

Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress Update

September 2023

YCC delegates and mentors,

The start of the school year always brings new beginnings and opportunities. Are any of you trying out for a new sport, or considering joining a new academic club? It seems like the possibilities are endless. This is an incredible time in your life to explore new pathways, in school and in your free time.

The YCC provides an abundance of opportunities. Are you interested in learning about bird migration, helping with a local service project, hunting a new species, habitat conservation, job shadowing a conservation warden, mushroom foraging, or scouting for the best fishing spots? Let us know what excites you about conservation and the natural world.

Throughout the year we plan group activities, and provide information about programs around the state. However, if there is something that you want to explore further, please reach out. I can help to find local mentors and natural resource experts.

Much of your success and enjoyment with the YCC rests on your shoulders, but please know that I am happy to help facilitate pathways to make new opportunities accessible. Throughout the upcoming year, I challenge you try something new at school and explore more of what the YCC has to offer.

Have a great year!

~Kyle Zenz, YCC Coordinator

YCC Delegates in Action



Brody & Shawn, YCC delegates from Racine Co. helped the Burlington Conservation Club build 21 wood duck nest boxes.



Tommy, YCC delegate from Vilas Co. enjoyed a great trip to Montana, and made sure to spend time fishing. He entered this catch and release trout to the YCC virtual fishing contest.



Ariana, YCC delegate from Sawyer Co. met DNR Secretary Adam Payne at the Waterfowl Hunters Expo. Ariana spoke with visitors exploring the Touch of the Wild Trailer.



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: Frank Pratt (715) 699-3974 / fpratt32@gmail.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 new delegates to the YCC:

Seth, Clark Co.

Mattie, Trempealeau Co.



In Memory



Rick Wayne

Learn more about Rick's life and legacy by reading his [Obituary](#)

It is with heavy hearts, we share the news of the passing of Rick Wayne, of Pepin County. Rick served as WCC delegate for many years, and was very supportive of the Youth Conservation Congress.

Rick was known for making countless bluebird nest boxes, and donating them to local schools and youth programs. At the 2022 WCC Convention, Rick donated bluebird box kits for all YCC delegates to assemble and take home. He also provided wood duck box kits to YCC delegates and helped make a video detailing how to assemble a wood duck nest box.

Rick has definitely left his mark on the landscape with his bluebird boxes scattered across the state! The impact he made on conservation among all ages is remarkable.

Rick's service to youth and conservation was commendable, but it will be his attitude and positive spirit that will be missed the most.

We thank Rick for his dedication to conservation in Wisconsin, and his support of the Youth Conservation Congress.



YCC delegates and mentors assembling bluebird nest boxes at the 2022 WCC Statewide Convention.

GIFTS TO THE YCC

The YCC is incredibly grateful for the generous monetary gifts donated by Wisconsin conservation organizations and individuals. These organizations listed below have recently invested in the future of the YCC:

[Koenigs Conservation Association LLC](#)

[Pheasants Forever Chapter 590](#)

[Calumet Co. Youth Safety](#)

[Manitowoc Unit, Manitowoc County Fish & Game Protective Assn.](#)



Financial gifts help provide opportunities for YCC delegates to participate in mentored hunting programs, engage with resource professionals to learn about habitat conservation, join peers and mentors for group fishing outings, engage in volunteer service projects and much more!

WISCONSIN YOUTH DEER HUNT

We encourage all YCC delegates 15 and under to participate in the Wisconsin Youth Deer Hunt, October 7 & 8. This is a great opportunity for an early season hunt. Learn more about details of the youth hunt by reading the [rules and regulations](#).

If you need help finding a mentor to help you hunt or need help finding a location to hunt, please reach out to Kyle. We will connect you with an experienced mentors who can help you learn more about deer hunting and prepare you for a hunt. If you have not completed your hunter safety course, you are still able to participate in the youth hunt. You will need to purchase a [mentored-only hunting license](#) and must stay in arms reach of an experienced mentor at all times.

