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UPEC BOARD MEMBER NANCY WARREN WINS PRESTIGIOUS PETOSKEY PRIZE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP

Houghton - Nominated by the Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition (UPEC), long time board member, Nancy Warren of Ewen, Michigan, has been named the winner of the Petoskey Prize for Environmental Leadership. The prize is given annually by the Michigan Environmental Council, based in Lansing.

The Petoskey Prize recognizes a volunteer activist whose outstanding grassroots environmental leadership is marked by commitment, creativity and courage. Inaugurated in 2001, the award carries a \$5,000 gift which Nancy has designated to be used to further wolf education and research in Michigan.

On learning of the prize, Nancy said "I am humbled and in awe."

Nancy is being honored for her many years of work on behalf of numerous environmental causes. Her environmental leadership skills extend back many decades. They focus around the core goals of protecting and enhancing public lands, promoting ecosystem integrity and biodiversity, restoring habitat and sustainable species populations, increasing informed citizen involvement in democratic environmental stewardship, and building organizational capacities to pursue these goals.

Nancy's passion for wolves began in the early 1990s as wolves began to recolonize the state. Nancy discovered that for wolves to survive there needs to be human tolerance of wolf behavior. Her goal is to have a sustainable wolf population within suitable habitat.

Since 2013, Nancy has served as the executive director of the National Wolfwatcher Coalition which fosters positive attitudes about wolves through education and advocacy. She oversees the activities of about 50 volunteers and regional coordinators, researching issues, countering misinformation, providing testimony, raising funds and produces educational material.

Though known for her work for her wolves, Nancy is actively involved with the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) which is authorized to receive \$900 million from offshore energy production. However, Congress diverts most of the funds elsewhere. Nancy has provided testimony to congressional committees and encouraged others to do the same to use the funds to protect wild lands, fund local community projects and ensuring public access.

Nancy and her husband have conducted hands-on surveys of wood turtles in the Ottawa National Forest as part of its Wood Turtle Monitoring Project. The Warrens have identified and handled over 100 turtles, compiling essential data to support the protection and revitalization of this species.

Nancy serves on the Ottawa National Forest Resource Advisory Committee. Three of her recommendations for the Ontonagon River have been adopted and implemented, including a barrier to protect prime turtle nesting areas and another that minimized erosion and sediment run-off into the East Branch of the river.

Nancy has been a member of UPEC for more than 20 years, serving on the Board for the past seven years. During that time she has taken on the roles of President and Vice President. Her strong organizational skills have helped keep UPEC activities effective.

Also involved in local community activities, Nancy participates in Michigan's "Adopt-A-Highway" program and serves on the Ontonagon County Commission on Aging.

"I am thrilled to hear Nancy has received the Petoskey Prize," says Horst Schmidt, President of UPEC. "We believe Nancy's efforts for wolf protection represents the ecological balance needed in the Upper Peninsula. Her advocacy for the environment through hands on activities, education and maintaining vigilance on the legislative front has helped us meet our organization's goals."

The Michigan Environmental Council believes that lasting environmental protection is earned through a synergy of local activism and institutional leadership. We support the Council in its work. The annual awards are another way of honoring distinguished vision and service by public and private sector leaders while recognizing the significance of grassroots leadership.

For more information, contact Horst Schmidt at 906 369 3797.

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The Upper Peninsula Environmental Coalition chartered in 1976, was the first grassroots group that focused solely on environmental issues across all of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. For more information visit www.upenvironment.org