

John L. Funk Award of Excellence – is named to honor the founder of the Missouri Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, for his professionalism and commitment to Missouri’s aquatic resources. The recipient of this award is recognized for their professionalism and their long-term contributions to the aquatic resources of Missouri.

This year’s recipient of the John L. Funk Award of Excellence is Mike Kruse.

Mike Kruse has been a long-time and well respected advocate of Missouri’s aquatic resources. In 1983 Mike received a bachelor’s degree in Fisheries and Wildlife from the University of Missouri and in 1985 a Master’s degree in Environmental and Forest Biology from the State University of New York College. He then spent a short stint as a biologist for the University of Wisconsin Center for Lake Superior Environmental Studies before joining the Missouri Department of Conservation as a Fisheries Management Specialist in 1986.

Mike retired from MDC in 2013 after a successful and productive 27 year career. During his career Mike was:

- Fisheries Management Biologist
- Resource Scientist
- Fisheries Program Supervisor
- Fisheries Administrative Manager
- Resource Science Center Chief
- Resource Science Division Chief

Following his MDC career Mike continued his support for the conservation of Missouri’s aquatic resources as an instructor at the University of Missouri. He taught Fisheries Management and Ichthyology and designed a Fisheries Techniques course. During this time, he has also focused on being an advisor for undergraduate students as they navigate their path to a career in conservation.

Mike has also:

- Served as President for the Mid Missouri Chapter of Trout Unlimited
- Served as an advocate for cooperation between Trout unlimited and the Missouri Department of Conservation
- Received the 2009 Conservation Federation of Missouri “Water Conservationist” Award
- Served as President and Secretary for the Missouri Chapter of the American Fisheries Society
- Chair of the Southern Division AFS Trout Committee
- Chaired the development of the Missouri Trout Management Plan
- Created Mike’s Mohair Leech, a popular fly for trout fishing
- Has caught trout in 28 states, Canada, England, Italy, and New Zealand

Throughout Mike’s extensive time as an advocate for aquatic resources he has always served as a well informed, practical, voice of reason. Missouri’s aquatic resources are lucky to have Mike serve their interests and the Missouri Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is proud to present Mike with this year’s John L. Funk Award of Excellence.