 **Share your hunt with us! All YCC delegates who participate in the youth hunt will be entered in a drawing to win prizes!**

- YCC delegates who harvest a deer will be entered to win a solar powered game camera.
- YCC delegates who participate in the hunt (even if you don't harvest a deer) will be entered to win a yearly subscription to the Wisconsin Outdoor News.
- In order to qualify for the drawing, please send a photo of yourself with your harvested deer, or an outdoor picture (or selfie) of you taken on October 7th or 8th wearing your hunting clothes. Send photos by October 9th to kyle.zenz@wisconsin.gov or text to 715-299-0925. We will draw for prizes at the YCC virtual gathering on Wednesday, October 11th.



Brody, YCC delegates from Racine Co. pictured during the 2022 youth hunt.

WANNA GO HUNTING? DNR HUNTING WEBINAR SERIES

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) created several educational hunting [webinars](#) for members of the public that are new to hunting or hunting curious. The [webinar series](#) is in partnership with the National Wild Turkey Federation, Pheasants Forever and Becoming an Outdoorswoman.



The series is designed for those interested in learning about hunting, fishing and trapping. Each episode features guest speakers sharing their experiences getting started with hunting and includes discussions addressing common challenges faced by those new to hunting, fishing or trapping.

Wanna Go Hunting Series:

- [Let's Get Started!](#) - [What Can We Hunt?](#) - [Where Can We Hunt?](#) - [Where can we practice shooting?](#) - [Who Can We Learn From?](#)

Follow the [DNR YouTube](#) channel to learn more.

SPECIAL DEER HUNT OFFERED AT SANDHILL WILDLIFE AREA

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is offering a unique gun deer hunting opportunity this fall at Sandhill Wildlife Area in Babcock as part of a [study on deer density](#).

The Sandhill Wildlife Area's 2023 Gun Deer Hunt will be held on December 9 and 10 and will be the final 2023 deer harvest opportunity at Sandhill Wildlife Area. Space is limited, and those wishing to participate in this hunt must apply for a [special permit](#). Applications are due by October 13, and all licensed gun hunters are eligible to apply.



The study will evaluate various methods for estimating deer density on small scales, like within the [Sandhill Wildlife Area](#). The study will utilize multiple data sources, including trail camera photos and GPS-collared deer.

All applications must be submitted before October 13, 2023. Successful applicants will be notified one week after the deadline.

Before beginning their hunt, participating hunters must review the special hunting rules and regulations for the Sandhill Wildlife Area. Each participant will be issued two harvest authorizations, one either-sex permit and one antlerless-only harvest authorization. These harvest authorizations are only valid at Sandhill Wildlife Area and during the special two-day hunt.

WATERFOWL HUNTERS EXPO

The [Waterfowl Hunters Expo](#), held Saturday, August 26th was a wonderful example of Wisconsin Conservation Congress delegates and Youth Conservation Congress delegates working together to share collective messages of conservation and education with the public at the “[Youth Zone](#)”. 18 WCC delegates and 15 YCC delegates volunteered during the event.



We are grateful for the support of all WCC and YCC delegates who donated their time and talents to the 2023 Waterfowl Hunters Expo. Over 5,000 individuals attended the Expo. Youth and their families visiting the youth zone had an opportunity to participate in hands-on activity stations including: duck stamp design, duck decoy painting, fly tying, pellet gun shooting, archery, wood duck nest box assembly, touring the Touch of the Wild Trailer, waterfowl trivia, duck education, and more.

Individual youth and families enjoyed all aspects of the Youth Zone, and loved getting to spin the prize wheel upon completing activities in the youth zone.



