



Brass Bluegill Award

Recognizing Outstanding Angler Education Programs

2021: Marsha Bailey

Bailey heads up the Mid Iowa Scout Council fishing committee and offers fishing programs to all levels of scouts. She also serves as a merit badge counselor for the Fishing Merit Badge, Fly Fishing, and Fish and Wildlife Management.

2020: Amy Ascherl

Ascherl teaches *Fish Iowa!* in her PE classes for grades 5-8. After their unit, students travel to local ponds to fish. Seventh and 8th grade students also learn paddling and archery skills. Ascherl chooses to teach *Fish Iowa!* because of her love for the outdoors. She wants to provide experiences her students may not otherwise have.

2019: Norma McCutchan

McCutchan uses *Fish Iowa!* to introduce animal behavior and Iowa's natural resources to her sophomore classes at Nodaway Valley High School in Greenfield. Her students study Iowa fish species found in their regional lakes, characteristics of the fish and make a hypothesis about which lure or bait they could use to catch a specific fish species.

2018: Faith Bruck

Logan-Magnolia Schools built a pond and wetland on school grounds in 2015 and stocked the pond for fishing. Bruck developed a fishing unit for PE that crosses over into Science classes and takes advantage of her students' outdoor interests. Students regularly fish the pond after the unit has concluded.

2017: Mid-Iowa Bassmasters

The Mid-Iowa Bassmasters have supported fishing opportunities for campers at the Easter Seals' Camp Sunnyside for decades and hosted dozens of youth fishing events, as well as the fishing village at the Iowa Outdoor Expo in Des Moines. The group assisted with the *Fish Iowa! Games* casting competition from 2006-2015.

2016: Justin Kinney

Kinney is a physical education and health instructor at Ridge View High School in Holstein where fishing is incorporated into 5th grade and junior high PE. High school students can opt to take an outdoor skills PE class that includes fishing. The course culminates in a trip to the Boundary Waters.

2015: Laura DeCook

DeCook began working with *Fish Iowa!* in 1996. As an At-Risk Coordinator, she developed a K-12 mentoring program based on fishing. She has worked with thousands of youth and adults as a naturalist and has trained some 40 other educators in *Fish Iowa!* She has been a pioneer in bow fishing education in Iowa.

2014: Mat Daniels

Daniels works with 150 at-risk students/year, using *Fish Iowa!* He teaches a nine-week course that, upon completion, students get an elective "Fish Iowa!" credit on their transcript. Daniel's *Fish Iowa!* program partners with Bass Pro Shops, Berkley, and Woods Sporting Goods.

2013: Dan Anderson

Anderson works with 20-30 sophomores through seniors in his Natural Resources Science class. The high school students help teach kindergartners and 3rd graders casting and a unit on fishing. Students visit the DNR fisheries management station in Guttenberg where they assist with electro-fishing to sample walleye and sauger.

2012: Karen Phelps

Phelps' *Fish Iowa!* programs reached more than 1000 students each year as a naturalist with the Benton County Conservation Board (CCB). She partnered a host of local conservation and education groups to connect children with the outdoors. Phelps now directs the Benton CCB.

2011: Larry Stott

Stott used the program with 6th grade students. Over almost 40 years he used various outdoor programs to involve youth in the outdoors and he ran the very popular Conservation Club at Waukon's East Elementary.

2010: Jason Thomson; Angie Christensen

Officer Thomson created an after school program with 4th grade students in 2006 to establish a better relationship between the schools and police, and to educate students to stay away from drugs. Life skills - goal setting, decision making, responsibility, improving self-esteem - are taught through fishing.

Christensen used *Fish Iowa!* with pre-K students, and trained 50 other instructors to use it as well. Christensen is always looking for ways to get kids outside playing, exploring, and learning. Christensen is also an instructor/trainer for several other DNR programs.

2009: Pete Eyheralde

Eyheralde used *Fish Iowa!* to introduce fishing to thousands of youth in Mahaska County, working with the YMCA, ISU Extension, the library, Cub Scouts, and local day care providers to take kids fishing. The Mahaska CCB summer “Fishn’ Camp” is one of the most popular day camps offered. Pete now teaches at William Penn University.

2008: Brad Freidhof

Friedhof used *Fish Iowa!* to help educate thousands of youth about fish and fishing in Pocahontas and Johnson Counties. He also trained more than 20 *Fish Iowa!* instructors who reached over 5,400 youth. He oversees education and outreach for Johnson CCB.

2007: Dianne Modlin

Modlin was first trained in 1996, one of 24 educators to pilot the national Hooked on Fishing Not on Drugs® materials. She taught a fishing unit each spring for seventh and eighth- grade students at Ballard-Huxley until her retirement in 2016. She worked with thousands of youth and trained dozens of other instructors.

2006: Vic Bjork

Bjork used \$100 of his own money to purchase basic supplies and began teaching *Fish Iowa!* to 12 eager students in 1992 at the Iowa Juvenile Home. By 1994, he had expanded his little “fishing unit” into a semester-long, accredited science course with fish and fishing as the central theme. “Mr. B.” shared his passion for fishing with hundreds of Iowa’s most troubled youths.

2005: Lyle Lundgren

Lundgren was among 30 educators who piloted *Fish Iowa!* in 1990. He involved thousands of students and trained hundreds of other teachers. Lundgren incorporates field archery, orienteering, rock climbing, and rappelling in his classes. He's also used *Fish Iowa!* on Scout camping trips.

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2004: Scott Kinseth

Kinseth was involved in youth education programs for more than 20 years. In 1999, he convinced Independence teachers to include *Fish Iowa!* in their “Iowa Studies” curriculum. The six- to eight-week unit is still being used and culminates in an all-day field experience.

2003: Pat Coen

Coen included *Fish Iowa!* in third-grade science class for 25 students. Students learned fish anatomy and habitats and how to operate fishing poles, tie flies, and fillet fish. Coen trained almost 100 other educators to lead *Fish Iowa!* activities and was a strong advocate for the program as a school administrator.

2002: Robert Behnkendorf

Behnkendorf and three volunteers created a youth club in Kossuth County as part of 4-H *Fish Iowa!* – a cooperative effort of Iowa 4-H and the Iowa DNR that included some 4,000 4-H youth.

2001: Tom Koster

Koster worked with over 800 children of all ages and (dis)abilities through *Fish Iowa!* with the Iowa and National Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

2000: Chuck Ungs

Ungs has used *Fish Iowa!* to help thousands of Iowa youth and adults learn to fish and enjoy our natural resources. His students range from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. Ungs has incorporated *Fish Iowa!* into water quality studies, after-school programs, fishing clinics, programs for persons with handicaps, and summer camps.

1999: Jean Ward

Ward taught *Fish Iowa!* as part of an optional “Great Outdoor” unit for fourth and fifth graders during three-week breaks in the spring and fall at a year-round school located in an inner city environment.

1998: Tom Zimmerman

Zimmerman included *Fish Iowa!* in PE. Because class sizes grew so much, a separate class was designed to allow more students a better learning experience. He took over 1,600 kids fishing through his classes and included students as teachers.

1997: Kathy Nelson

Nelson was one of approximately 200 “pioneers” who attended the first series of *Fish Iowa!* workshops. She recruited other teachers to develop a two-week interdisciplinary unit in PE, math, science, geography and language arts. Nelson recruited her successor to continue the fishing unit before her retirement.

