

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

April 2022

YCC delegates and mentors,

The Youth Conservation Congress Oversight Committee recently met to discuss upcoming plans for the YCC. Exciting opportunities are in place for spring and summer! We hope you will consider joining us for the WCC Convention, May 12-14th, in Wisconsin Dells. Field trips are scheduled to visit the International Crane Foundation, Aldo Leopold Foundation & Shack and Devil's Lake State Park.

Our 2nd annual YCC Summer Program will be held August 11th-14th, on the South Fork of the Flambeau River in Price County. Planning is underway and potential activities include, fishing, paddling, camping, learning about natural resource careers, and exploring the local ecology and history of the area.

We are excited about these opportunities and hope to see you this spring and summer.

~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

REQUEST FOR PICTURES

We want to feature photos of you in our monthly newsletters.

Email or text outdoor pictures of yourself to: kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov or 715.299.0295



Visit the [WCC Facebook site](#) to see what's new

Outdoor Adventures



Gabby, YCC delegate from Jefferson Co. enjoyed building wood duck boxes. These boxes will be placed in suitable habitat and maintained yearly.



Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. (second from left, front row) attended a rod making workshop sponsored by the Headwaters Chapter of Muskies Inc.



Madison, YCC delegate from La Crosse Co. helped tag elk in the Black River State Forest.



Wisconsin Youth Conservation Contacts

YCC Oversight Committee Chair: Trent Tonn (262) 534-1962 / ttonn@basd.k12.wi.us

YCC Oversight Committee Vice Chair: Reed Kabelowsky (920) 242-3144 / r.kabelowsky@sbcglobal.net

YCC Oversight Committee Secretary: Tashina Peplinski (262) 483-2483 / tashina@startistries.com

YCC Coordinator: Kyle Zenz (715) 299-0925 / kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov

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

Welcome

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

Jacob, Ozaukee County



In Memory



Alan Horvath

We are sad to share information about the passing of one of our Youth Conservation Congress mentors, Alan Horvath of Douglas County. Al was a Conservation Congress delegate for several years, and recently served as a mentor to Destiny. We thank Al for his dedication to conservation in Wisconsin, and his support of the Youth Conservation Congress.

<https://www.downsfh.com/obituary/alan-horvath>

Al was a great mentor and he brought a lot of light into my life. From giving me confidence for what I want to do, to giving me life advice for when these next 5-10 years of my life come. Al had a bright smile and great opinions on everything we talked about relating to the conservation world. May heaven gain another angel. ~Destiny, YCC delegate, Douglas County

YCC Adventures



Gabby and Gavin, YCC delegates from Jefferson Co. shot trap at the Iowa State Games. Gavin got first in handicap and second in doubles and Gabby got silver medals in: 16yrd, handicap and doubles.



Caleb, YCC delegate from St. Croix Co. enjoyed ice fishing on Cedar Lake during spring break.



Madison, YCC delegate from La Crosse Co. had some help checking her Snapshot WI elk project trail cameras.



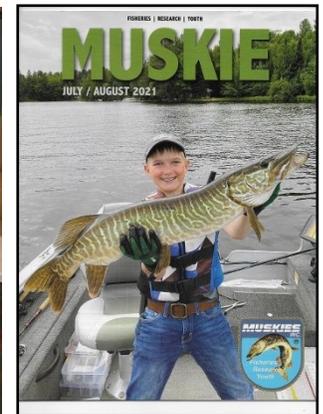
Jacob, YCC delegate from Dane Co. participated in a work day on the Ice Age Trail with the Friends of Sugar River.



Olivia, YCC delegate from Calumet Co. attended a 3-day tree felling course at UW-Stevens Point. Olivia was one of five high school seniors selected to attend.



Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. is pictured with his mentor, Jim Heffner. Tommy is holding a replica musky mount in the photo on the left. This mount is based off of Tommy's catch and release musky on the right that was featured on the cover of the magazine, MUSKIE.



APRIL IS VOLUNTEER MONTH

Think of all of the volunteers who make our lives possible and more enjoyable. We send a huge “thanks” to the Wisconsin Conservation Congress delegates and mentors who believe in sharing their voices to help responsibly manage Wisconsin's natural resources for present and future generations.

Please thank your mentor for sharing their time and talents with you. Volunteers deserve our appreciation this month and every month!

THANK
YOU

A Special Message of Appreciation

A. Jim Heffner, from Oneida County, is stepping down from the Wisconsin Conservation Congress. He has been a huge supporter of the Youth Conservation Congress, and has been on the YCC Committee and served as a mentor for several years.

