

1997 Award Recipients

The Benton H. Box Award - C. Thomas Wyche

The William C. Everhart Award - not awarded this year

The Dwight A. Holder Award - Dr. Robert D. Bixler

The Walter T. Cox Award - Robert G. Stanton

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 awarded to C. Thomas Wyche for sustained leadership by a private citizen on behalf of our natural heritage.

In the early 1970's, South Carolina faced an environmental tragedy as unchecked development threatened the Blue Ridge Mountain wilderness. In 1973, Mr. Wyche organized Natureland Trust, the State's first conservation land trust, which ultimately preserved a 40,000 acre wilderness area spanning the Blue Ridge Mountains, now known as the Mountain Bridge Wilderness Area.

For the next twenty years, the Mountain Bridge project was the story of a series of cooperative partnerships created and sustained by Mr. Wyche, partnerships with individual landowners, local, state, and federal government agencies, and private industry to acquire the land and assist in its conservation and management. Mr. Wyche's keen insight, his appreciation for the environment and his furious determination assured that a part of South Carolina's heritage was not forever and irretrievably lost.

This year, our trepidation has been renewed as a "For Sale" sign has appeared on another large portion of the Blue Ridge Escarpment. The 50,000 acre expanse that includes the beautiful Lake Jocassee and connects the Mountain Bridge area with the national forests to the west and southwest contains some precious flora and fauna and some treasured recreational resources. Our hopes that the Jocassee gorges' area will be spared from condominium cancer and preserved for future generations are bolstered by the knowledge that Tommy Wyche is rallying private, federal, and state resources to purchase this area. By his example, Mr. Wyche has taught us never to underestimate the effectiveness of the concerned private citizen in protecting our natural heritage.

Mr. Wyche's passion for the wilderness is captured by his photography and text in South Carolina's Mountain Wilderness: The Blue Ridge Escarpment. A more recent book of photographs by Tommy Wyche, *The Blue Wall, Wilderness of the Carolinas and Georgia*, is a springboard for his current efforts to preserve the Jocassee gorges' area, which he describes as "the most significant wilderness remaining in South Carolina."

Mr. Wyche has received South Carolina's highest award for public service, the Order of the Palmetto. Honorary doctorates have been conferred by both Clemson and Furman Universities. He has received the national Alexander Calder Conservation Award, the South Carolina Wildlife Federation Environmentalist of the Year Award, the Gulf Oil National Conservation Award, and the Nature Conservancy's Oak Leaf Award. To these honors, we

are pleased to add the Benton H. Box Award, our gratitude for past achievements, and our encouragement and support for current endeavors.

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 William C. Everhart Award is awarded for sustained achievements that illuminated, created insights to, and fostered an appreciation of our natural and cultural heritage.

This was not awarded this year.

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).

The Dwight A. Holder Award was awarded to Robert D. Bixler for outstanding work by a doctoral student in the area of recreation resource management.

Dr. Rob Bixler received his Ph.D. in Recreation Resource Management within Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at Clemson in May 1994. His dissertation research involved public school children and their fears and attitudes toward outdoor experiences. Dr. Bixler discovered that "Mother Nature is not always wonderful" in the eyes and minds of all school children. Some children feared the outdoor classroom, while many more expressed repugnance with elements characteristic of these environments. Dr. Bixler's dissertation, entitled "Topophobia," empirically documented this phenomenon and suggested mechanisms for attempting to overcome it. Rob's doctoral research has led to several presentations and publications on the fear of the outdoors and environmental education initiatives to allay these fears.

During Rob's tenure at Clemson he worked on several other research and scholarly projects: a boater survey of South Carolinians; NPS visitor perceptions of park resource conditions; impacts of Hurricane Hugo on recreation resources in South Carolina; an evaluation of a USDA Forest Service Course for field personnel; and teenager perceptions of wildland environments. It is often said that Dr. Bixler was the best read and most experienced of recent doctoral graduates from the Department of Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management.

After graduation from Clemson, Dr. Bixler served as a Post-Doctoral Research Associate at Texas A&M University. In September of 1994 he became Manager of Research and Program Evaluation for Cleveland Metroparks in Ohio, a position he currently holds. The research interests and experiences developed in Dr. Bixler's doctoral program continue with his work at Cleveland Metroparks, where he is involved with the study of Recreation Administration, he has spoken widely on park management,

resource preservation, visitor services, and organizational management. He has represented the National Park Service through on-site assistance in Trinidad-Tobago, West Indies; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Dominica, West Indies; and the Outdoor Laboratory at Clemson University. visits by school children and the public to fourteen metroparks and the Cleveland Metroparks Zoo.

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 Robert G. Stanton for sustained achievement in public service that provides inspiration and leadership for wise management of our natural and cultural resources.

Robert G. Stanton was appointed Director of the National Park Service in August 1997. As Director of the Park Service, he oversees the management of more than 80 million acres of cherished lands that include 375 national parks, monuments, battlefields, and scenic rivers and trails.

Mr. Stanton began his career with the Park Service in 1962, as a college student working summers as a Park Ranger in the Grand Teton National Park. After serving as Director of Public Relations and Alumni Affairs for Huston-Tillotson College, he returned to the Park Service in 1966 as a personnel management and public information specialist in the Washington office.

In 1969, Mr. Stanton went to National Capital Parks, and in 1970, became Superintendent of National Capital Parks-East. A year later, he was appointed Superintendent of Virgin Islands National Park. In 1974 he became Deputy Regional Director of the Southeast Region.

In 1976, he returned to Washington where in 1988 he became Director of the National Capital Region. There he was responsible for the management of 40 sites that attracted more than 38 million visitors annually, including the White House, Vietnam Veterans Memorial, Washington Monument, Lincoln and Jefferson Memorials, Manassas National Battlefield, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and Wolf Trap Farm Park for the Performing Arts.

Mr. Stanton is the recipient of numerous awards including the Distinguished Service Award from the National Council of Negro Women, the Presidential Distinguished Senior Executive Award, and the Department of the Interior's highest honor: the Distinguished Service Award. A Fellow of American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, he has spoken widely on park management, resource preservation, visitor services, and organizational management. He has represented the National Park Service through on-site assistance in Trinidad-Tobago, West Indies; Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Dominica, West Indies; and the Outdoor Laboratory at Clemson University.

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