

2012 Award Recipients

The Benton H. Box Award - Dr. Reed F. Noss

The William C. Everhart Award

The Walter T. Cox Award - Dan Wenk

Fran P. Mainella Award - awarded alternate years

The Robert G. Stanton Award - David Vela

The Dwight A. Holder Award

The Benton H. Box Award

The Award is named in appreciation of Dr. Box's distinguished career as an educator/administrator, especially as Dean of the College of Forest and Recreation Resources at Clemson University, which he led to national and international recognition for academic excellence and for leadership in fostering private innovation in resource management. The Award recognizes the teacher who by precept and example inspires in students the quest for knowledge; or the administrator who fosters a learning environment and encourages curriculum innovation to inculcate an "environmental ethic" as the rule of conduct involving resource management, development and utilization; or the private practitioner whose management over a sustained period demonstrates leadership in preserving, enhancing, renewing and restoring a livable environment.

The Benton H. Box Award was presented to Dr. Reed F. Noss for recognition as a private practitioner who by precept and example inspires in students the quest for knowledge and encourages curriculum innovation to inculcate an "environmental ethic" as the rule of conduct.



Dr. Lawrence Allen, Dr. Ben Box and Helen Hartzog presented the Benton H. Box Award to Dr. Reed F. Noss.

Dr. Reed F. Noss is Provost's Distinguished Research Professor at the University of Central Florida and President of the Florida Institute for Conservation Science. He has a B.S. in Education from the University of Dayton, an M.S. in Ecology from the University of Tennessee, and a Ph.D. in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida. He has served as Editor-in-Chief of Conservation Biology (1993-1997), President of the Society for Conservation Biology (1999-2001), and President of the North American Section of the Society (2006-2008). He is an elected Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and has served on many boards and advisory panels, including the Board of Governors of the Society for Conservation Biology, the Board of Trustees of the Florida Chapter of The Nature Conservancy, and Florida's Acquisition and Restoration Council. He recently served as Vice-Chair of a Federal Advisory Committee for the U.S. Climate Change Science Program.

Professor Noss has nearly 300 publications and is recognized as one of the 500 most highly cited authors in all fields. His research involves the application of science to species-level and ecosystem-level conservation planning, restoration, and management. He is currently writing a book on southern grasslands, studying the effects of suburban and exurban development on bird communities, and conducting research on impacts of, and adaptation to, sea-level rise in Florida.

The William C. Everhart Award

The Award is named in appreciation of the distinguished career of Bill Everhart as field interpreter, researcher, administrator, author, and creator of the National Park Service's Harpers Ferry Center for creative design and communication, which has received national and international recognition for excellence. The Award recognizes sustained achievements during a career or in a specific episode that illuminate, provide creative insights to, and that foster an appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage.

The Walter T. Cox Award

The Award is so named in appreciation of Dr. Cox's distinguished career in education and public service, especially his tenure as President of Clemson University and as the Director of the Santee-Cooper Authority. The Award recognizes sustained achievement in public service on the firing line, where the public interest meets the private interest in public policy formulation and administration; distinguished leadership and support of innovation in conflict resolution of policy initiatives that enhance the quality of life; personal achievements during a career or in a specific episode that provides inspiration and leadership to others in serving the above purposes.

The Walter T. Cox Award was awarded to Dan Wenk for sustained achievement in public service providing leadership in administration of public lands and for policy formation affecting our natural and cultural resources.

Dan Wenk assumed his duties as Superintendent of Yellowstone National Park in February, 2011. He manages more than 2.2 million acres, a staff of 800 and has an annual base budget of more than \$36 million, the largest operating budget of any national park in the National Park Service. Dan served as Deputy Director of Operations for the National Park Service in Washington D.C from March 2007 through February 2011, which includes 394 national park sites covering more than 84 million acres. From January through September, 2009, Dan Wenk served as the Acting Director of the National Park Service during the transition of the Obama Administration.

A graduate of Michigan State University, with a Bachelor of Landscape Architecture, Dan joined the National Park Service in 1975 as a Landscape Architect at the Denver Service Center. Subsequent assignments included park landscape architect for Yellowstone National Park from 1979 to 1984



Dr. Lawrence Allen and Helen Hartzog presented the Walter T. Cox Award to Dan Wenk.

with responsibilities for the planning and development for the park including the removal of facilities from the Fishing Bridge and Old Faithful areas, the rehabilitation of National Park Service and concessionaire facilities throughout the park.

He was named Superintendent of Mount Rushmore National Memorial in 1985. As Superintendent he developed a public/private partnership with the Mount Rushmore National Memorial Society to raise over \$60 million in non-federal funds for the preservation of the sculpture and the redevelopment and improvement of visitor facilities at the Memorial.