The level of commitment and passion Jim has shown towards fishing, conservation and outdoor education is impressive and commendable. He has no doubt made a positive impact on many individuals of all ages.

Jim's wisdom and presence on the YCC committee will be missed. We are forever grateful for the time and talents he shared with the YCC. Thank you Jim!

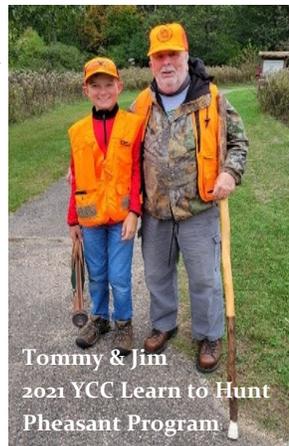


Jim and granddaughter, Courtney. Courtney will replace him as a WCC delegate in Oneida County.



Jim is pictured with Rob Bohmann (former WCC chair) receiving the Educator of the Year Award in 2015.

Jim Heffner is probably the most talented fisherman I've ever seen in my life. He has helped me out a lot over the years on how to fish. I will never forget the time that we went to Hi Pines Campground and Jim and Carol were teaching the kids fishing tips that night. When they were done, I thought this was really cool, so I came back every Wednesday night to listen to them. After a couple nights I became a pro at the fish identification board. Jim is the reason I am in the YCC right now. He has taught me so much about wildlife conservation. I will never forget the pheasant program last October we attended together. Overall, Jim is probably the most talented and kindest man you will ever meet. I will really miss him as my mentor. ~Tommy



Tommy & Jim
2021 YCC Learn to Hunt
Pheasant Program

Personal messages:

Jim, thank you for all the great work you have done with the youth of Wisconsin, not only the YCC but the other youth programs you helped with. You can always count on Jim to be in the corner of our youth! I have enjoyed all of the years of working with you with both the YCC and Outdoor Heritage committees, you always have had great and valuable input. We will miss you Jim! ~Kevin Smaby

Jim - thanks so much for serving on the Rule Simplification committee with me! I really appreciate your dedication and contributions over the years. I wish you the best and hope that your health improves! Thanks again! ~Eugene

First of all, Jim and Carol are a TEAM: So it is virtually impossible to praise one without also mentioning a strong assist from the other.

I have known both since I retired in 2011, via the Conservation Congress. Their love, dedication, and commitment to youth education has been inspirational for me. I always looked forward to going over to Eagle River to assist them with their events. That was a great lesson in humility. I have been doing angler education strong, for about 30 years. I soon learned that Jim and Carol had about another 20 years on me, and that I was merely following in their footsteps. In fact, my personal Mount Rushmore for angler education would probably be Hayward's Leon Pastika, Bob Haase, and the Heffner Team. Giants all. And such great human beings, too. Jesus said: "Follow me and be fishers of men". Jim and Carol laid down everything else and followed. God Bless them. ~FBP

I really enjoyed our time together at the pheasant hunt weekend. Thanks for sharing your knowledge with me. ~Jacob

Best wishes, Jim! Thank you for sharing all your passion for conservation with all our Youth Delegates! ~Jessica T

It's sad to see you leave the WCC, but you have made a huge impact on many people/kids lives and I hope you can continue what you like to do and feel better. Thanks again and I wish you the best! ~YCC delegate

2022 SPRING HEARING - ONLINE

The Spring Hearing questionnaire will go live on April 11, 2022 (starting at 7:00 pm) and remain open through 7:00 pm on April 14, 2022. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>

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

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".



2022 WCC CONVENTION

Wisconsin Dells, Thursday, May 12th through Saturday, May 14th.

This is the one time of year when WCC delegates from all 72 counties come together. The 2022 convention site is located at the Chula Vista Resort on property adjacent to the Wisconsin River.

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 local field trips, learn about the local geology and history of the area, and more!

All YCC delegates received an email on April 7th with information and details related to the convention and registration. Please reach out to Kyle with additional questions. **Registration materials need to be sent in by April 18th.**



YCC SUMMER PROGRAM

Save the date: Thursday, August 11th - Sunday, August 14.

Initial plans are being made to hold our YCC Summer Program on the South Fork of the Flambeau River in Price County. There will be many opportunities to explore and learn about river ecology, fisheries biology, forest management, wildlife management and more. Fishing, paddling, hiking and camping activities will all take place over the weekend.

Plans will be finalized by June. Save the date!



NATURAL RESOURCE FOUNDATION - MEMBERSHIPS & FIELD TRIPS

YCC delegates are gifted a complimentary membership to the Wisconsin Natural Resource Foundation. Paperwork was sent in the mail detailing your membership.

In addition – you are also eligible to receive 20% off of Natural Resource Foundation Field Trips. If you haven't already looked into these field trips, please do. There are some amazing, one of a kind opportunities to learn about natural resources from experts around the state.

Information about the NRF Field Trips: <https://www.wisconservation.org/field-trips/> You will need your NRF paperwork (mailed to you) to locate your membership number and information.



— Featured YCC Delegate —

Name: Blake Gates

County: Calumet

School: Chilton High School , Senior

WCC Mentor: Keith Propson

Years involved in the YCC: 3

What is one of your most memorable outdoor experiences?

One of my most memorable experiences was shooting my first Turkey with my grandpa. We hunted my spring period and I was never able to get a shot, but in fall, I finally did. We were both so excited.

Share something specific you have learned from your mentor or an experience you shared together

Keith has helped me to learn about options for my career path as a Conservation Warden.

Aside from your interest in the outdoors/hunting, are there other school activities or personal activities that you enjoy participating in?

I am a Hunter Safety junior instructor and a member of National Honor Society. I bought my own Lab last year and am working to train her for hunting. I also belong to a local conservation club, where I shoot trap. My dad and I have a dirt track race car.

What are your plans following high school graduation?

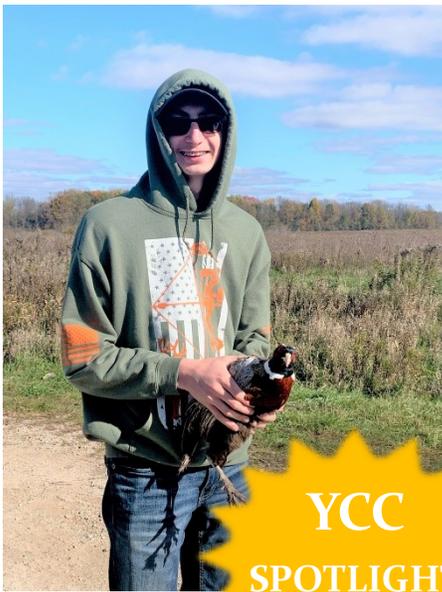
I plan to attend UW-Stevens Point to major in Conservation Law enforcement.

What would you say to encourage someone to join the YCC?

There are so many opportunities to learn about and experience things that we otherwise would not get. I am looking forward to more opportunities now that pandemic restrictions have begun to be lifted.

“ Blake was Calumet County's first YCC member. The process was a learning curve for both of us as well as the uncertainty of the past few years. Blake took every advantage he could to be involved with YCC events. He is active within his community by teaching and inviting others to share in his love of the outdoors. At first Blake may seem somewhat reserved. However, if you ask him to tell you about his latest hunting or fishing story, his high school trap team or especially about his new puppy, he will give you all the details. I am excited to see how far his goals take him in the field of Natural Resources. Good luck Blake. ”

~Keith Propson, Mentor to Blake



YCC SPOTLIGHT

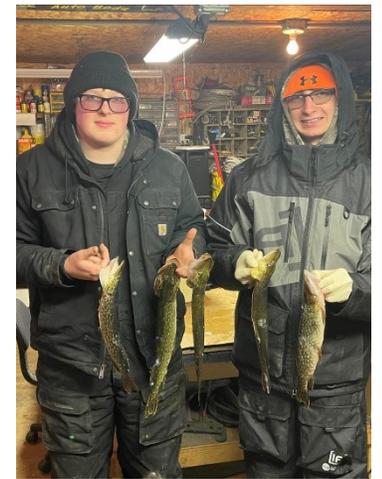
Blake volunteered to help DNR staff with pheasant stocking



Releasing stocked pheasant



Blake and one of his classmates built this CWD testing kiosk in Advanced Woods class at school.



Fishing with a friend (Blake on right)



Pheasants Forever Learn to Hunt Program



Deer hunting season

WISCONSIN NATURAL RESOURCE MAGAZINE—SPRING 2022

This issue's cover story explores Wisconsin's fire season, how the DNR works to keep people and lands safe, and provides tips for protecting homes from wildfires.

As the season changes, buds are growing and fish are spawning making way for the Ojibwe spring fishing season. Learn about the sacred tribal harvest traditions and the importance of upholding tribal rights.

Readers will also meet the women in forestry cutting a path for diversity in forest management, including technology specialists, forest health experts, wildland firefighters and field foresters who help care for the 17-million-acres of forest in Wisconsin.

Prep for the spring turkey season with a culinary spotlight featuring a delicious wild turkey schnitzel recipe, discover fly fishing in the Wisconsin Driftless Area, find a fun fishing game for kids and get inspired to sign up for a field trip with the Natural Resources Foundation of Wisconsin.

Find a map of accessible opportunities at Wisconsin's state properties, a guide to Milwaukee day trips, reminders of how to handle an encounter with young wild animals and an introduction to weeds that do good – because they may actually be a valuable native species.

Read the Spring issue of *Wisconsin Natural Resources* online at wnrmag.com.



CONSERVATION LEADERSHIP CORPS

We encourage all YCC seniors to apply for the Conservation Leadership Corps (CLC).

The CLC is designed to provide training for seniors in high school along with college freshmen, sophomores, and juniors to develop leadership skills and techniques to allow students the ability to analyze as well as develop conservation policies in his or her subject of interest. Students involved will also gain experience advocating their conservation resolutions at the Annual Meeting for the WWF. Successfully written and presented conservation resolutions may be adopted by WWF to serve as official policies.

Training will be provided by current and former natural resource professionals in both public, non-profit as well as private sectors. Students will be presented with real-world experience and will receive feedback from professionals with expertise in conservation policy. Such interactions will be valuable to participants in relation to school success, future career aspirations, and involvement in conservation organizations.

The tenth year of the program will take place during the 2022-2023 academic year. Events will be scheduled for four weekends throughout the year (Friday night and most of Saturday). Conservation resolution presentations conducted by those involved would be made at the Annual Meeting of the Wildlife Federation in April 2023. Selected CLC candidates are encouraged to attend most, if not all, of the four training sessions throughout the year.

All expenses encountered while participating in the CLC program will be covered by WWF. At the successful completion of the year, each participant will receive a Certificate of Accomplishment for the training program, a letter of commendation for their resume portfolio and a \$250 scholarship to advance their continuing education.

Application Deadline is May 31st, 2022. Interested CLC candidates should fill out the application and send it to the CLC Coordinator, at CLC.WWF.Coordinator@gmail.com. Candidates selected (by June 15th) will be notified in June for the upcoming school year. **Additional details and application:** <https://wiwf.org/clc/>



YCC Upcoming Opportunities

APRIL

- 11th - Spring hearings will be held online beginning at 7:00pm and remain open through 7:00 pm on April 14, 2022. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/springhearing>
- 13th - YCC virtual gathering 7:30-8:30pm. Learn more about Snapshot Wisconsin.
- 16th-17th - Youth Turkey Hunt
- 22nd - Earth Day
- Dates vary by county - [County Deer Advisory Council \(CDAC\)](#) meetings

MAY

- 7th - Fishing opener in Wisconsin.
*Please always check regulations first. Season dates are often specific to the species of fish as well as the water body.
- 11th - YCC virtual gathering. Topic to be determined.
- 12-14th - WCC Annual Convention, Wisconsin Dells.
- 18th-19th - Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo (MOHEE).

JUNE

- 4th-5th - Free fishing weekend in Wisconsin.
- 8th - YCC virtual gathering. Topic to be determined.
- 30th - YCC field trip to the DNR Science Operations Center, Madison.

JULY

- 13th - YCC virtual gathering. Topic to be determined.

AUGUST

- 11th-14th - YCC Summer Program - Save the date!

ONGOING

- Statewide opportunity: volunteer to help with conservation workdays at State Natural Areas. <https://dnr.wi.gov/topic/lands/naturalareas/volunteer.html>
- DNR State Park System volunteer information: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/parks/volunteer>

APRIL - YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING

- Snapshot Wisconsin



Wednesday, April 13th 7:30-8:30pm

Snapshot Wisconsin is a partnership to monitor wildlife year-round, using a statewide network of trail cameras. The project provides data needed for wildlife management decision support at the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources. It is also a unique opportunity for individuals, families, and students to get involved in monitoring the state's valuable natural resources.



Let's discover our wildlife together!

Watch your email for a zoom link.

YOUTH TURKEY HUNT — APRIL 17-18

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. <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/hunt/youth.html>

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.

For additional information and application form visit: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/about/wcc/lth>

**Applications must be postmarked by
Wednesday, April 22, 2020.**