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OUTSTANDING TEACHER AWARD GIVEN TO LOCAL EDUCATORS

Five Rivers MetroParks awards those who encourage environmental education.

DAYTON, OH (March 16, 2016) – [Five Rivers MetroParks](http://FiveRiversMetroParks) has named the winners of its second [OUTstanding Teacher Award](#), created to honor Dayton-area teachers who engage students with the outdoors:

- **Rising Star (less than 10 years):** Dana Franks, [DECA Prep](#)
Franks' kindergarten students are scientists who ask questions, make observations, test ideas and explain their thinking in their outdoor classroom. During outdoor activities, her students learn through storytelling, problem solving and taking care of plants. Franks' impact extends to families and community members through garden-based classes and collaboration with student teachers from Wright State University.
- **Leader (10 to 20 years):** Kristina Dobberstein, [Brookville Elementary](#)
Dobberstein is an active member of the Teachers of Outdoor Education group at Brookville Elementary, where she helped develop project-based learning activities for first grade and started an ecology club. To help students understand their connection with nature, the ecology club is identifying the environmental impact of the school. Dobberstein also has focused on expanding and using the school's outdoor spaces.
- **Lifetime Achievement (more than 20 years):** Joe Beringer, [Miamisburg High School](#)
Beringer is helping create future caretakers of the environment by providing opportunities for students to connect with nature. He emphasizes the importance of nature, making it relevant in the lives of his high school students through hands-on experiences, field trips and projects. His students work with professionals in the environmental field at The Ohio State University's Stone Lab, the Florida Keys and local park districts to discover how their interests could become careers.

Awardees were honored Saturday, March 12, at the Miami Valley Leave No Child Inside summit with a plaque and prize package that included:

- Kit with plants selected for the winning teachers' schools
- [Environmental Education Council of Ohio](#) (EECO) membership
- Conference fees for EECO's 101 Alternatives to the Chalkboard Conference at Camp Kern
- Outdoor educational tools and resources for the winners' schools

The award honors teachers who provide students with outdoor, environmental experiences that inspire interest in and build positive attitudes about nature. The award is offered annually, and [applications](#) for the next year's awards will be available this fall.

ABOUT FIVE RIVERS METROPARKS

[Five Rivers MetroParks](#) is a nationally renowned [park system](#) composed of natural area parks, [gardens](#), high-quality [river corridors](#), urban parks and a network of [recreation trails](#), [celebrating more than 50 years](#) of preserving green space and natural areas. Five Rivers MetroParks [protects](#) the region's natural heritage and provides [outdoor experiences](#) that inspire a personal connection with nature. [Educational](#) programs and [recreational](#) opportunities are offered year-round for all ages. To learn more [about](#) Five Rivers MetroParks, visit www.metroparks.org or call 937-275-PARK.

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