

2026 Volunteer Awards Ceremony







North Country Trail Association

2026 Volunteer Awards

2025

Honor Awards

NCTA Chapter, Affiliate, and partner leaders may select volunteers to receive an Honor Award. This award is different in that all nominees receive an award.

Chapter or Affiliate volunteers who demonstrate loyalty, commitment, and hard work annually to the local organization's chosen activities.

2025

Honor Awards

Derek Ogle, Chequamegon Chapter

Dick + Laura Wohl, Central Flyway Chapter

Denise Stanley, Sheyenne River Valley Chapter

Sally Dykhuis, Grand Traverse Chapter

Mark + Laura Braasch, Brule-St. Croix Chapter

Beth Kaszynski, Superior Hiking Trail Association

Joe Baker, Superior Hiking Trail Association

Monica Shoberg, Superior Hiking Trail Association

2025 Honor Awards

Dale Linton, Chief Baw Beese Chapter

Tanya Bromley, Chief Noonday Chapter

Bill Stone, Dakota Prairie Chapter

Carl Harting, Clarion County Chapter

Jack Barnhill, Spirit of the Woods Chapter

Kyle Crawford, Kekekabic Trail Chapter

Catherine Andrews, Peter Wolfe Chapter

Jacob Winkler, Chief Baw Beese Chapter

2025

Honor Awards

Tim Calloway, Jordan Valley 45° Chapter

Tom Striggow, Northwestern Ohio Rails-to-Trails Association

James Nocera, Wampum Chapter

William Lallman, Allegheny National Forest Chapter

Todd Olsen, Marquette Area Chapter

Judy Fox, Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore Chapter

Clinton Warner, Butler County Chapter

Kim Fishburn, Star of the North Chapter

Pam Tavernier, Border Route Trail Association



Thank you

Awards Committee

Mel Baughman

Josh Berlo

Dave Brewer

Sue Harvey Brown

Tom Gilbert

Deb Koepplin

Larry Pio

Randall Roberts

Zoe Rudisill

Trail Maintainer

A volunteer who has demonstrated exceptional dedication or achievements in maintaining or restoring pre-existing North Country Trail segments over a 3-year period or more.

Trail Maintainer
Kit Grayson
Minnesota



Trail Maintainer
Jerome Lemke
Minnesota



Trail Maintainer
Jim Martin
Michigan



Trail Maintainer
Jim + Jeri Rakness
Minnesota



Trail Maintainer
Jeff Syphrit
Pennsylvania



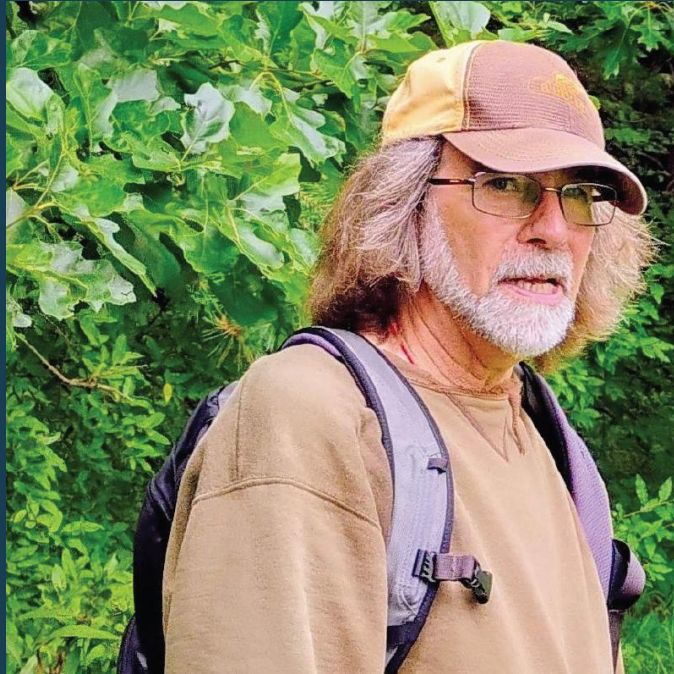
Trail Builder

A volunteer who has spent 3 years or more of trail planning, landowner negotiations, layout and design, and/or construction, that has resulted in the development of outstanding new North Country Trail or facilities.

