

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

March 2023

YCC delegates and mentors,

The snow is melting! Are you ready for spring? As the weather changes, make plans to enjoy the transition. Take a hike and use your senses to observe how the environment is changing. Feel the warm sun or the sting of a cold wind on your face. Smell the pungent skunk cabbage blooming in wetlands. Hear migratory birds chatter as they fly over head. Taste the sweet flavor of maple sap that boils away to make syrup. Look for animal tracks in mud or melting snow as creatures emerge from a winter's hibernation.

Spring is also the time of planting. Did you know that the State of Wisconsin has a reforestation program that produces three to four million tree and wildlife shrub seedlings annually? Wisconsin's reforestation program grows high-quality native tree seedlings and shrubs to plant on private and public lands for conservation. The seedlings will provide future forest products, improve wildlife habitat, prevent soil erosion, create aesthetic beauty, and increase carbon sequestration. The reasonably priced nursery stock is available for residents to purchase and plant every spring.

Get out there and enjoy this transition to spring! ~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

Outdoor Adventures



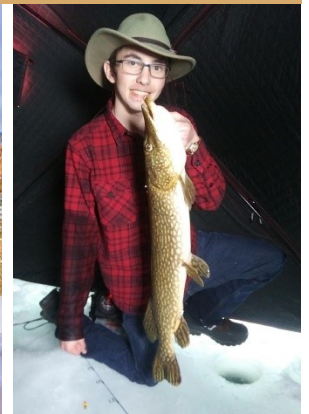
Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co. enjoyed spending time spearing with his grandpa in Orr, Minnesota.



Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. and his grandpa got together for sturgeon spearing on Lake Winnebago. Although they didn't see any sturgeon, they had a great time together on the ice.



Madison, YCC delegate from La Crosse Co. hiked and explored the beautiful terrain of Utah.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co. and his dad were fishing for panfish when this northern got on the line. They had quite the team adventure landing the fish - including Caleb reaching his entire arm into the water. The fish was released.



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

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WCC Liaison: Kari Lee-Zimmermann (608) 266-0580 / Kari.LeeZimmermann@Wisconsin.gov

Welcome

We are excited to welcome new delegates to the YCC:

Tavin, Racine Co.
Lawson, Kenosha Co.
Breyson, Kenosha Co.



Outdoor Adventures



Tavin, Breyson and Lawson are cousins and YCC delegates. They enjoyed a family spring break trip to Florida. They went bass fishing together, enjoyed the beaches, searched for sea shells and tidal creatures, got up-close and personal with alligators, and much more!

Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. smiling after a great day on the ice.

Wood Duck Boxes

All YCC delegates were provided an opportunity to receive a wood duck box kit. These kits were donated by Eric Johnson, from Delta Waterfowl. The kits included pre-cut wood, bedding material, hardware and instructions. Several YCC delegates are in the process of constructing nesting boxes and installing them in suitable habitat.

THANK YOU

WCC delegate, Jeff Hintz, from Waukesha Co. connected with Eric Johnson to provide this opportunity to the YCC. We appreciate all of the effort that went in to this YCC donation and learning opportunity.



Jeff Hintz and Karen transported wood duck box kits to YCC delegates.

The month of March is a great time to start thinking about building or installing a wood duck box.



The Wisconsin Outdoor News is featuring a "Wood Duck Challenge" For this "challenge" the WI Outdoor News asks youth to build and install a wood duck box, and take a photograph with the box. Photos will be shared in the WI Outdoor News, and prizes are available. Learn more: <https://www.outdoornews.com/wood-duck-challenge/>.

Looking for a kit or completed duck box? The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association sells kits and boxes: <https://www.wisducks.org/product-category/wood-duck-boxes/>



Shawn, from Racine Co.



Jacob, from Ozaukee Co.



Ava, from Racine Co.

Behind-the-Scenes Tour of the College of Natural Resources

14 YCC delegates, along with parents and guests participated in a behind-the-scenes tour of the College of Natural Resources (CNR) at the UW-Stevens Point campus. WCC delegate, Jessica Tomaszewski worked with CNR faculty, staff and students to plan and host six unique and informative tours.

The hands-on tours included:

- Learning about the vivarium and animals in the herpetology collection.
- Touring the Water and Environmental Analysis Lab and learning about water research, and community drinking water programs.
- Viewing the ichthyology collection of preserved and live fish.
- Engaging with a forest harvester simulator and learning about the Wisconsin Forestry Center.
- Checking out the CNR stockroom and learning about all of the equipment used for hands-on courses.
- Visiting the WI Cooperative Fishery Research Unit and discussing current and past research projects.

