



Waukesha County

Department of Parks and Land Use

December 18, 2023

Ms. Chris Schlutt
Training and Events Manager
WI Land+Water
chris@wisconsinlandandwater.org

Re: Nomination of Jayne Jenks for the 2024 Brad Matson Youth Education Award for
Outstanding Youth Educator

Dear Ms. Schlutt,

I am writing to enthusiastically nominate Jayne Jenks for the Brad Matson Youth Education Award for Outstanding Youth Educator. As a dedicated Conservation Specialist with the Waukesha County Department of Parks and Land Use since 1991, Jayne has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to conservation education, making her a standout professional in the field of environmental education.

Jayne's environmental educational approach is nothing short of exemplary, characterized by her belief in hands-on, boots-in-the-water experiences. Over her remarkable career, she has taken thousands of students, teachers, and volunteers into the natural landscapes of Waukesha County, where she has imparted invaluable knowledge on assessing water quality through activities such as scooping dragonfly nymphs and freshwater mussels from streambeds.

With a Bachelor of Science in General Agriculture from the University of Illinois, Jayne has consistently been at the forefront of stormwater education and outreach. Her coordination of stormwater education programs for 25 communities in Waukesha County maintains compliance with WDNR MS4 permits and has been instrumental in fostering awareness and sustainable practices. Furthermore, Jayne's dedication to coordinating the Water Action Volunteers stream monitoring program for the past 19 years showcases her long-term commitment to environmental stewardship.

Jayne initiated the County's Adopt-A-Drain program, where citizens serve as custodians of storm sewer inlets and log their debris removal work through an interactive map. Jayne has creatively integrated water and soil conservation education into various outreach events. She has successfully coordinated Science Fest at Retzer Nature Center and introduced Stormwater Action Day in 2023, engaging the public and raising awareness about stormwater issues.

Her involvement in coordinating Boy Scout merit badges, her leading instruction for Water and Aquatic Life components in WI Master Naturalist Volunteer Training, and her role in creating and maintaining Retzer Nature Center's Aquatic Animal Ambassadors program highlight Jayne's multifaceted contributions to environmental education.

Land Resources Division

515 W Moreland Blvd., AC 260 • Waukesha, Wisconsin 53188-3878 • Phone: (262) 896-8300 • Fax: (262) 896-8298

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In addition to her substantial achievements, Jayne's positive and can-do attitude is contagious, inspiring those around her to actively participate in conservation efforts. She effectively utilizes educational models and engaging materials, including storm drains, watershed models, and groundwater models, making complex concepts accessible to diverse audiences.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to youth education in the field of conservation, I wholeheartedly endorse Jayne Jenks for the Brad Matson Youth Education Award. Her passion, creativity, and tireless dedication make her an exemplary candidate, and I am confident that her impact will resonate for years to come.

Thank you for considering Jayne Jenks for this well-deserved honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Barrows".

Alan Barrows
Land Resources Manager
Department of Parks and Land Use



Waukesha County

Department of Parks and Land Use

December 21, 2023

Ms. Chris Schlutt
Training and Events Manager
WI Land+Water
chris@wisconsinlandandwater.org

Re: Nomination of Jayne Jenks for the 2024 Brad Matson Youth Education Award for
Outstanding Youth Educator

Dear Ms. Schlutt,

It is with great honor that I am writing to nominate Jayne Jenks for the Brad Matson Youth Education Award for Outstanding Youth Educator. I have known Jayne since 2015, when I started as an Educational Naturalist at Retzer Nature Center, where I also served with her on the Environmental Education Team for Waukesha County Parks & Land Use. As a fellow educator, I soon learned Jayne is our long-standing Conservation Specialist, and more specifically...she is our subject matter expert on all things related to water.

Above all, I soon learned that Jayne is so much more than an effective environmental educator. Her mindset is one that continually looks for ways to bring improvement. Whether it is updating curriculum, aligning to the state/national standards more accurately, extending our reach to the public further by creating relevant events (Science Fest & Stormwater Action Day), Jayne is creative, innovative, and not afraid to think and do things differently. She has been a key part of Waukesha County's citizen science program for many years, including leading a Water Action Volunteer stream monitoring program and now the Adopt-a-Drain program. Her message to engage the public in methods and practices to keep our watersheds clean and healthy is clear in all she does.

In 2023, Jayne officially joined our team at Retzer Nature Center, working 50% of her time executing natural history programs to thousands of students and scouts. This was a tremendous amount of content she was not normally used to teaching, but Jayne embraced the learning process and is now teaching much more than water-related topics. In fact, she has added additional components/talking points related to water and soil education to many of Retzer's programs, taking students to a deeper understanding of our ecosystems. She and I recently collaborated to develop an adult-oriented program on environmentally appropriate gardening and yard practices, which Jayne aptly named "Sustainable Yardening". We successfully gave this



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presentation to more than 100 adults this year. And on a personal note, I love that Jayne never says no when assistance is needed, no matter what the task.

Jayne has also been instrumental in leading and expanding Retzer's reach into the scouting community. Her leadership in executing Merit Badge Week each summer has been extensive, as we easily hit our maximum registrations for each badge. Under her direction, Retzer now also offers Scout nights in the fall and spring, where several badges are offered to the broader scout community in one big night, minimizing individual packs/troops from scheduling with us on their own. This has been a much better way to utilize staff time for teaching.

In recognition of her outstanding contributions to youth education in the field of conservation, I wholeheartedly endorse Jayne Jenks for the Brad Matson Youth Education Award. Her devotion and commitment to excellence make her a worthy candidate.

Thank you for considering Jayne Jenks for this much-earned honor.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet Barthel".

Sincerely,

Janet Barthel
Nature Center Supervisor