

**Awards & Recognition**  
**Division of Nature Preserves & Natural Resources**  
**Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department**

Since 1995, the Division has been recognized at the local, state, and national level with the following awards:

**1995 State Award:** Governor's Award - Industrial / Municipal Conservationist of the Year. Awarded by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation in cooperation with the National Wildlife Federation. Awarded for "outstanding service to the State of North Carolina" for "Conservation of North Carolina's Natural Resources."

**1996 National Award:** Mutual of Omaha's Wildlife Heritage Center's "Award of Excellence". Awarded for "displaying leadership and vision in promoting an awareness and appreciation of our natural world." And for creation of the "Sunny Sally Schweinitz Educational Booklet" for children.

**1996 State Award:** Outstanding County Program Award - 1996. Awarded by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. Awarded for the Piedmont Prairie Restoration Program "in recognition of innovative and effective county programs and services."

**1999 State Recognition:** North Carolina's First State Designated "Important Bird Area." Presented by the National Audubon Society's Important Bird Area Conservation Initiative . Mountain Island Lake / Catawba River data collected, compiled and application submitted by staff for the Latta Plantation Nature Preserve and Cowans Ford Wildlife Refuge area.

**1998 & 1999 International Award:** International "Nations in Bloom" - First Runner Up - 1998 and International Winner - 1999. This prestigious honor awarded to the entire Park and Recreation Department, was supported in part by Division programs. Specifically, the Division involvement was vital to the application in the following areas of the judging process: **Environmentally Sensitive Practices:** Natural Heritage program, environmental education programs, greenway and nature preserve programs. **Community Involvement:** Citizen Environmental Advisory Council. **Planning for the Future:** Nature Preserve Master Plans.

**2000 State Recognition:** North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission "Model Local Agency". Recognized by the state coordinator of the NC Partners in Flight Program for implementation of bird conservation programs at the local level. Staff members were invited to speak at the program's annual meeting.

**2000 National Award:** Outstanding Program Award - Environmental Category. Awarded by the National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials for the

natural community management program.

**2002 National Award:** Achievement Award Winner - 2002. Awarded by the National Association of Counties. Awarded "in recognition of an innovative program which contributes to and enhances county government in the United States." This award was for the Mountain Island Lake Important Bird Area research and monitoring initiative.

**2002 State Award:** Merit Award awarded by the North Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Awarded for the design of the Lower McAlpine Creek Greenway project in conjunction with Wirth Associates and A Fine Line Design.

**2002 State Award:** Local Government Conservationist Award. Awarded by the NC Land Trust Council for sustained and outstanding commitment to partnering with Land Trusts for land conservation initiatives. Presented March 2003.

**2003 Local Recognition:** Presented by the Catawba Lands Conservancy "in appreciation for its generosity and enthusiasm while working with the Conservancy to protect Brackett Bluff, a Mecklenburg County Natural Heritage Site."

**2003 National Award:** National Association of County Park and Recreation Officials - Award of Excellence. Awarded in the Environmental Areas and Facilities category recognizing "an exceptional effort to reclaim, restore, preserve, or develop a natural area" for the McDowell Grassland Expansion project at McDowell Nature Preserve.

**2003 Local Recognition:** Guardians of the Environment. Awarded by the Charlotte Observer recognizing the Division's efforts to restore Piedmont Prairie ecosystems, provide environmental education programs, and promote open space preservation. Presented November 2003.

**2004 State Award:** The Wildlife Society North Carolina Chapter Award. Presented to Conservation Supervisor for individual efforts and contributions to wildlife conservation in North Carolina and in recognition of outstanding service as a wildlife professional.

**2004 National Award:** Feinstone Environmental Award. Awarded to Reedy Creek Nature Center from among 60 conservation nature education centers from across the United States for demonstrating a clear commitment to educational programs focusing on the natural environment, excellence in programming, service to the community, and in serving as a role model that other centers may emulate.

**2005 State Award:** North Carolina Partners in Flight "Extra Effort" Award. Presented to the Division for "extra efforts in local bird conservation, research, and education." The award recognizes staff's efforts to protect habitat in Mecklenburg County for breeding birds as well as those that pass through during annual migrations.

**2005 Local Award:** Environmental Educator of the Year Award. Presented to Environmental Education Supervisor by the Mecklenburg County Soil and Water Conservation District for service and dedication to the field of environmental education.

**2005 National Award:** Achievement Award awarded by the National Association of Counties "in recognition of an innovative program which contributes to and enhances county government in the United States". This award was for the Environmental Education Practicum Course in partnership with the University of North Carolina at Charlotte's College of Education.

**2005 State Award:** Award from North Carolina's Hugh Hammond Bennett Chapter of the national Soil and Water Conservation Society for outstanding achievement and contribution to resource related programs that protect soil, water and wildlife.

**2007 State Award:** Honorary Warden Award. The state office of Audubon North Carolina presented this award to Mecklenburg County Park & Recreation for "exemplary service in protection of our state's most important bird habitats and sanctuaries." The award recognizes the Division's extensive work on habitat preservation that supports birds and educational programs that educate the public about birds, habitat, and other wildlife in an urban environment.

**2007 National Awards (2):** Two Achievement Awards awarded by the National Association of Counties (NACo) "to recognize the county's hard work to promote quality and efficiency and responsible and responsive county government management and administration". Awards were for the Invasive Exotic Plant Control Workshop program and gang/at-risk Survivor: Copperhead Island summer nature camp program.

**2008 State Award:** Wildlife Conservation Award. Awarded to Don Seriff, Natural Resources Manager, in recognition of outstanding leadership and achievement of the benefit of wildlife and natural resources in the greater Mecklenburg County region.

**2008 National Awards (2):** Two Achievement Awards awarded by the National Association of Counties (NACo). Awards were for the 2007 U.S. Kayak Polo Nationals and the innovative and successful Natural Resources Canada Geese Reduction Program.

**2009 National Awards (4):** National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA) Barb King Environmental Stewardship Award. Three Achievement Awards awarded by the National Association of Counties (NACo). Awards were for the Solar GEM vehicle (Global Electric Motorcar), the Physical Education Teacher In-Service: Outdoor Recreation Alternatives training, and the Natural Enhancements/Learning Partnerships between Reedy Creek Nature Center and Central Piedmont Community College.

**2010 National Awards (2):** Two Achievement Awards awarded by the National Association of Counties (NACo). Awards were for the Adaptive Kayaking program and the Naturally Home Schooled Special Program Series.

**2011 Local Awards (2):** Outstanding Environmental Educator award to Anthony Shaheen, McDowell Nature Center. Awarded by the Mecklenburg County Soil & Water Conservation District. Mecklenburg County Team of the Year Award. Awarded to the P&R Hummingbird Festival Planning Committee.

**2011 National Awards (3):** Three Achievement Awards awarded by the National Association of Counties (NACo). Awards were for the Nature Explorer Zone Nature Play Area, Achievement through Adventure McClintock Outdoor Club, and Orienteering for Winners on Wheels.