

The A. Stephen Weithman, Jr. Leadership Award is presented to a member who provides exemplary leadership in the Chapter. Only members may be considered for this award.

This year's recipient of the Weithman Leadership Award is Doug Novinger.

Dr. Doug Novinger is an outstanding leader with a long-time career in research and conservation of Missouri's aquatic resources. Doug received his B.S. degree in Fisheries & Wildlife from University of Missouri, his M.S. degree from Michigan State University and his Ph.D. in Zoology from the University of Wyoming; he also completed post-doctoral research at Virginia Tech. Doug is a 22-year veteran of the Missouri Department of Conservation and currently serves as the Science Section Chief leading the Aquatic and Biometrics Section. Aquatic Diversity and Game Fish Unit Supervisor out of Columbia, Missouri.

Doug has become a national leader in research and conservation of game and non-game aquatic, amphibian, and reptile species. Doug was a Scientist with the Missouri Department of Conservation for 14 years researching and working on the recovery of multiple federally listed threatened and endangered species including the Topeka Shiner, Niangua Darter, and Neosho Madtom, as well as many other aquatic species of conservation concern (SOCC). In 2015, Doug became the supervisor of the Aquatic Diversity and Game Fish Unit where he supervises research projects including amphibians, reptiles, crayfish, mussels, and game fish in small impoundments, large reservoirs, and big rivers. Doug also serves on the Sport Fish Coordination Team, where he has been involved with writing the regulation process for their Charter recommendations following multiple research projects such as the Big Rivers Catfish Assessment. Doug's leadership helped make these projects successful and ultimately enhanced the understanding and management of sport species, SOCC, and conservation issues in Missouri.

Doug's leadership as a supervisor also deserves recognition. He has overseen MDC's nationally-respected research and monitoring efforts and programs on imperiled aquatic fauna such as mussels, crayfishes, and fishes. He continually shows understanding of, respect for, and loyalty to these programs and their staff. Doug is known to be a measured voice of reason, much like this Award's namesake, Steve Weithman. He has the innate ability to understand resource issues and challenges, wade through the distractions and emotionally-charged traps, and focus on logical approaches to solving such problems.

Doug's passion to conserve and manage the natural resources of Missouri, his dedication to mentoring conservationists of today and tomorrow, and his service to AFS make him a well deserving recipient of the MOAFS Stephen Weithman, Leadership Award.