2023.

What are the criteria for a resolution to be accepted?

1. The concern must be of statewide impact.
2. The concern must be practical, achievable and reasonable.
3. The resolution must have a clear title.
4. The resolution must clearly define the concern.
5. Current state statutes and laws must be considered, with reasonable cause for change being presented.
6. The resolution must clearly suggest a solution to the concern and a description of further action desired.
7. Resolutions must be 2000 characters or less.
8. The author's name, mailing address, county, telephone number are required with the resolution. Email address is helpful, but not required.
9. An individual may introduce no more than two resolutions.



YCC Upcoming Opportunities

FEBRUARY

- February 8th - YCC virtual gathering 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about how airplane pilots assist with natural resource management in Wisconsin.

MARCH

- March 4th - YCC Oversight Committee meeting at UW-Stevens Point. Behind the scenes tour for YCC delegates.
- March 8th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30. Learn about the WI Wildlife Federation's Conservation Leadership Corps program.

APRIL

- April 12th - YCC virtual gathering 7:30-8:30pm. Learn about aquatic invasive species. DNR biologists will talk about identification, impacts, prevention, and citizen science opportunities.

SAVE THE DATE

- May 11-13, WCC Convention, Oshkosh.
- June 22, YCC career day field trip.
- August 10-13, YCC Summer Program.
- August 26, Volunteer at the Youth Zone - Waterfowl Hunter's Expo, Oshkosh.
- October (date TBA), YCC Oversight Committee meeting. YCC Learn to Hunt program.

ONGOING

- [Winter candlelight events](#) will be taking place on state properties in February. These free-to-low cost events typically begin around sunset and offer a variety of ways to enjoy the winter scenery after dark, including hiking, snowshoeing and cross-country skiing. Many will include activities such as bonfires, hot chocolate, cider and other refreshments available for sale or by donation, and some will have open warming shelters.
- Participate in a variety of events and activities across the state. State parks and forests feature public programming (hikes, presentations, nature crafts, children's programs, outdoor explorations, and more. Check for activities near you: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/events>
- DNR State Park System volunteer information: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/volunteer>
- DNR Statewide opportunity: volunteer to help with conservation workdays at State Natural Areas. <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/naturalareas/volunteer.html>

YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING -

Wednesday, February 8th, 7:30-8:30pm



Retired DNR pilot, Bev Paulan will speak to the YCC about her experience combining aviation, biology and conservation into a meaningful and exciting career. Learn more about Bev's career with the DNR: <https://www.eekwi.org/engage/careers/conservation-pilot>

Watch your email for details and a zoom link.

RUN FOR THE TREES!

Happy Little Trees 5k, a popular virtual 5k race, is coming to Wisconsin!

Participation is open to people of all abilities, whether they walk, run, skate, bicycle or use a mobility device. Participants can pick their start and finish lines for this 5k (3.1 mile) race.

Registrants can select Wisconsin as the state they wish to represent. A portion of the \$34 registration fee will go towards tree planting and forest health efforts to combat threats from invasive species in Wisconsin state parks, forests, trails and recreation areas.

Everyone who participates gets a Happy Little t-shirt, a commemorative bib and a finisher's medal. Participants pick the pace and the place, as long as it's outdoors and you reach the finish line between Earth Day (April 22) and Arbor Day (April 28).

Suggested 5k routes at Wisconsin state parks, forests, trails and recreation areas can be found on the [DNR's OutWiGo webpage](#). Registration is open until March 1, 2023.



HUNTER ETHICS AWARD

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now accepting applications for its annual Wisconsin Hunter Ethics Award. Nominees are selected based on exceptional moral actions and character while out in the field.

Any hunter or non-hunter can nominate a licensed Wisconsin hunter for the Wisconsin Hunter Ethics Award for their actions during the 2022 calendar year. Although many nominations result from gun deer season, ethical actions can occur during a squirrel hunt, turkey hunt, waterfowl hunt or other Wisconsin hunting season.

The nomination committee focuses on singular actions or events rather than individuals who have long term conservation-related programs.

The deadline to submit a nomination is Feb. 15, 2023. Learn more: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/newsroom/release/65856>