Trail Builder

Jim Bronson

Michigan



Trail Builder

Carrie Elzinga

Michigan



Trail Builder

Karen Frederick

Ohio



Trail Builder
Jon Hughlett
Wisconsin



Trail Builder

Mark Zimmerman

North Dakota



Sweep

A volunteer, who has contributed 3 years or more of tireless work and achievements behind the scenes on behalf of the NCTA.

Sweep

Rick Burkhart

Michigan



Sweep

Jim Nocera

Pennsylvania



Sweep

Ruth Perino

Michigan



Boots on the Trail

A volunteer who regularly leads hikes that are well-advertised and promoted to the public as a way of building NCTA membership and support for the North Country Trail over a 3-year period or more.

Boots on the Trail

Gloria Brushwyler

Michigan



Boots on the Trail

Nancy DeJong

Michigan



Boots on the Trail

Glee Mayer

North Dakota



Outreach

A volunteer whose efforts to build coalitions, partnerships, or other forms of local support that significantly contribute to the ongoing success of the North Country Trail, over a 3-year period or more.

Outreach

Julie Smith

Michigan



Communicator

A volunteer who has contributed exemplary work in promoting the North Country Trail or the NCTA through a communications medium (newsletter, website, brochure, etc.) or personal contacts over a 3-year period or more.

Communicator
Ken Baker
Michigan



Communicator

Karen Campbell

New York



Communicator

Cheryl McGrath

Michigan



Trailblazer

A business or foundation with far-sighted vision and support, demonstrated by significant contributions to the North Country Trail or the NCTA.

Trailblazer
Barb Gecas
Minnesota



Trailblazer

Upper Peninsula Land Conservancy

Michigan



Trailblazer

Jeff Van Winkle

von Brieson & Roper Law Firm, Michigan



Friend of the Trail

An employee(s) of a unit of governance or organization whose leadership, accommodations, and active collaboration have substantially benefited the North Country Trail or the NCTA.

Friend of the Trail

Will Cooksey

Trust for Public Land, Wisconsin



Friend of the Trail

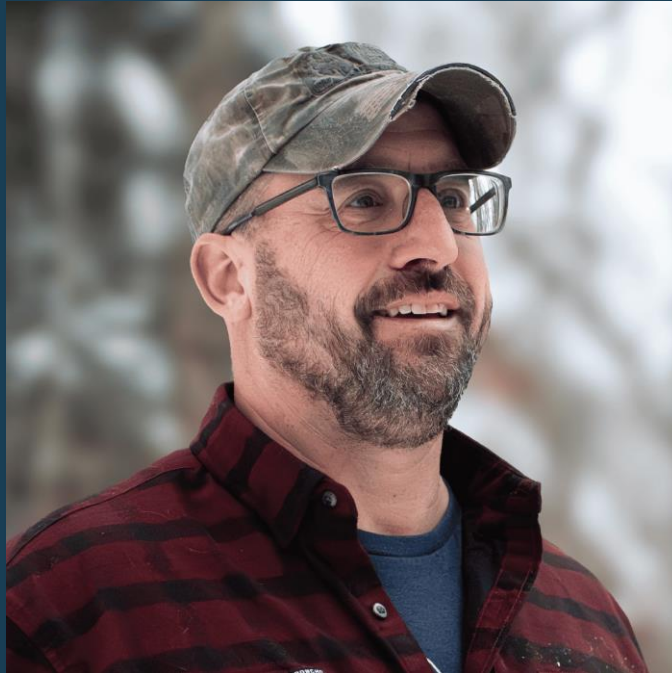
Steve DeBrabander

Iron Belle Trail Funds, Michigan



Friend of the Trail
Aaron Kania

Minnesota



Friend of the Trail

Dan Kephart + Matt Leischer

Brule River State Forest, Wisconsin



Outstanding Private Landowner

A private landowner whose leadership, accommodation, and active collaboration substantially benefit the North Country Trail.

