

2009 Conservation Educator of the Year

Jeff MacKenzie teaches Environmental Systems and Introduction to Aquatic Environmental Careers and has been teaching at the Whitmer Career and Technology Center for Washington Local Schools since 1998. He was given an empty room and six computers and told to build a program. Through the programs and the FFA his students have been involved with doing stewardship with The Metroparks of the Toledo Area, Clean Your Streams, frog population monitoring with the Ohio Biological Diversity Survey, and developing a school wide paper, printer cartridge, cell phone and battery recycling program. With the FFA his students are involved with competitions including wildlife management, nature interpretation, and environmental as well as the Envirothon. Jeff also takes 20 students camping in Hocking Hills every October so that they can participate in the FFA's state forestry competition at Hocking College. In 2008, his nature interpretation team placed number one in the state.



Jeff MacKenzie has worked for the Metroparks of the Toledo Area since 1995. He began as a gardener taking care of the Manor House grounds and joined the Naturalist staff in 1996. Certified by the National Association of Interpretation as a Certified Interpretive Guide, Jeff has provide thousands of Lucas County residents with nature walks, educational programs and information about the natural and historical importance of Northwest Ohio.

With a passion for historical interpretation, Jeff has portrayed many local historical figures such as Aldo Leopold, General Anthony Wayne, Tontogany, Kinjaino, and Alexander McKee and many others. He portrayed Jonathan Alder for the District's Annual Meeting in 2004.

As a naturalist or historical interpreter, Jeff's passion for sharing his knowledge with others shines through. Jeff excels at communicating excitement for the natural world to all of the people he encounters.

Jeff truly cares. He cares about our environment, he cares about his students, he cares about his school, and he cares very deeply for his family and passes this passion through to all he touches. He is an incredible person with so much passion and respect for life.

It is with great pride that we name Jeff MacKenzie the 2009 Conservation Educator of the Year