



# 2022 State Forester's Stewardship Awards Announced



**SALT LAKE CITY** – The Utah Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands honored two individuals with forestry stewardship awards as a part of the 2022 Utah Association of Conservation Districts. