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Illinois Conservation Foundation Announces 2025 Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame Inductees

SPRINGFIELD – The Illinois Conservation Foundation (ICF) has announced nine new inductees into the Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame, recognizing their outstanding contributions to conservation, education, and outdoor recreation.

The 2025 class represents decades of dedication to protecting Illinois' natural resources and inspiring others to enjoy and care for the outdoors. Formal inductions will take place during the Illinois Conservation Foundation Gala on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at Abbington Banquets in Glen Ellyn.

"This year's inductees reflect the mission of the Illinois Conservation Foundation. Through their leadership and example, they've helped protect natural spaces, expand access to the outdoors, and inspire others to get involved in conservation," said **Jenny Vaughn, Executive Director of the Illinois Conservation Foundation**. "We're proud to recognize their impact and celebrate the difference they've made across Illinois."

"These honorees have spent their lives protecting our lands and waters, caring for wildlife, and passing down the hunting and fishing traditions that define Illinois' outdoor heritage," said **IDNR Director and ICF Chair Natalie Phelps Finnie**. "I'm especially proud to see IDNR team members among this year's inductees, whose work has gone above and beyond both professionally and personally to serve the people of Illinois and the places we all love."

2025 Illinois Outdoor Hall of Fame Inductees

Suzanne Entress Morris, Lake Forest: Suzanne helped transform Waukegan's North Beach into one of the Midwest's top dune ecosystems and spent more than 50 years leading education and conservation programs through Audubon and Lake County Forest Preserves.

Steve McClone, West Dundee: McClone is the founder of Moonpie Outdoors. He has guided more than 80 hunting and fishing trips for veterans and children with cancer, using outdoor experiences to bring healing, connection, and joy.

Stacy Iwanicki, Wonder Lake: Iwanicki has served nearly four decades as natural resources education coordinator at Volo Bog State Natural Area. She has inspired generations through her creativity, knowledge, and commitment to environmental education.

Scott Huschle, Smithton: Huschle has introduced thousands of youth to safe and ethical hunting through his Celebrity Youth Duck Hunt and spent 25 years as an outdoor radio host and conservation advocate.

Larry Lucas, Chicago: Lucas has advanced Illinois conservation policy by championing youth hunting legislation and establishing a fourth waterfowl hunting zone, expanding access and opportunity statewide.

Kara Downin, East Galesburg: Kara secured hundreds of thousands of dollars for streambank stabilization and habitat restoration in Knox County while leading conservation education for more than 1,500 children and adults each year.

James Gowen, Granite City: James is a 28-year veteran of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources, has revitalized state parks and wildlife areas in southern Illinois through habitat improvements and youth mentorship.

Frank Hyla, Lemont: Hyla has mentored young anglers at more than 200 events as Shimano's youth fishing coordinator and helped expand high school and collegiate bass fishing nationwide.

Dave Gannaway, Morton: Gannaway, a former IHSA assistant director, established high school competitive fishing in Illinois and inspired similar programs across the country, giving students new ways to engage with the outdoors.

In addition to the Hall of Fame inductions, the gala will also honor recipients of the Illinois Outdoor Excellence Awards, which recognize outstanding outdoor businesses, volunteers, influencers, and writers. Nominations are still being accepted at <https://ilconservation.org/awards>.

For updates about the gala, sponsorship opportunities, or ticket information, visit ilconservation.org or contact Jenny Vaughn at jenny@ilconservation.org.

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