

Conservation officers crucial to protecting resources

Written by Janet Rohde

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By Bill Ziegler For the Iron County Reporter

IRON COUNTY—As a fisheries student at the University of Michigan, School of Natural Resources, I talked one of my professors into letting me design an Independent Study Course working with Michigan DNR conservation officers.

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The purpose of the study course was to gain valuable practical experience working with anglers and hunters, and to see what role conservation officers play in the whole resource management picture.

I worked almost every weekend and many nights for a year in downstate Washtenaw County, outside of Ann Arbor. I worked with Conservation Officers John Watson and Frank Caroffino.

We worked all the hunting and fishing seasons throughout the year. I learned a tremendous amount about how to work with anglers and hunters and how to gain information under stressful circumstances.

I also learned what role law enforcement plays in the overall resource management conducted by the DNR.

Upper Peninsula conservation officers often prefer to be called game wardens. They cannot miraculously make fishing and hunting better; however, they can protect a fishery or hunting area once the biologists, technicians, and foresters create it.

Without game wardens most fishing and hunting spots would be very short lived in their value to anglers and hunters.

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