



Howard Johnson receives 2015 TU Distinguished Service Award for Conservation

*Howard Johnson, right, with TU
National Leadership Chairman,
Mick McCorcle*

Howard Johnson is known by many in Michigan as the unofficial river-keeper of the South Branch of the Au Sable River and the 11-mile stretch of land surrounding it donated to the state by George Mason, one of the 16 founders of Trout Unlimited. Over the course of the last 30 years, he has been at the center of almost every conservation project on the Au Sable, from cedar tree plantings to telemetry studies, redd counts and more. His work is everywhere, and his love for the river his family has lived alongside for 100 years is more than evident.

When members of the 020 – William B. Mershon Chapter brag that Howard's efforts have led to more than 20,000 white cedar trees being planted along the banks of the Au Sable, you're impressed. When you learn the way he did it—by engaging youth and having them bring their parents and grandparents to the river in multi-generational stewardship projects— you're in awe. You begin to realize that Howard truly understands how to build a community of conservationists.

From building long-lasting and powerful partnerships with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, to holding that same agency to task when it was not using science to drive its inland fisheries management plans, Howard is well-liked and respected by all who have encountered him in his quest to protect his river. More importantly, Howard has built a conservation mindset among the many landowners along the Au Sable—convincing them to adopt practices that will ensure the river remains a healthy haven for wild trout for generations to come.

Since the early 1960s, Trout Unlimited (TU) has bestowed awards to publicly recognize the outstanding achievements of its members, chapters and councils that have embodied the values of TU and fulfilled its mission to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. TU also recognizes the contributions and accomplishments of individuals and groups outside the organization that have demonstrated significant leadership and success in the world of coldwater conservation.

Today, TU is proud to showcase an exceptional group of achievements by these award winners who represent grassroots conservation successes, professional commitment to conservation excellence and organizational strength within our chapters and councils.

Congratulations 2015 TU National Conservation Award recipients! Chapter / Council Awards State Council Award for Excellence: Tennessee Council Gold Trout Award: 688 – Tiadaghton Chapter (PA) Silver Trout Award : 383 – Kitsap-Olympic Peninsulas Chapter (WA) Volunteer Awards Distinguished Service Award for Leadership: Tom Jones Distinguished Service Award for Conservation: Howard Johnson Distinguished Service Award for Youth Education: Judi Sittler Distinguished Service Award for Communications: Frances Oates Partner Awards Corporate Conservation Partner: The Orvis Company Corporate Conservation Partner: Tiffany & Co. Foundation Conservation Professional Award: Phil Hulbert Conservation Communications Award: Hal Herring