

# DEC'S ECO 2018 AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

## **SAMUEL S. TAYLOR AWARD**

This award is in memory of the first New York State Game Protector killed in the line of duty. It is presented to those who, by conspicuous acts of valor, courage, integrity, resourcefulness and bravery in the protection of our natural resources and public safety, have clearly set themselves apart in the performance of their duties. This award should be recognized by all Members of the Division as the highest fulfillment of the position of a Division Member.

## **DIVISION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT LIFESAVING AWARD**

This award is presented to those whose extraordinary actions saved, or attempted to save, the life of another person.

## **FRED P. DREW AWARD**

This award is in memory of the first Chief of Law Enforcement. It is presented to those who display special and outstanding levels of achievement in the performance of their duties. Award categories include completion of noteworthy projects, outstanding enforcement efforts which reflect positively on the Division, and innovative ideas that have increased the productivity and efficiency of the Division.

## **DIRECTOR'S COMMENDATION**

This award is presented to those who consistently carry out their duties with persistence, integrity, good judgment, devotion to duty and loyalty to the Division. Recipients have inspired others to strive for excellence in their work. An excellent performance evaluation is a minimum requirement. Good relations with the public, other agencies, fellow officers, investigators and supervisors, as well as complete and thorough knowledge of the laws and regulations of the Department, are also required.

## **MAJOR'S AND CAPTAIN'S COMMENDATIONS**

These awards are presented at regional staff meetings throughout the year for meritorious performance of assigned duties. This shall include, but not be limited to, Central Office and regional assignments, investigations or community relations which reflect positively on the Division.

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD**

This award is presented to those outside the Division who have, by their actions, enhanced the ability of the Division to perform its mission.

# PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

## **TAYLOR AWARD - LT. LIZA-J BOBSEINE**

### **LIFESAVING AWARD - LT. LIZA-J BOBSEINE**

On November 29, 2016, Lt. Liza Bobseine provided lifesaving emergency medical care to ECO James Davey, who was shot and gravely wounded with a high-powered rifle during a nighttime deer poaching investigation. While preventing ECO Davey from bleeding to death from the wound, Lt. Bobseine also disarmed the suspects and directed law enforcement and emergency medical responders to the remote woodland location. After arriving at the hospital with minutes to spare due to extensive blood loss, ECO Davey underwent several hours of surgery. If not for the quick and decisive actions of Lt. Bobseine, ECO Davey would not have survived the incident.

## **TAYLOR AWARD - ECO JT RICH, ECO SPENCER NOYES**

### **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO JT RICH**

### **MAJOR'S COMMENDATION - ECO SPENCER NOYES**

On July 11, 2018, while conducting marine patrol during a large boating event on Sodus Bay, ECO JT Rich employed hemostatic gauze to control bleeding for a victim who was stabbed in the carotid artery with a broken bottle. Had the officer not provided this advanced first aid, the victim would have succumbed to his wounds prior to the ambulance arriving. After turning the victim over to local emergency medical responders, ECO Rich, along with ECO Spencer Noyes, located the stabbing suspect and took him into custody after a struggle in chest-deep water.

## **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO WALDEMAR AUGUSCINSKI**

On July 18, 2016, while off duty in Staten Island, ECO Waldemar Auguscinski observed a minivan that had crashed into a utility pole and caught fire. With the help of an off-duty NYPD officer he extricated the victims, including a seriously injured passenger, multiple children and a toddler, and assisted them until additional emergency response personnel arrived. The driver of the minivan was arrested for DWI.

## **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO FAY FUERCH**

On July 7, 2017, ECO Fay Fuerch responded to a 911 call for an unresponsive elderly woman in the village of LeRoy. Upon arriving at the scene, the ECO found the woman slumped over in the seat of her car. After removing the woman from the car, ECO Fuerch performed CPR and employed an Automated External Defibrillator. The woman was transported to a local hospital where she made a full recovery.

## **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO CHRIS WARD**

On July 8, 2018, ECO Ward responded with other agencies to a 911 call of two people stranded in the Genesee River in the town of Geneseo. Working with a Livingston County Deputy Sheriff, ECO Ward located the subjects clinging to a tree in the rushing water on the opposite bank of the river, a significant distance from other responders. ECO Ward entered the water, swam to the victims with a rescue rope and, with the assistance of the Deputy on shore, rescued the father and daughter.