Wood duck nest box construction



Duck decoy painting, first and second place artists



Plinko waterfowl trivia and biology station



DNR Secretary Adam Payne learning about fly tying



Learning station featuring lure making and fly tying



Shooting competition



Filling bags with prizes and information about the YCC



The live trivia “Kahoot” competition was a popular station at the youth zone



Assembling nest boxes



Reviewing duck stamp art entries



YCC delegates showing the donated drills used to assemble nest boxes



YCC delegates assisting the youth zone



Youth zone welcome station

YCC SUMMER PROGRAM

The 2023 YCC Summer Program was a whirlwind of activity, adventure, and learning! YCC delegates, mentors and chaperones all camped at Calumet County Park, on the shore of Lake Winnebago. Three days of scheduled activities led them through Manitowoc, Sheboygan, Calumet and Fond Du Lac Counties.

YCC delegates learned about ducks, geology, survival skills, trout habitat, natural resource law enforcement, archery, and trap shooting.



DUCK BANDING AT COLLINS MARSH WITH DNR BIOLOGISTS



The group arrived to the duck banding location at 4:30 am! 12 YCC delegates sat in the blind for an hour waiting for the perfect time to release the net on the ducks. Everyone helped hold and transfer ducks to the biologists who recorded sex and age, and fitted each duck with an ID band. Almost 100 ducks were identified and recorded. A storm began to roll in, so the group worked quickly and rolled the net back up just in time as the rain started.

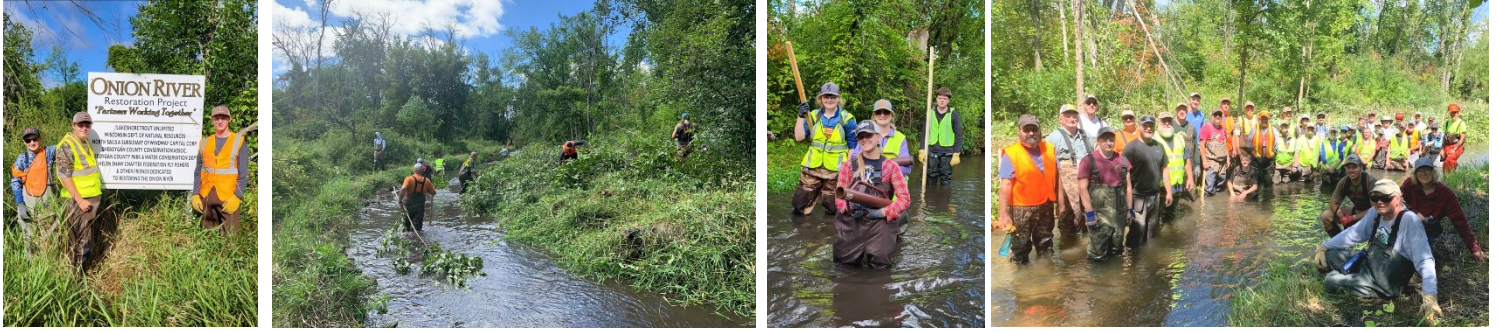
CAVING AND SURVIVAL SKILLS AT LEDGE VIEW NATURE CENTER



Traveling underground was a new experience for many YCC delegates. The “adventure caving” program involved exploring, ducking and crawling through a series of caves. One of these tunnels was a very tight squeeze for those who chose to pass through. After surfacing, the group enjoyed a survival program and learned about fire starting. One new tip they learned is that chapstick can be a helpful fuel to get a fire started!

YCC SUMMER PROGRAM (CONTINUED)

STREAM WORK WITH TROUT UNLIMITED



The [Lakeshore Chapter of Trout Unlimited](#) invited the YCC to help during their monthly workday. The focus was on the Onion River south of Plymouth. Over 45 volunteers from TU and the YCC worked together to complete 250 ft of bank stabilization and improve 150 feet of lunger structures. YCC delegates really enjoyed all of the manual labor and teamwork that was required to successfully complete improvements on this stretch of the river. The TU team shared information with YCC delegates about the history of this project and its trout population success stories.