This was an incredible educational and networking opportunity. The YCC is fortunate to have great partners and support at UWSP. Everyone enjoyed this experience and we have a several YCC delegates who are considering UW-Stevens Point as they plan for their future.



The YCC Oversight Committee met at UW-Stevens Point on March 4th. The committee discussed upcoming YCC activities and welcomed input and planning ideas from YCC delegates.



A show and touch discussion about the herpetology collection in the CNR.



Jessica Tomaszewski, WCC delegate, explains the Ponsse North America timber harvester and forwarder simulator programs. The simulators are part of the [Wisconsin Forestry Center's](#) new WI Forestry Careers Coalition, a forestry workforce development program funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation.



Committee members, YCC delegates and UWSP staff enjoyed a pot luck lunch.



Ava and Jacob were impressed with the harvesting simulators.



This photo shows the full view of the simulator and Charlie in the operator's seat.

Conservation Congress Information

WCC / DNR OPEN HOUSES

The Wisconsin Conservation Congress (WCC) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) will host an open house in each county, the week of April 3 to connect with the public, answer questions about resource management, and discuss local issues of importance. The WCC will also hold elections for two of the five delegate seats in each county.

[Dates and locations for each open house.](#)

OPEN HOUSE SCHEDULE

- 6 p.m. | Doors open for meet and greet (public wishing to participate in election can get ballots at this time)
- 7 p.m. | [WCC elections](#) (must be 18 years old and a county resident to participate in this portion of the evening events)
A panel discussion with DNR staff and WCC delegates will immediately follow the elections. Each DNR program will provide a brief update on issues/items pertinent to the county. WCC delegates will provide an overview of their work on the WCC and what the organization is all about. There will be an opportunity for Q&A following the panel discussion.
- 9 p.m. | Conclude

All YCC delegates are encouraged to attend the open house in your county. This is a great time to learn about local natural resource management and to interact with WCC delegates. Posters promoting the YCC will be at each open house. Please talk to attendees about your experience in the YCC and encourage new delegates to join.

ANNUAL WCC AWARD NOMINATIONS



Each year the Wisconsin Conservation Congress recognizes individuals and organizations who have dedicated themselves and their time to the conservation of Wisconsin's natural resources.

These awards are intended to acknowledge the hard work, exemplary leadership and commitment of these individuals and groups to continuing our outdoor legacy for generations to come. Learn more about the award categories. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/award> Nominations will be accepted through March 31st.

LEARN TO HUNT BEAR APPLICATION

Beginning in 2005, the Wisconsin DNR began offering Learn to Hunt Bear opportunities. The Learn to Hunt Bear Program (LTHB) is an opportunity to expose novice hunters to the hunting experience and recruit new hunters into the sport. The Conservation Congress is one of the statewide conservation organizations that are specifically issued a bear harvest tag through the [LTH Bear Program](#).

Each spring the Conservation Congress accepts [applications](#) from novice hunters interested in participating in the LTH Bear Program. Applicants must fill out and submit an [application](#) along with a brief essay describing why they would like to be considered to receive the bear harvest tag and why they would like the opportunity to hunt bear.

Applications must be postmarked by Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

2023 SPRING HEARING - ONLINE

The Spring Hearing questionnaire will go live on April 10, 2023 (starting at noon) and remain open through noon on April 13, 2023. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>

The public will have the opportunity to provide input on the natural resources proposed rule changes from the DNR, and advisory questions from the Natural Resources Board (NRB) and WCC through the online input option.



You are all encouraged to participate in the Spring Hearings. If you plan to contribute your input to these questions, please take time to look over the questions in advance. If you are unsure about the meaning of any of the questions, or want more information feel free to reach out to your WCC mentor for clarification. If you don't have an opinion on a question, or if you aren't really sure, you can just click "no opinion".

2023 WCC CONVENTION

Oshkosh, Thursday, May 11th through Saturday, May 13th.

This is the one time of year when WCC delegates from all 72 counties come together.

The 2023 convention site is located at the Best Western Premier Waterfront Hotel on property adjacent to the Fox River and nearby Lake Winnebago.



All YCC delegates are invited to attend this convention. Specific YCC focused activities are being planned in addition to attending general Conservation Congress meetings. This convention will help you learn more about the work of the Conservation Congress, meet new YCC delegates, participate in field trips, fish on the Fox River outside of the hotel, learn about local fish research, surgeon populations, and much more!

