

Two N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services employees were recently recognized for their leadership and work.

Joe Reardon, assistant commissioner for consumer protection, received the James A. Graham Award At the annual meeting of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The award recognizes an individual for outstanding work in providing service to agricultural producers.

Reardon has served the department in various regulatory positions for over 30 years and has also worked cooperatively with state departments of agriculture during his tenure at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Reardon's leadership, vision and strategic direction increased collaboration and communication with federal, state and local partners to achieve a national integrated food safety system.

“There is so much talent working to advance American agriculture in our departments, talent that often goes unrecognized. NASDA's Honor Awards Program provides our members the opportunity to recognize their staff for their work on a national stage,” said NASDA President and Louisiana Commissioner of Agriculture & Forestry Dr. Michael G. Strain.

NCDA&CS forester David Schnake was recognized by the North Carolina Wildlife Federation with the Land Conservationist of the Year award. It was presented at 54th Annual Governor's Conservation Achievement Awards. These prestigious awards are the highest natural resource honors given in the state.

As the Forest Research Operation Manager for the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Schnake is responsible for more than 25 land projects spanning 17,000 diversely forested acres. Developing comprehensive land conservation and restoration planning for shortleaf pine and oak savanna ecosystems are among Schnake's studies and efforts. His expertise has furthered the sustainable management and conservation of longleaf pine forest ecosystems.

This year's winners are exceedingly notable conservation devotees who span the range of water quality advocates, land stewardship champions and leaders in the preservation of unique ecosystems.

“Each year we are amazed at the commitment and creativity of North Carolina citizens in protecting wildlife and wild places,” said T. Edward Nickens, NCWF Awards Committee Chair. “This awards program brings together a remarkably diverse group of conservationists to highlight the ‘good news’ about wildlife conservation in North Carolina.”

The North Carolina Wildlife Federation first presented its conservation awards in 1958