

2002 Deputy Waterways Conservation Officers of the Year

Deputy waterways conservation officers (DWCOs) work with WCOs, performing mainly specialized law enforcement duties in protecting, conserving and enhancing our water resources, and in watercraft safety. Deputies work long hours, on weekends and holidays, and even though they receive a small allowance for some expenses, they are otherwise not compensated.

The Commission recognized DWCOs in their regions in annual awards presentations for the first time in 1997. The idea was offered by Guy Bowersox, Bureau of Law Enforcement Assistant to the Director, when he was Assistant Regional Supervisor in the Southcentral Region. The DWCO Officers of the Year awards for 2002 were presented during

Northwest Region

DWCO Fred Leonetti, Mercer County

DWCO Fred Leonetti has served with five different WCOs since becoming a deputy in 1970. In each instance, he has assisted greatly in acclimating the new WCO to his new district. DWCO Leonetti has attended nearly every trout stocking that has occurred since becoming a deputy. He is an excellent boat operator and has assisted in training many new operators. DWCO Leonetti also teaches the Commission's Safe Boating Course. He is a member of the Shenango Water Safety Council, and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers personnel often ask him to operate their boat in training seasonal officers.

Southwest Region

DWCO Lonnie Lowndes, Indiana County

DWCO Lonnie Lowndes has been an active deputy since 1996. He devotes many hours to fish and boat law patrols and stocking fish. DWCO Lowndes participates in public relations programs, including the Indiana County Youth Field Days. His appearance is always neat and professional, and his demeanor has been described as friendly, courteous and professional. During 2002, DWCO Lowndes increased his volunteer patrol hours to help cover Indiana County during the absence of his WCO. He often volunteers for boat patrol on the Allegheny River to assist his neighboring WCOs.

Northcentral Region

DWCO Neil H. Cook Jr., McKean County

DWCO Neil H. Cook Jr. has faithfully served law enforcement efforts in McKean County for more than 14 years. His dedication to the resource and to the profession of law enforcement is unparalleled. DWCO Cook completes his tasks enthusiastically and needs no direct supervision to perform the day-to-day tasks required of a deputy. He has excellent decision-making skills and good rapport with the public. DWCO Cook's knowledge and abilities are vital to conservation law enforcement in the Northcentral Region.



Photo: George Gaidler, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant to the Director

DWCO Fred Leonetti (center) with Northwest Assistant Regional Supervisors Bob Nestor (left) and Frank Parise

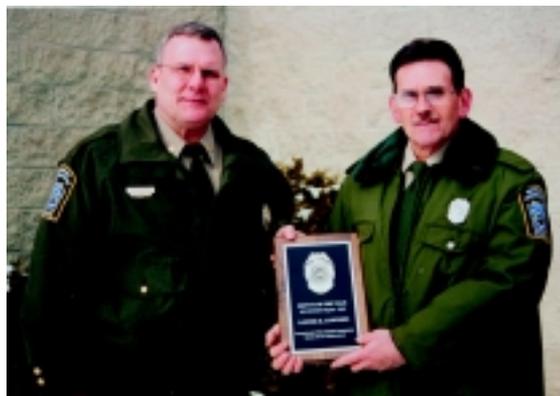


Photo: George Gaidler, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant to the Director

DWCO Lonnie Lowndes (right) with Southwest Region Supervisor Emil Svetahor



Photo: George Gaidler, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant to the Director

DWCO Neil H. Cook Jr. (right) with Northcentral Region Supervisor Brian Burger

Deputy Waterways Conservation Officers of the Year **2002**

regional meetings early in 2003.

Any officer may nominate a deputy for this recognition. Regional committees of personnel in the Commission bureaus of Law Enforcement and Fisheries review the nominations and choose the winners. DWCOs receive attractive

plaques for these awards. The awards carry the distinction of their recipients knowing that they were selected by their peers. Here are the 2002 DWCOs of the year.

Southcentral Region DWCO Robert Houser, Cumberland County

DWCO Robert Houser has served in Cumberland County since 1981. Three nominators chose him for this recognition, citing his outstanding performance and dedication to duty while conducting nearly 690 hours of volunteer service and initiating 32 summary prosecutions. DWCO Houser is an avid angler and fly tier, and he readily shares his expertise with anglers on Cumberland County waterways. He has a thorough knowledge of the Fish and Boat Code and is well-respected by the public and his fellow officers.



Photo: George Caidler, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant to the Director

DWCO Robert Houser (left) with Southcentral Regional Supervisor Don Lauver

Northeast Region DWCO Roger J. Wrazien, Southern Mon- roe and Northern Carbon Counties

DWCO Roger J. Wrazien has served the anglers and boaters of northeast Pennsylvania for 15 years. He is an active law enforcement officer, engaging in boat law enforcement in Monroe, Carbon, Pike and Wayne counties, and on Lake Harmony, Beltzville Lake and Lake Wallenpaupack. He has assisted with trout stocking and maintains contacts with landowners to ensure that waters remain open to the public. DWCO Wrazien has participated in plain-clothes details in and out of his home district. He is thoroughly professional in his appearance and his interactions with the public.



Photo: Tom Kamezick, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Director

DWCO Roger J. Wrazien (left) with Northeast Region Supervisor Kerry Messerle

Southeast Region DWCO William Muller, Southern Bucks County

DWCO William Muller has been a deputy for 33 years. In 2002, he worked more than 650 hours and issued 33 citations. DWCO Muller readily assists with stocking and has a reputation for having a professional demeanor and for treating the public respectfully. He eagerly assists with any other duties he's asked to perform. ☐



Photo: George Caidler, Bureau of Law Enforcement, Assistant to the Director

DWCO William Muller (left) with Southeast Region Manager Jeff Bridi