The Native Plant Society of Northeastern Ohio

The Wilderness Center
Gentian Award for 2016

The Native Plant Society created the Gentian Award in 2012 to honor those individuals or organizations we believe made a significant contribution to our Society's goals and mission of promoting the study, appreciation, and conservation of Ohio's native plants and plant communities. Each past recipient: Perry Peskin, Judy Semroc, Fred Losi, and our founding President Ann Malmquist uniquely shared their understanding and appreciation of nature in a manner that helped widen the scope of what we look at and inspired us to discover more.

The recipient of this year's Gentian Award provides opportunities for discovering, observing, studying, and experiencing nature both indoors and very importantly outdoors – in essence, widening our scope of awareness and understanding about what surrounds us and our part in the natural cycle of life. This year the Native Plant Society ("NPS") is very proud to honor The Wilderness Center ("TWC") and its dedicated team of staff and volunteers who are responsible for planning and carrying out the activities that support TWC's mission to connect our community with nature, educate people of all ages, conserve natural resources and practice environmental stewardship.

For over half a century, TWC has been home to those who understand the importance of connecting with nature. Established in 1964, TWC is a nonprofit nature education and land conservancy organization located in Wilmot Ohio. The nature interpretive

center, astronomy education building, solar array, and miles of nature trails are situated on approximately 650 acres of forest, meadow, wetland, and prairie. Through its various land trust activities, TWC protects thousands of additional acres of land and Ohio's biodiversity.

Through all its programs, ventures, special events, and nature playscape, TWC encourages and promotes the importance of learning about nature and our environment, protecting and respecting our natural habitats and resources, and getting outside for health and enjoyment. The nature center is home to many special interest clubs whose members gather together for learning, camaraderie, and fun. TWC's Botanizers Club and the NPS have enjoyed many past outings together. John Burroughs considered nature the greatest of the three most precious resources in life. The other two resources being friends and books.

TWC's educational classes, programs, interpretive displays, workshops, and special events illuminate the infinite relationships and interests found in nature. Some of the nature and science education programs offered are:

- Sprouts; Roots and Branches; Oaks; and Science-to-Go
- Ohio Certified Volunteer Naturalist certification training
- A science and nature podcast -- Wild Ideas

TWC's land conservation programs and ecopreneurial ventures protect, enhance, and restore the natural habitats native plants and wildlife need to survive and thrive. Several of these efforts are first in Ohio and first in the nation. Some of the conservation and stewardship programs and innovative ventures offered are:

- Community Watershed Conservation Partnership
- Foxfield Preserve, a nature preserve cemetery
- TWC Consulting Forestry
- annual Native Plant Sale and in progress, construction of a greenhouse

Their Nature Store stocks an excellent selection of quality wares and books covering many topics as well as nature and local community items.

A simple yet poignant thought Henry David Thoreau penned in 1851 is reflected in all of TWC's activities:

"The question is not what you look at, but how you look and whether you see."

We wish to thank TWC for inspiring our sense of wonder and curiosity about the whole natural world surrounding us and for creatively pursuing ways to be a good steward of the natural environment for over half a century and for future generations to come.

It is with great delight and honor that we present TWC with this year's Gentian Award for 2016. Please join me in congratulating TWC and in welcoming Carrie Elvey, Senior Naturalist of TWC, who is here to accept our Society's Gentian Award on their behalf.

The plaque has a picture of a fringed gentian and says:

Gentian Award
For Dedication to the Native Plants of Ohio
The Wilderness Center
2016

Lisa K. Schlag, Treasurer and Webmaster of the Native Plant Society, gave this introduction at the Annual Meeting on October 29, 2016 before presenting Carrie Elvey, Senior Naturalist of The Wilderness Center, with the Gentian Award.