

# THE PRAIRIE PROMOTER

Grassroots Conservation in Action

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The  
**Prairie**  
Enthusiasts



## TPE Volunteers Receive Awards

By Alice Mirk and Debra Noell



Ron Endres (top, photo by Dennis Connor) and Zach Kastern (bottom, photo by Jerry Newman)

Awards for “Conservationist of the Year” and “Volunteer Steward of the Year” were handed out this fall to two of our own.

Ron Endres from the Empire-Sauk Chapter received 2016 Conservationist of the Year from Gathering Waters Conservancy at a ceremony Nov. 2 at the Friends of Wisdom Prairie Dinner Lecture in Middleton.

Zach Kastern from the Glacial Prairie Chapter was honored by the WI Department of Natural Resources with the Volunteer of the Year prize Sept. 17 at the DNR’s annual picnic at Wisconsin River State Natural Area.

Ron’s nomination to Gathering Waters was initiated by TPE member Carla Wright. In his supporting letter, member Dennis Connor said Ron was a “stalwart conservation leader and a dedicated, persistent and generous soldier in the pursuit of conserving our declining environmental heritage.”

For numerous years, Ron has been active as a volunteer with several land conservation organizations, including Ice Age Trail, The Prairie Enthusiasts, Wisdom Prairie and Dane County Parks. Not only does he selflessly give his time and resources to the land – especially prairies and savannas – Ron also shares his learnings. For example, Ron has worked tirelessly to collect, process and give away the very heart of natural area restoration - native plant seed.

On his own, Ron commutes to local and distant sites where particular species of plants are known to prosper, and at the appropriate time, collects the seed. He then harvests, dries and processes the seeds into what is considered

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