

# Lawrence W. Deitz



Lawrence W. Deitz devoted his life to preserving West Virginia's forests and wildlife. Deitz never forgot the damage done by the chestnut blight, and he witnessed the creation and resurgence of the Monongahela National Forest out of fire-ravaged lands. Those events shaped his professional career path and the State's future.

In 1963, the West Virginia Legislature reorganized the State's Conservation Commission into the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, and appointed Deitz as one of its seven original commissioners. He spent the next 24 years working to solve the state's forestry, wildlife, and water-related problems.

He worked tirelessly to improve turkey and bear populations and establish responsible water regulatory authority and strip mine reclamation policies. Deitz brought in outside experts with personal funds to come in and assist him in finding solutions to these issues.

He served on the first West Virginia Forest Management Commission, which investigated forest management practices in the Monongahela National Forest. Deitz was the founder of the annual Cranberry Mountain Spring Nature Tour. He organized a nature tour for Nicholas County high school students and invited the finest forestry professionals to serve as speakers. He was also a conservation adviser to the Boy Scouts of America Buckskin Council and recipient of the Silver Beaver Award.

He was honored by the U.S Forest Service with its 75th anniversary award for "significant contributions to forestry and conservation" for his efforts as a citizen volunteer in the agency's eastern region. He received the Izaak Walton League's Special Presidential Waltonian Award for Outstanding Environmental Conservation Activities and the National Conservation Award.

Colleagues have characterized Deitz as a leader who was responsible for finding solutions to many of the state's most important forestry problems.