Additional information will be sent out soon. Watch your email for details. The deadline for registration is April 14th.

2023 YCC Ice Fishing Contest

The YCC virtual fishing contest was held December through March via the FishDonkey app. Ice conditions were extremely variable across the state this winter, and many lakes in the southern part of the state had very few days with safe ice.

This winter we had 5 YCC delegates participate in the virtual contest.

Before we know it, the lakes will all be ice free and our summer YCC virtual fishing contest will start.

We hope you all consider joining the summer contest. It is fun to participate, and virtually follow other YCC delegates to see what they are catching in all parts of the state.

Thanks to WCC delegate, Larry Damman for continuing to coordinate and run this contest for the YCC.



[FISH \(Friends Into Spooner Hatchery\)](#) sponsored this event.



Largest Northern Pike: 28"
Trevor, YCC alumni



Stringer of 5 Northern Pike: 117.25"
Shawn, Racine Co. YCC delegate



Largest Walleye: 22.5"
Trevor, YCC alumni



Stringer of 5 panfish: 51.75"
Trevor, YCC alumni



Mixed Bag: 135.75"
Shawn, Racine Co. YCC delegate



Wildcard: 16" Bass
Trevor, YCC alumni

Additional participants in the ice fishing contest:



Jacob, YCC alumni entered several panfish in the contest and is pictured with a 11.5" perch.



Liv, YCC alumni caught a northern pike, walleye and panfish. She is pictured with a 10" crappie.



Brody, YCC delegate from Racine Co. entered a panfish and this 24" northern pike.

DO YOU NEED A FISHING LICENSE?

In Wisconsin, kids 15 and under can fish without a license. So can anglers born before 1927. For everybody else, a variety of license options can get you out on the water quickly and easily.

All licenses are available for purchase through [Go Wild](#), sales locations or at one of our DNR Service Centers unless otherwise noted. A valid driver's license or social security number is required to purchase a license online through [GoWild](#).

YCC Upcoming Opportunities

MARCH

- March 1-20th - Spring district meetings. [Schedule](#)
- 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 3-6 - WCC/DNR [Open Houses](#)
- April 10-13 - [Spring Hearings](#) online
- 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.

MAY

- May 11-13 - WCC Convention, Oshkosh.

SAVE THE DATE

- June 22, YCC career day field trip, [Sandhill Wildlife Area](#), Babcock, WI.
- August 10-13, YCC Summer Program, Calumet Co.
- 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

- 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>

YOUTH TURKEY HUNT – APRIL 15-16

Wisconsin's annual [Spring Turkey Youth Hunt](#) is designed to give young hunters the opportunity to hunt and gain valuable experience without competing against adults. The youth hunt is open to resident and non-resident hunters under age 16 who possess a valid spring turkey license, stamp, and harvest authorization. Youth hunters must be accompanied by an adult age 18 or older. All youth hunters must have successfully completed Hunter Education unless they are participating under the Mentored Hunting Program. Youth hunters can use a harvest authorization for any time period, but they are limited to the turkey management zone for which their authorization was issued. [All other spring turkey hunting regulations apply.](#)

YCC SUMMER PROGRAM

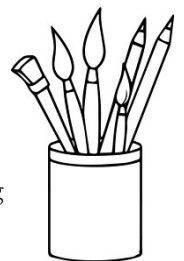
Save the date: Thursday, August 10th - Sunday, August 13.

Initial plans are being made to hold the YCC Summer Program in Calumet County. The group will be camping at Calumet County Park. There will be many opportunities to explore the area and learn about Lake Winnebago. Activities and lessons will include cave exploration, bat ecology, survival skills, duck banding, fishing, hiking and much more.

Plans will be finalized by June. Save the date!

SEEKING ARTISTS

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is now accepting artwork entries for the [Wild Turkey, Pheasant and Waterfowl Stamp design contests](#). The winning designs will appear on the 2024 collection of stamps.



Each year, local artists from around Wisconsin compete for an opportunity to have their artwork commemorated in a historic way on the wild turkey, pheasant and waterfowl stamps.

The contest is open to anyone 18 years of age or older living in Wisconsin who is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. Artwork must meet technical requirements to be eligible, and applicants should carefully review the contest rules to ensure their entries' eligibility.

The deadline to submit stamp designs is July 15, 2023. Judging will take place on Aug. 26, 2023 at the Waterfowl Hunters Expo in Oshkosh, WI.