## **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO DONALD DAMRATH**

On September 4, 2016, ECO Donald Damrath responded to a 911 call regarding a male who was unconscious and not breathing in a parking lot. After determining from the subject's mother that the condition was possibly the result of a heroin overdose, ECO Damrath deployed his overdose rescue kit, administered Narcan and revived the individual, who was transported to a local hospital for further treatment.

## **LIFESAVING AWARD - ECO DAVID THOMAS**

On April 28, 2017, ECO David Thomas responded to a report of an unconscious female who was not breathing and believed to be a possible heroin overdose victim in the town of West Monroe, Oswego County. With the assistance of responding EMTs, ECO Thomas deployed his overdose rescue kit and administered Narcan to the victim. The victim, after beginning to breath and regain consciousness, was transported to a Syracuse hospital for further treatment.

## **FRED P. DREW AWARD - LT. KAREN PRZYKLEK**

### **MAJOR'S COMMENDATION - LT. JESSE PALUCH, INV. MARK WOJTKOWIAK, INV. JOHN DOBIES, INV. FRANCIS D'ANGELO, INV. MARK MALONE**

Lt. Karen Przyklek worked diligently to create DLE's Environmental Forensic Unit. Due to her efforts, 15 DLE members completed training courses required to become DCJS certified Crime Scene and Evidence Specialists, and the Unit was outfitted with advanced crime scene forensic and 360 photographic equipment. Since its inception, the Unit has deployed successfully on multiple significant cases. Through her foresight and leadership, and with the assistance of these members, the Unit has brought a higher standard to DLE's police procedures.

## **FRED P. DREW AWARD - ECO DARCI DOUGHERTY**

### **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - TERRI MUCHA, DEC REGION 9 ASSISTANT REGIONAL ATTORNEY**

ECO Darci Dougherty is recognized with the Fred P. Drew Award for her efforts in the closure of two significant, long-standing wild animal cases. The first case involved the execution of a multi-agency search warrant and seizure of 19 exotic and dangerous animals at the JNK Animal Sanctuary in Sinclairville NY. This was the most prolific large-animal seizure in New York State history. The second case involved execution of a search warrant leading to the seizure of a black bear, cougar and serval. Assistant Regional Attorney Terry Mucha secured over \$35,000 in funding through the International Federation of Animal Welfare and, with the assistance of ECO Dougherty, ensured the safe transport and placement of the seized animals.

## **FRED P. DREW AWARD - LT. JESSE PALUCH, INV. ERIC DOWLING, INV. SARA KOMONCHAK, INV. JEFF CONWAY, INV. EDWARD PIWKO**

### **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - NEW YORK COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY CYRUS VANCE, JR., ADA ADAM MALTZ, ADA SPENCER WILLIG**

The Drew Award is presented to recognize the efforts of Lt. Jesse Paluch and Inv. Jeff Conway, Inv. Eric Dowling, Inv. Sara Komonchak and Inv. Edward Piwko during the investigations leading to arrests and convictions in the Metropolitan Fine Arts & Antiques and Operation White Gold investigations.

The Special Service Award is presented to the New York County District Attorney's Office recognizing the efforts of ADA Adam Maltz and ADA Spencer Willig for their prosecution of Metropolitan Fine Arts & Antiques, and cases arising out of Operation White Gold.

In October 2015, an undercover investigation into the alleged sale of elephant ivory at Metropolitan Fine Arts & Antiques led to the seizure and forfeiture of more than 150 pieces with a market value of \$8.5 million. From trinkets to raw unprocessed tusks several feet long, the investigation resulted in a \$200,000 penalty paid to conservation groups. Operation White Gold targeted the unlawful trade in elephant ivory throughout the five boroughs at high-end antique dealers, resulting in 100 percent convictions for the 15 companies and 23 individuals charged, and the seizure and forfeiture of over 2 tons of ivory and ivory-containing products worth an estimated \$12 million, with \$400,000 in penalties paid to elephant conservation groups. The approximate two tons of seized ivory was destroyed at the 2017 Ivory Crush in Times Square.