Outstanding Private Landowner

UPM Blandin

Minnesota



Outstanding Private Landowner

Robert Zuch

Ohio



Blue Blazes Benefactor

An individual or household demonstrating vision and generosity through significant monetary or in-kind contribution(s) to the North Country Trail or the NCTA.

Blue Blazes Benefactor

Peter Bennett + Julia Davey

Michigan



Blue Blazes Benefactor

Jon + Christine Saari

Michigan



Leadership

A volunteer who has demonstrated exceptional leadership, resulting in significant local achievements or highly successful events over a 3-year period or more.

Leadership

JoEllen Sokoloski

Pennsylvania



Leadership

Mark Wadopian

New York



Leadership

Kevin Whitley

Michigan



Distinguished Service

A volunteer who has dedicated 8 years or more of exceptional service in furthering the goals of the NCTA, and outstanding contributions toward the dream of the North Country Trail.

Distinguished Service
Bill Majernik
Ohio



Distinguished Service

Jack Norland

North Dakota



Distinguished Service

Dale + Kathy Painter

Michigan



Distinguished Service
Mary Rebert
Michigan



Distinguished Service

Karen Stenberg

Minnesota



Thomas L. Gilbert

Lifetime Achievement

An individual who has shown 15 years or more of true dedication, exceptional service, and outstanding contributions toward the dream of the North Country Trail, or the success and growth of the NCTA.

Lifetime Achievement

Mary Moberg

Arizona



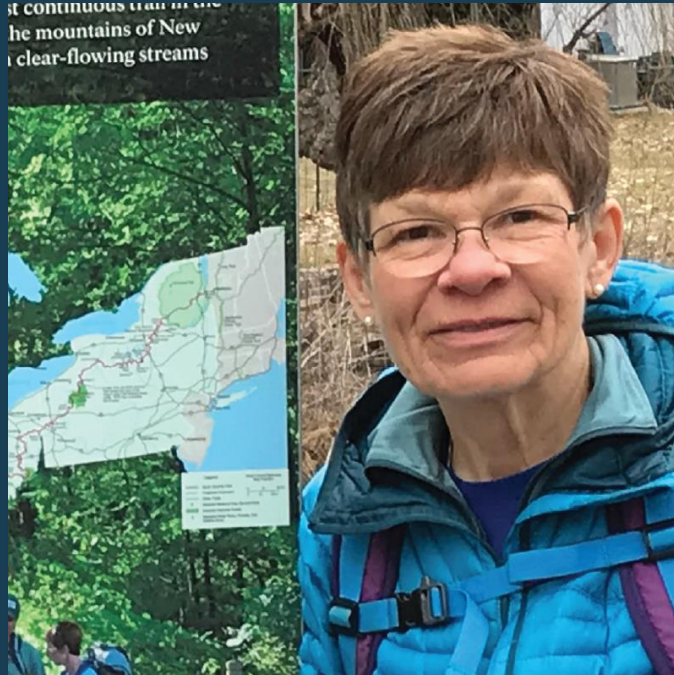
Nancy Brozek, NCTA Director of Development and Communications



