
By Nancy Hastings

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Teacher honored by Hillsdale Conservation District

nancy.hastings@hillsdale.net

HILLSDALE — Each year, the Hillsdale Conservation District Board of Directors selects a landowner that has made the greatest effort to improve Hillsdale County's natural resources.

This year, the district will honor Hillsdale High School Environmental Science teacher Edward "Chip" Patterson with the Conservationist of the Year Award. The award will be presented at the district's annual dinner and meeting at 6 p.m. Jan. 24 at the Lewis Emery Park Community Center, 2020 State Road, Hillsdale.

The event, open to the public, has a reservation deadline of Jan. 22 by calling 517-849-9890, ext. 3 or by e-mailing Jessica.luck@mi.usda.gov. Patterson has lived in Hillsdale County his whole life. His family includes wife, Jo, and two sons, Mike and Jed.



He attended Reading Schools through ninth grade and graduated from Hillsdale High School in 1987. Undergraduate studies were conducted at Lake Superior State University, where he earned a bachelor of science in fisheries and wildlife management in 1995.

In 1999, he received his teaching certification from Spring Arbor University with an emphasis in chemistry. In 2008, he finished a masters degree in entomology from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. He is also a licensed contractor since 1990. Free time is spent hunting, fishing and gardening.

Patterson said he was surprised to be chosen, but at the same time, he has done a great deal of work with the Conservation District concerning his 80 acres of land in southern Hillsdale County.

"I've done some work on the wetlands and plantings for wildlife on my property," he said. "I really love the land and try to get across to my students that we live in a unique county with the watersheds and endangered species as compared to other counties. I like to expose them to what we have here."

District Conservationist Jason Wheeler said Patterson is an advocate for conservation and his efforts have left a lasting impact, not only on his own land, but also on the natural resources of the community.

"His enthusiasm for biology and natural resources management inspires young people to get more involved in the classroom and also in projects that benefit the land," Wheeler said.

Board member Bud Heinowski said the decision to honor Patterson was something he was glad to see since it veered from the norm where farmers are typically the choice.

"There's more to being a conservationist than feeding cows and growing corn," Heinowski said. "Patterson goes above and beyond in what he does with teaching outdoor education."

A presentation will also be made by Brian Haynes of Cisco Farm Seed on cover crops in 2013.

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