

For Immediate Release

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Pankratz Honored by Roger Tory Peterson Institute

JAMESTOWN, NY - Scott Pankratz of Missoula, Montana, has been selected as one of three recipients of the 2010 Blanche Hornbeck Award for Excellence in Nature Education, given by the Roger Tory Peterson Institute of Natural History to honor those who exemplify the life mission and work of the great nature educator, artist, writer and photographer Roger Tory Peterson (1908-1996).

Starting in 1934 Peterson introduced the world to simple, user-friendly handbooks - "field guides" - for identifying birds and other natural subjects. The millions of birdwatchers and other naturalists Peterson trained through his books formed the backbone of the environmental movement. His Field Guide to Birds is widely recognized as one of the most important books of the 20th century.

Miss Blanche Hornbeck was Peterson's seventh grade science teacher whom Peterson credited with sparking his lifelong fascination with birds at the age of 11. The Institute's key role of providing nature education-based professional development to teachers is based on Peterson's belief in the power of teachers to influence the lives of others.

The nature education work of recipients of the Blanche Hornbeck Award must be place based, fostering knowledge of and responsibility for the natural world where teacher and/or students live, as well as outdoor based, innovative, and current.

Pankratz is co-founder and head of Ecology Project International, a conservation education organization that engages kids in hands-on research projects to save endangered species and habitats in Costa Rica, Galapagos, the Sea of Cortez in Mexico, and the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in Montana. EPI's unique program partners local youth with research scientists in the field. As a result of their experiences young people take leadership roles in their communities to bring about environmental awareness, spearhead stewardship efforts, and many of them choose careers in natural science and conservation.

In addition to Pankratz, the Peterson Institute is honoring two other outstanding nature educators with its Blanche Hornbeck Award: Rebecca Nystrom of Jamestown, New York, who has shared her love of nature and natural science with hundreds of college students and community members through courses and public programs for over three decades; and Rod MacVicar of Port

Moody, British Columbia, a 40-year veteran environmental educator who leads young people to help restore and steward the coastal marine environment of Vancouver Harbour.

For more information about Ecology Project International, visit www.ecologyproject.org, or for the Roger Tory Peterson Institute, visit <http://www.enaturalist.org/>.

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