## **DIRECTOR'S COMMENDATION - LT. DAWN GALVIN**

From September 2017 to February 2018, Lt. Dawn Galvin supervised Governor Cuomo's Operation Clean Sweep anti-littering initiative in the subway system of New York City to help prevent debris-related track fires and flooding. The overwhelming success of this innovative and complex enforcement detail was directly related to Lt. Galvin's dedication and superlative leadership, which included coordinating statewide DEC Police resources and liaising with the Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

## **DIRECTOR'S COMMENDATION - LT. KENNETH BRUNO, INV. JOHN DOBIES, INV. DANIEL MALONE, ECO ALAN BRASSARD**

On November 25, 2017, ECOs responded to a Hunting Related Shooting Incident for an individual who sustained a serious bullet wound to his hand. Despite initial statements from the victim and his hunting partner that the injury was caused by a third party, ECOs and Investigators continued the investigation, locating a spent shell casing and employing a unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) and Ltron OSCR 360 photographic equipment for advanced evidentiary and site mapping. Faced with significant forensic evidence and site reconstruction indicating that the victim's hunting partner was in fact the shooter, the shooter pled guilty to Assault in the Second Degree, receiving a sentence that included jail time

## **DIRECTOR'S COMMENDATION - INV. NEIL STEVENS, ECO ROBERT JOHNSON**

In late September 2017, Inv. Neil Stevens and ECO Rob Johnson spent 16 days in Puerto Rico as part of a delegation sent to help in relief and recovery efforts in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. Working alongside New York Power Authority and Puerto Rico Power Authority crews, they employed UAVs to conduct aerial surveys and record damage to the critical infrastructure of Puerto Rico's dams, power generation facilities, substations and electrical transmission lines. Despite intermittent electric power and limited supplies of food and drinking water, Inv. Stevens and ECO Johnson worked 16-hour days to provide detailed, real-time video and photos to help speed recovery efforts.

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - ASSISTANT ATTORNEY GENERAL ANDREW GERSHON**

New York State Assistant Attorney General Andrew Gershon is awarded the Special Service Award for his civil prosecution of North Bergen Beverage, a New Jersey based beverage wholesaler that engaged in a scheme to circumvent New York's Returnable Container Law. Following a lengthy investigation, North Bergen Beverage pled guilty to illegally transshipping deposit-required beverages from its New Jersey warehouse into New York. The company also failed to collect the 5-cent deposit for containers sold in New York. North Bergen Beverage paid a \$500,000 penalty, \$50,000 for investigative costs, and suspended sales of Returnable Container Law-regulated products in New York for three years. The company also agreed to a \$450,000 suspended penalty, payable if the company violates the terms of the settlement or any Environmental Conservation Laws related to returnable beverages. The penalty is largest to date for Returnable Container Law violations in New York State

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - WILDLIFE CONSERVATION SOCIETY (JOHN CALVELLI, SARA MARINELLO, CHRISTINA MANTO)**

The Special Service Award is presented to the Wildlife Conservation Society, with special recognition to John Calvelli, Sara Marinello and Christina Manto for their efforts to save African Elephants from extinction in the wild by co-hosting the 2017 Ivory Crush in Central Park with DLE. They were instrumental in obtaining required permits and promoting the event, thereby helping to bring world-wide attention to the plight of African Elephant poaching and the unlawful trafficking in ivory products.

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - COLUMBIA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY PAUL CZAJKA, ADA RYAN CARTY, ADA JOYCE CRAWFORD**

The Special Service Award is presented to the Columbia County District Attorney's Office for outstanding assistance with several significant cases brought by the Division of Law Enforcement in the past two years:

When ECO Davey was gravely injured on November 29, 2016, the District Attorney's Office immediately committed to supporting DLE and bringing the case to a successful conclusion. DLE is grateful for their diligence and efforts in this sensitive and significant case.

During the first half of 2018 the District Attorney's Office successfully prosecuted a deer poaching case that resulted in over \$16,000 in fines and criminal convictions for four perpetrators on fifteen counts involving the illegal taking of deer, resulting in the highest-ever fine for deer poaching against a single individual in New York State.

In June of 2018, the District Attorney's Office was instrumental in obtaining multiple search warrants resulting in the seizure of nearly 100 illegal wildlife products and obtaining convictions resulting in over \$35,000 in criminal fines.

