



June 22, 2015

Nomination for the North Carolina Governor's Conservation Achievement Award

The North Carolina Falconers Guild – "NCFG"

Who we are and why we deserve the award:

The North Carolina Falconers Guild was formed in the late summer of 1987 when long time falconer, Bill Halstead, contacted all the permitted falconers in the state and invited them to a meeting at Umstead Park in Raleigh, NC. At this meeting the North Carolina Falconers Guild was formed and a president was elected. Over the next year, the Guild installed a board of directors, established by-laws, accepted a mission statement and set up a flexible meeting schedule for the future. In June of 2015, we celebrated 28 years as an organization and we continue to grow each year.

Currently our officers are a president, vice president, a secretary and a treasurer. The Guild membership is made up of "regular" members (permitted falconers) and "associate" members (members who are not falconers), "honorary" members and "life" members. Regular members vote on Guild matters. Officers are elected by the regular membership and serve for a term of 2 years. Officers approve financial transactions and conduct the business of the Guild. The duties of the officers are fully described in our by-laws. The NCFG regular membership is made up of approximately 80% of all licensed and practicing falconers in the State. This is one of the highest ratios in the country. The NCFG is one of the most highly respected organizations of its kind in the United States and our mission proves us worthy of this award:

*The NCFG was established to provide communication and disseminate information to interested members; to promote and benefit scientific study of all raptorial birds and their prey species; to promote and benefit appropriate methods for the care, welfare and training of raptorial species; to enhance conservation of raptors and all aspects of the environment with which they are integrated; to enhance the legitimacy of falconry as a field sport through our actions and aspirations; to establish traditions which will aid, perpetuate, and further the welfare of falconry, raptors, prey species, and our environment"*

What falconry is and what we do:

Falconry is the taking of wild game using a bird of prey. For over 4,000 years, falconry as an ancient art and method of hunting has remained unchanged. Falconers worldwide brought their knowledge and tradition of the practice of falconry through many generations into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In 2011, the NCFG worked very closely with the NCWRC to finalize changes to the Code of Federal Regulations Part §21.29 relating to Migratory Bird Permits. These laws directly affected falconry and falconry permitting. We were successful getting this change completed by the January 2012 deadline.

In 2010, falconry was recognized as an *Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity* by the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The NCFG continues to sustain the practice and teachings of falconry through guild membership; apprenticeships, education programs, affiliations and celebrations. The NCFG abides by North Carolina hunting rules and regulations; practices falconry on North Carolina game lands or with permission on private land in all corners of North Carolina.

2014 Participations and Affiliations:

- The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission – Raleigh, NC
  - Annual Introduction to Falconry Workshop – Varsity Campus, Raleigh NC
  - Sportsman's Day Event-Legislative Building Raleigh, NC
  - National Hunting & Fishing Day – Lake Wheeler & Pisgah Forest, NC
- North American Falconers Association & International Association of Falconry
  - NCFG officers hold Directorship and Officer positions; attend national and world-wide board meeting and field events to further their falconry education
- Carolina Raptor Center – Huntersville, NC
  - Falconry programs given at the center for CRC educators and the public
  - Volunteer to evaluate injured raptors for release back into the wild by using falconry techniques
- Catawba Lands Conservancy
  - Falconry programs for educators and the public at Dan Nicholas Park, Salisbury NC relating to land conservation; land and quarry are vital necessities to practice falconry
- Falconry education programs around the state of North Carolina
  - Millstone 4H Camp – Ellerbe, NC
  - Catawba Science Center- Hickory, NC
  - The Allison Woods Outdoor Learning Center – Statesville, NC
  - Boy Scouts of America-Cary, NC
  - Home Schools-various around the state
  - Special Birthday Parties
  - Student mentoring
  - Seasonal Field meets and picnics – invitees are nature photographers and future falconer apprentices

The NCFG also reviews grant requests from students taking courses related to environmental education and makes donations to Affiliates such as NCWRC and NAFA. In 2014, a large donation was made to the NCWRC project for the Golden Eagle Camera Trapping in the Brushy Mountains.

**We thank the North Carolina Wildlife Federation for considering the NCFG for this prestigious award**