



# NASF Awards

## Designations and Criteria

### 2022 Current and Lifetime Achievement Awards

- Larry Kotchman **Lifetime Achievement Award**
- Jim Karels **Current Achievement Award for Fire Protection**
- Larry Biles **Current Achievement Award for Forest Resource Management**
- Steve Sinclair **Current Achievement Award for Urban and Community Forestry**
- Tom Boggus **Current Achievement Award for Communications**
- Lisa Allen **Current Achievement Award for Leadership**
- Joe Mafnas **Current Achievement Award for Partnerships**
- Steve Koehn **Current Achievement Award for Forest Public Policy**

+ **John "Chris" Maisch Award** honoring members of Congress, congressional staffers, and other influential players in federal forestry matters



# NASF Awards

## 2021-2025 Award Name Designations

### **Larry Kotchman Lifetime Achievement Award**

Larry Kotchman served as North Dakota's State Forester from 1986 to 2018. As State Forester, Larry was responsible for administering the North Dakota Forest Service's (part of North Dakota State University) \$15-million annual budget and directing forestry services statewide through three leadership teams comprised of 27 full-time and approximately 45 seasonal employees. He also managed 13,290 acres of State Forests and the Towner State Nursery, which produces one million tree seedlings annually.

Larry earned his Bachelor of Science Degree in forest science from the University of Minnesota and is an alum of Harvard University's Executive Fellowship Program. He has served as president of the National Association of State Foresters and chair of the Council of Western State Foresters. Now retired, Larry's career in forestry spanned 46 years, including four years with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and 42 years with the North Dakota Forest Service.

### **Jim Karels Current Achievement Award for Fire Protection**

Jim Karels is a national leader in wildland fire with more than 40 years of experience in wildfire and forest management. In addition to leading the Florida Forest Service as the state's State Forester for 12 years, he has served in other capacities working to strengthen, engage, and support the agencies and organizations that ensure state and private forests in the U.S. are protected and well-managed.

Jim's focus on firefighter safety has been at the forefront of his leadership efforts. Jim testified before Congress and was called on by the State of Arizona to lead a review of the Yarnell Hill Fire, which took the lives of 19 wildland firefighters in 2013. He has served as NASF president, chair of the NASF Wildland Fire Committee, NASF representative to the Wildland Fire Leadership Council, and chair of the Southern Group of State Foresters.

In his commitment to NASF, he generously contributed Florida Forest Service resources to host an NASF annual meeting, NASF Wildland Fire and CMS meetings, an NASF Executive Committee meeting, and a staff retreat for NASF and regional association staff.

## **Larry Biles Current Achievement Award for Forest Resource Management**

Larry Biles received his Bachelor of Science Degree in forestry from the University of Missouri in 1967 and a Master of Science Degree in ornamental horticulture from Kansas State University in 1974. Larry began working for K-State & Extension Forestry in 1967 as an area extension forester out of Hiawatha, Kansas. He left to serve in the U.S. Army for several years and came back to work for K-State Extension Forestry through 1977. By 1978, he had accepted a position with the USDA FS Southern Region out of Atlanta as their urban forestry/multiple-use coordinator.

Larry has worked as a consulting forester and as the national program leader for forest management under the USDA Extension Service in Washington, DC. He also served in that capacity for the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education and Extension Service. Prior to taking on State Forester responsibilities with the Kansas Forest Service (a position that he held from 2008 to 2019), he served as director for Southern Forest Research Partnership in Athens, Georgia.

## **Steve Sinclair Current Achievement Award for Urban and Community Forestry**

Steve Sinclair worked for the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation for over 40 years, retiring in 2018. During his long, diverse, and successful career with the department, Steve held numerous positions including state lands forester, private lands forester, manager for the urban and community forestry program, division director, and Vermont's State Forester.

Steve always had a passion for forestry, a curious mind, and a drive to get things done. He was a visionary, innovator, and leader for advancing the conservation and ecological management of forests across the continuum, from rural to urban in Vermont, as well as regionally and nationally. He'd be the first to tell you that his success as Vermont's State Forester was built on the lessons he learned as manager for Vermont's urban and community forestry program. He maintained engagement with the program at a national level as the chair of the NASF Urban and Community Forestry Committee.

## **Tom Boggus Current Achievement Award for Communications**

Tom began his career as a field forester in Linden, Texas, in 1980. He later moved to Lufkin as a county forester, and in 1987, was promoted to the position of assistant department head for forest resource development in College Station. In 1996, Tom took on the role of associate director for the finance and administration division, and in 2004, was asked to serve as

associate director for the forest resource development division. From 2010 to 2021, Tom served as State Forester of the Texas A&M Forest Service.