Mr. Wenk completed the Department of the Interior Senior Executive Service Development Program in April 2001. While in the program he completed two assignments outside of the Department of the Interior with Discovery Communications in their Public Partnerships Office and as a Congressional Fellow with Senator Bob Graham of Florida.

In December 2001, Mr. Wenk was selected as Director of the Denver Service Center, the National Park Service central office with primary responsibility for the Planning, Design and Construction programs of the National Park Service.

Wenk received the Department of the Interior Meritorious Service Award in 1991 and Secretary Executive Leadership Awards in 2008 and 2009. Dan also received the Meritorious Presidential Rank Award in 2010.

The Fran P. Mainella Award

The Award is named in appreciation of the dynamic career of Fran Mainella as the first woman Director of the National Park Service. As Director, she focused some of her many efforts on creating systems of connected parks and developing innovative partnerships to expand services. Director Mainella was previously the Director of the Florida State Park Service and the Executive Director of the Florida Recreation and Park Association. The Award

recognized sustained and innovative achievement by a woman in the management of North America's natural, historic or cultural heritage.

The Robert G. Stanton Award

The Award is named in appreciation of the remarkable career of Robert Stanton as the first African-American Director of the National Park Service. Among the many accomplishments of Director Stanton was expansion of the interpretation of diverse cultural meanings inherent in National Parks and increased participation by racial and ethnic minorities as both visitors and employees. The Award recognized sustained and innovative achievement by a member of a racial or ethnic minority in the management of North America's natural, historic and cultural heritage.

The Robert G. Stanton Award was presented to David Vela for sustained and innovative achievement in promoting racial and ethnic diversity in the management of North America's natural, historic and cultural heritage.

Since 2008, **David Vela** has served as the Southeast Regional Director, one of seven regional directors for the National Park Service. "David came up through the ranks, beginning as a frontline park ranger," said Mary A. Bomar, National Park Service Director. "His early field experience prepared him to be a great superintendent and now he will apply those same skills as regional director." The Southeast Region encompasses 66 parks in nine states, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands, and welcomes over 60 million visitors a year. It has a \$204 million operating budget and employs more than 2,600 people, including 174 employees at the regional office in Atlanta. Since 1998, Vela has served as superintendent for several park units including the George Washington



Dr. Lawrence Allen, Robert Stanton and Helen Hartzog presented the Robert G. Stanton award to David Vela.

Memorial Parkway (2006-2008), Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park (2004-2006), and Palo Alto Battlefield National Historic Site (1998-2002). In 2002, he was appointed the Texas State Coordinator for the Intermountain Region of the National Park Service. Vela began his career with the National Park Service in 1981 at San Antonio Missions National Historical Park. He transferred to Appomattox Court House National Historical Park as a supervisory park ranger in 1984 and then to Independence National Historical Park in 1986 as a district ranger.

From 1987 to 1998, Vela resigned from the National Park Service and worked as a Special Agent with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Office of Inspector General, performing white-collar criminal investigations in New York and New Jersey. He also served as a Special Assistant for Hispanic Affairs to the late U.S. Congressman Mickey Leland, worked as a Federal Investigator with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and was appointed as the Director of the Texas Child Support Program by the Attorney General of Texas in 1996. Vela holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Recreation and Parks from Texas A&M University. He is the recipient of numerous awards including a Distinguished Service Award in 1998 from the Federal Commissioner of Child Support Enforcement, the Intermountain Region's "Pinnacle Award" in 2002, a Departmental "Superior Service" Award in 2003, and former Secretary Manuel Lujan, Jr.'s Champion Award in 2006. Vela graduated from the U.S. Department of the Interior Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program in May 2006. He was the 2007 recipient of The Leslie M. Reid Alumni Award - For Outstanding Contributions to the Field of Recreation, Parks, or Tourism by a Graduate of the Department of Recreation, Parks & Tourism Sciences at Texas A&M University.

The Dwight A. Holder Award

The Award is named in honor of Mr. Holder's illustrious career as an entrepreneur and public servant. As Chairman of the South Carolina Parks,

Recreation and Tourism Commission he led South Carolina's parks into a new era of service to the people of South Carolina and the nation. The Award recognizes outstanding work by doctoral candidates in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management; a member of the Department faculty for original research, scholarly writing, and innovative and inspired teaching; the faculty adviser and graduate student as a team, for initiatives that foster understanding of and provide new insights into the promotion, management, wise use and enjoyment of South Carolina's natural and cultural heritage in perpetuity; and distinguished academic leadership by a member of the Department faculty. (Mr. Holder passed away in Spring 2006).

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