CONSERVATION WARDEN CONNECTIONS AND ENFORCEMENT SIMULATIONS



Conservation Wardens, Mary Bisch and Josh Voelker along with Community Service Officer, Simeon Rivera walked the YCC delegates through creative, CSI-type simulations. These included role playing some common natural resource law infractions, and using clues, and interviewing skills to gather evidence. Delegates also completed an “eagle eye” challenge, trying to find 15 hidden items along a trail. These items included: a trail camera, arrow, animal pelt, antlers, turtle shell, spotlight, decoys, and more!

TRAP SHOOTING, BOW FISHING, AND ARCHERY AT THE CONSERVATION CLUB



The Eastshore Winnebago Conservation Club welcomed YCC delegates to use their facilities for a field day, rotating through stations including trap shooting, archery, and target bow fishing. The weather was perfect and the day ended with a beautiful sunset. Everyone enjoyed getting a chance to try the stations, and bow fishing was definitely a first for many of them.

YCC Upcoming Opportunities

SEPTEMBER

- 13th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Career building program.
- 16th - Archery season opens for deer hunting.

OCTOBER

- 7th - 8th - [Youth Deer Hunt](#).
- 11th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Waterfowl Hunting overview, Todd Schaller, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association.
- October 21st - YCC Oversight Committee meeting at Sandhill Wildlife Area.
- October 21-22nd - YCC mentored hunt program at Sandhill Wildlife Area.

NOVEMBER

- 8th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Topic to be determined.
- 18th - 26th - Wisconsin gun-deer season.

DECEMBER

- 13th - YCC virtual gathering, 7:30-8:30 pm. Learn about Sturgeon Spearing in Wisconsin, Margaret Stadig, WDNR.

HUNTING INFORMATION

Looking for hunting dates, regulations, hunting locations and more information?

Check out: <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Hunt>

Hunters and trappers can explore fall forecasts at the links below:

[2023 Fall Deer Hunting Forecast](#)

[2023 Fall Upland Game Bird Forecast](#)

[2023 Fall Migratory Bird Hunting Forecast](#)

[2023 Fall Bear Hunting Forecast](#)

[2023 Fall Furbearer Hunting And Trapping Forecast](#)

“The DNR’s species forecasts are the result of a thorough analysis of federal and local surveys, the findings of research projects, weather patterns and the on-the-ground information we receive from our advisory committees and staff,” said Shawn Rossler, DNR Wildlife Biologist. “They are based on a good mix of hard science and the observations of DNR professionals and experienced outdoorspeople from across Wisconsin.”

YCC VIRTUAL GATHERING -

Wednesday, September 13, 7:30-8:30pm



Hear from our YCC alumni about summer jobs and study experiences. Also learn about how your involvement in the YCC can help prepare you for future jobs, gain volunteer hours and enhance your resume.

Watch your email for details and a zoom link.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY:

The DNR releases pheasants in suitable habitat across the state throughout the months of October to December.

This could be an opportunity for a field experience releasing pheasants with a DNR biologist.



Contact your mentor to determine if this is an option for you. If you need assistance initiating contact with a biologist, or determining release dates, please contact the YCC Coordinator.

Are pheasants being released in your county? Search by county to determine pheasant release locations: [Pheasant Stocking Information \(wi.gov\)](#)

YCC MENTORED WATERFOWL HUNT

October 21-22

Sandhill Wildlife Area, Babcock

All YCC delegates are invited to participate in a mentored waterfowl hunt. New and experienced hunters are encouraged to attend. Even if you aren’t interested in waterfowl hunting, you are welcome to participate and learn about the process.

Overnight accommodations are available in the dorm building at Sandhill.

Saturday, October 21

1:00 - Learn about waterfowl hunting

3:30 - Head out to flowages to hunt

6:30 - Potluck dinner

7:30 - Basic gun cleaning demonstration

8:30 - Campfire s’mores

Sunday, October 22

Early morning - possible waterfowl hunt

9:00 - upland bird hunt, woodcock, grouse

12:00 - wrap up and head home

Watch your email, additional information and registration will be sent soon.

This hunt will be held in conjunction with the YCC Oversight Committee Meeting on Saturday, October 21st.