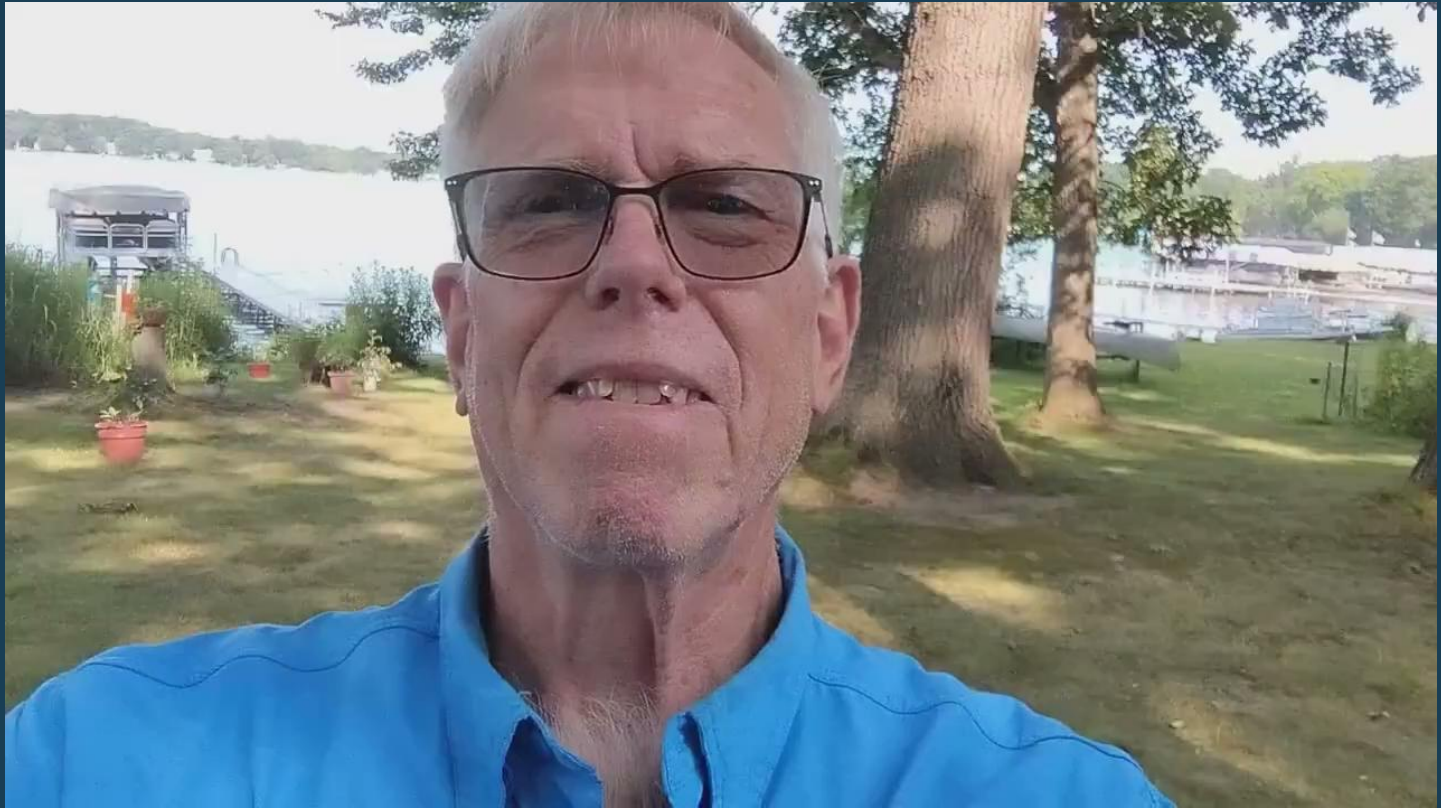
Lifetime Achievement

Jane Norton

Michigan



Eric Longman, Chief Noonday Chapter



Lifetime Achievement

Mark VanHornweder

Wisconsin



Peter Nordgren, Brule-St. Croix Chapter



**Thank you,
trail community!**

2027 Nominations + 2026 Honor Awards

northcountrytrail.org/awards

North Country National Scenic Trail Volunteer Recognition 2026



100 Hours Milestone



100 Hours Milestone

Janet Ball

Roy Barnes

Diane Bassette Nelson

Rex Bergsten

Sue Bouwense

L Byrne



100 Hours Milestone

Julie Davey

Heather Day

Michael DeMaster

James Doull

Steve Eidenschink

Mary Jane Emery



100 Hours Milestone

Judy Fox

Amy Godwin

Debra Harding-Vanaman

Dolores Heupel

Dinah Hoke

Aaron Keller



100 Hours Milestone

Jamie Korn

Eric Lillyblad

Patrick Long

Brandon Machler

John McCallum

Emily Mesch



100 Hours Milestone

Jack Morrison

Jim Nocera

Arthur Norton

Christopher Oppitz

Jim Patterson

Amy Poholski



100 Hours Milestone

Kim Putman

Nick Rahn

John Regan

Jennifer Reynolds

Al Ringer

Glen Roberts



100 Hours Milestone

Lori Rogers

Mark Spoden

Denise Stanley

Seth Stein

Mark Stevens

Chris Stoltenow



100 Hours Milestone

John Storkamp

Patty Strand

Jeff Syphrit

Carla Szalewicz

Luke Szczepaniak

Lori Tillman



100 Hours Milestone

Sarah Totall

Myrtle Turnquist

Nancy Van Nest

Anne Vanberg

Thomas Vayansky

Tammy Veloski



100 Hours Milestone

Mark Viel

April Willbur

Kaelyn Williams

Cheyenne Williams

Josie Williams

Paul Williams



200 Hours Milestone



200 Hours Milestone

Steve Anderson

Donna Bailey

Mark Belknap

Ryan Blaisdell

Mark Braasch

Rashelle Brown



200 Hours Milestone

Steven Busch

Gary Carlson

Jim Columbus

Timothy DeJong

Ron Douglas

Mark Evans



200 Hours Milestone

Chris Godwin