As a result of his interest and proficiency in communications, Tom was asked to chair the NASF Communications Committee and serve as the State Forester Liaison to the Southern Group of State Foresters Communications Committee, where he served for 10 years.

Tom has held notable NASF leadership roles as chair of the NASF Foundation Board of Directors and the Cooperative Forest Fire Prevention Committee (CFFP). His leadership was instrumental in establishing the Wildfire Mitigation Awards and creating an executive director position for the NASF Foundation, two lasting legacies that add value to the association.

## **Lisa Allen Current Achievement Award for Leadership**

A native of West Plains, Missouri, Lisa Allen earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in forestry from the University of Missouri in 1983. In 1984, she began her career with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) as assistant resource forester in Poplar Bluff. She was promoted to resource forester in Columbia in 1988.

Lisa temporarily left the department in 1993 to complete a Master's Degree in urban forestry at the University of Missouri, but by 1995, she had resumed her MDC career as a forestry field program supervisor over the state's urban and community forestry program. Three years later, she was promoted to forest management chief and then private land service division chief, and in 2006, accepted the job of State Forester, where she stayed for 34 years.

After chairing NASF's Urban and Community Forestry Committee for four years, she served as the second woman president of NASF. As NASF president, Lisa cultivated capacity among her own staff while supporting the staff of NASF.

## **Joe Mafnas Current Achievement Award for Partnerships**

Joe Mafnas has over 34 years of combined experience as a member of the military and as a civilian identifying and resolving complex and technical management issues, including those related to personnel, logistics, budgeting, and progress reporting for both local and federal programs. Joe provided senior-level guidance on forestry policy development and implementation with a keen focus on team building and talent development.

As State Forester of Guam, Joe Mafnas emerged as a leading national voice for Pacific Islands forestry. Joe hosted a Guam forestry tour that helped national leaders understand the urgency of invasive species, soil and stream bank erosion, and wildfire threats to island ecosystems. Joe is a rare leader who was able to connect NASF's most remote island members and their unique priorities with those of State Foresters in the contiguous U.S.

## **Steve Koehn Current Achievement Award for Forest Public Policy**

Steve Koehn served as the Maryland State Forester for more than a dozen years, during which time he provided a strong voice in support of state forester policy objectives. Steve played a vital leadership role in the passage of the Maryland Sustainable Forestry Act of 2009, which recognized the role healthy forests play in keeping Maryland's Chesapeake Bay ecosystems thriving. This legislation also changed how many states approached landscape-scale watershed restoration.

Steve served as chair of the NASF Forest Resource Management Committee and the NASF Water Committee during the years it was active. He also served as president of NASF and the Northeast-Midwest State Foresters Alliance, then called the Northeast Area Association of State Foresters.

## **John "Chris" Maisch Award**

Chris Maisch served as the Alaska State Forester from 1999 to 2021. Before his tenure as State Forester, Chris served the State of Alaska as its northern regional forester from 1999 to 2005, and prior to that, worked for Tanana Chiefs Conference, Inc., for 15 years in various capacities. He has worked in both forest and wildland fire management throughout his career and remains a Society of American Foresters certified forester. He holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in forestry from the University of Michigan.

In 2009, Chris attended Harvard University's Executive Fellowship Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government. He has also served in multiple leadership roles for NASF, including as president, Native American Relations Liaison, chair of the Communications Committee, and NASF Communications Liaison. Chris was a tireless advocate for, and the leading State Forester on, advancing multiple NASF positions related to appropriations, federal lands management, wildland fire, and the Forest Inventory and Analysis program. He developed critically important relationships with members of Congress and key congressional staff, testified before Congress on several occasions, and elevated NASF as a trusted source of expertise among lawmakers.

**The Maisch Award is typically presented at the NASF Partners Reception in Washington, DC, every December, but may also be awarded at any other NASF-sponsored event.**



# NASF Awards

## 2021-2025 Selection Criteria

### Selection Criteria

- **Importance and scope of goals.** Consideration of accomplishments in terms of how they contributed to general and specific goals, objectives, programs and activities of the NASF at the state, regional, national or international level.
- **Duration of efforts.** Continued accomplishments over a period of time shall be given greater weight than a single activity spanning only a limited period of time.
- **Size and extent of obstacles encountered and overcome (if applicable).** Consideration of the type and extent of obstacles, resistance, difficulties, etc. that were successfully overcome.
- **Methods employed.** Consideration of how accomplishments were brought about in terms of employment of various techniques, development of original approaches and adaptation of methods.
- **Achievement of objective.** Degree to which the goal was achieved; effectiveness of the effort in terms of how much it contributed to the achievement of goals, objectives, programs and activities of NASF.
- **Extent of Effort.** Consideration shall be given to effort above and beyond what might be expected of the nominee in the normal pursuit of duties and activities.