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - TOM MACKENZIE, DEC REGION 7 DIVISION OF OPERATIONS**

The Special Service Award is presented to Tom Mackenzie for his years of service and dedication to maintaining DLE's fleet of on- and off-road vehicles and vessels, frequently spending weeks working in the field in all weather conditions at both the EVOC and SEAVOC training venues. His long hours, competence, positive attitude and patience in helping DLE provide vehicle and vessel-based training greatly enhanced officer safety and mission capability.

## **SPECIAL SERVICE AWARD - JAMES CLAYTON**

Since 1999 Jim Clayton, DEC photographer, videographer, digital printer and imager has been instrumental in capturing and preserving special events hosted by the DLE. Jim's photography and video skills have provided lasting memories of basic school graduations, awards ceremonies, memorial services, receptions, and parades throughout New York State. He has worked tirelessly preparing and editing his work, helping showcase DLE's achievements to wide ranging audiences.

# AWARDS GIVEN BY OTHER AGENCIES, ORGANIZATIONS AND ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS

In addition to Division awards, every year Members receive recognition from numerous outside entities for their outstanding work in environmental enforcement, conservation projects, outreach and education, and more. The awards are given by federal, state and local agencies, environmental groups, law enforcement associations, and national and international hunting clubs. These include the US Environmental Protection Agency, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Shikar-Safari Club International, National Wild Turkey Federation, Northeast Conservation Law Enforcement Chiefs, NYS Rifle and Pistol Association, and several sportsmen's federations and commissions. Division Members were given these awards at conferences and ceremonies throughout each year.

## SHIKAR SAFARI CLUB INTERNATIONAL WILDLIFE OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

The Shikar-Safari Club was founded in 1952 by an international group of hunters interested in exchanging ideas about the sport, and to promote the ethical and conservation minded hunting of big game animals, primarily in Asia and Africa. In 1966, the Shikar-Safari International Foundation was formed to support various wildlife conservation projects with funds raised by club members. Each year the club sponsors an award for the Wildlife Officer of the Year in all 50 states, 10 Canadian provinces and the territories of both nations. It has awarded Division of Law Enforcement members the Wildlife Officer of the Year Award since the 1960s.

The award was given to:

**ECO TIMOTHY FAY - 2016**

**ECO RICKY WOOD - 2017**

## NORTH EAST CONSERVATION LAW ENFORCEMENT CHIEFS ASSOCIATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD

NECLECA consists of law enforcement chiefs from 13 Northeastern states, three Eastern provinces of Canada, and the United States and Canadian Federal Conservation Law Enforcement agencies. Each year, the club sponsors an award for the Wildlife Conservation Officer of the Year in all 50 U.S. states, 10 Canadian provinces and the territories of both nations, acknowledging the important role that Conservation Police Officers play in local, national, and international wildlife conservation. In assessing candidates for this award, the candidate's entire record with their division is considered.

The award was given to:

**ECO ROGER THOMPSON - 2016**

**INV NEIL STEVENS - 2017**

## **NEW YORK STATE CHAPTER, NATIONAL WILD TURKEY FEDERATION LAW ENFORCEMENT ACHIEVEMENT AWARD.**

In 1994, the New York State Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation approached the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's Division of Law Enforcement with the concept of an annual award presented by the Federation Chapter to a member of the Division. The award is presented at the Federation Chapter's State Banquet held each March. The concept behind the award is to provide a vehicle whereby the Turkey Federation can recognize individual efforts in the field of Fish and Wildlife Law Enforcement here in New York. It was generally agreed that the Division of Law Enforcement would research and formulate the criterion for the award, as well as the nominating and final selection processes. This award concept is an extension of the already substantial contributions the Turkey Federation has made toward our enforcement efforts in New York.

The award was given to:

**INV MATTHEW NICHOLS - 2016**

**ECO GARY WILSON - 2017**

## **NEW YORK STATE RIFLE AND PISTOL ASSOCIATION OFFICER OF THE YEAR AWARD.**

The Association is the leading organization in the state in promoting rifle marksmanship and competition. Thus, they strive to recognize one who promotes and personally participates in marksmanship competitions, and one who encourages such participation by New York's youth. The Association recognizes an Environmental Conservation Officer each year by acknowledging the important role he or she plays in hunter education and safe firearms usage among sportsmen and youth.

The award was given to:

**ECO KEVIN BUDNIEWSKI - 2016**

**ECO BRENT WILSON - 2017**

**Command Staff extends congratulations  
to all members who were honored  
for their excellent work.**