Rhiannon Harmon

Harold Heathman

Ron Hendrickson

Kevin Hirakis

Tia Hirakis



200 Hours Milestone

Joyce Irvine

David Jensen

Beth Kaszynski

Dale Linton

Katie Logan

Amanda MacDonell



200 Hours Milestone

James Marrs

Phil McDowell

Beth McIntyre

Jeffery Meister

Jeff Miller

Dale Prey



200 Hours Milestone

Jeanne Rokos

Robert Rosati

Chris Sherman

Diana Sherry

Donna Siska

Paul Smith



200 Hours Milestone

Cynthia Smith

Janita Springer

Shelly Thompson

Jeff Van Winkle

Robert Weisenberger

Linda White



200 Hours Milestone

Mishell Wiley

Diane Wright

Tom Zavitz



400 Hours Milestone



400 Hours Milestone

Timothy Bauer

Jay Benda

Rick Bothwell

Tom Carter

Cynthia Clemens

Katarzyna Dec



400 Hours Milestone

Nancy DeJong

Dan Driesenga

Dan Dueweke

Tim Duffy

Sally Dykhuis

Charles Gallet



400 Hours Milestone

Connie Geinert

Nathan Guntrum

Kim Gustafson

Don Hoppe

David Irvine

Michelle Lazar



400 Hours Milestone

Robert Lind

Elyria Little

Colleen Matula

David Olsen

Tom Piikkila

Konstantin Pokrovski



400 Hours Milestone

John Schmitt

Amy Seymour

Stacy Strand

Chuck Thomas

James Waters



1,000 Hours Milestone



1,000 Hours Milestone

Danny Austin

Larry Best

Dan Campbell

Michael Daly

Tom Harris



1,000 Hours Milestone

Jim Lindberg

Jon Maturi

Cheryl McGrath

Teresa Nelson

John Pitale



1,000 Hours Milestone

Katie Prindle

Ed Ranson

Charlie Todd

Tim Van Nest

Sam Zembardo



2,500 Hours Milestone



2,500 Hours Milestone

Jim Charvat

Eric Maturi

Michael Sekely

Brad Slagle

Brad Stewart

Mark Wadopian



4,000 Hours Milestone



4,000 Hours Milestone

John Texter

Bethany Thomas

Tom Walker

Carol Wright



Natural & Cultural Resources Steward





Jeff Manelick

Paul “Smitty” Smith

Tina Toole

Linda White

Thank you!

