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## **Conservation Leaders Recognized With 2016 Refuge System Awards**

Washington, D.C.--The 2016 recipients of the National Wildlife Refuge System Awards, sponsored by the National Wildlife Refuge Association, exemplify the outstanding conservation management skills and volunteer leadership found in the Refuge System.

The annual awards honor the outstanding accomplishments of a refuge manager, refuge employee, refuge volunteer and Friends group. Recognizing the excellence of these individuals and groups not only highlights the devotion of those who support the Refuge System, but also raises awareness about the diversity of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the challenges it faces and innovative efforts across the country to meet those challenges.

"The men and women represented among this year's winners illustrate the amazing dedication employees and volunteers have for America's wildlife refuges," said David Houghton, president of the National Wildlife Refuge Association. "Their passion inspires us all to consider additional ways we can help conserve these special places."

The 2016 Awardees are:

### **Keith Weaver: The Paul Kroegel Refuge Manager of the Year Award**

Dr. Keith Weaver, project leader at Central Arkansas National Wildlife Refuge Complex in Arkansas, has been selected as the 2016 recipient of the Paul Kroegel Award for Refuge Manager of the Year. The Award recognizes Weaver's more than 30-year career in conservation, which includes expanding wildlife habitat for migratory birds by helping acquire 10,000 acres of land, working with the community to establish a new Friends group and forming partnerships to aid in conservation efforts beyond the boundaries of wildlife refuges. The award is named in honor of Paul Kroegel, the first manager of the first refuge established in 1903 at Pelican Island, Florida. [Read more about Dr. Keith Weaver.](#)

### **Douglas M. Head II: Refuge Employee of the Year Award**

Head was named the Refuge Employee of the Year for his outstanding work as assistant zone biologist at Texas Chenier Plain Refuges Complex, Texas Mid-Coast Refuge Complex, Aransas National Wildlife Refuge, and Southwest Louisiana National Wildlife Refuge Complex in the upper gulf coast. He is known for being a well-rounded biologist and an engaging colleague who excels at establishing and maintaining relationships and at building teams to successfully accomplish a variety of restoration projects. Last year, he supervised over 30,000 acres of wild and prescribed fire and provided several educational outreach opportunities to urban youth, including a group from Los Angeles. [Read more about Douglas M. Head II.](#)

### **Ann Humphrey: Volunteer of the Year Award**

Humphrey has received the Volunteer of the Year Award in recognition of her unwavering support for Midway Atoll National Wildlife Refuge in the U.S. Minor Outlying Islands. Because of its remote location, volunteering at Midway requires a move to the island for the entire volunteer service tour. Since 2007, Ms. Humphrey has completed four service tours of various lengths. Under her direction, the refuge created a Refuge Biological Program volunteer corps to recruit and train stewards for Midway who grow to be technically savvy and make significant contributions to the refuge's mission. [Read more about Ann Humphrey.](#)

### **Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge: The Molly Krival Friends Group of the Year Award**

The Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge in Minnesota will receive the Molly Krival Friends Group of the Year Award. The award was recently renamed to honor the late Molly Krival – a pioneer of the Refuge Friends Group movement. The Friends of Tamarac's most impressive accomplishment was its successful campaign to build the Tamarac Discovery Center. Upon completion, this \$800,000 environmental education center was donated to the refuge. The Friends group has been instrumental in expanding the refuge's ability to provide family-oriented outdoor experiences. [Read more about Friends of Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge.](#)

To read more about this year's winners, visit the Refuge Awards page: [refugeassociation.org/award-winners](http://refugeassociation.org/award-winners).

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The National Wildlife Refuge Association is the only independent nonprofit that promotes and protects the world's largest wildlife conservation network: the National Wildlife Refuge System. Learn more at: [refugeassociation.org](http://refugeassociation.org).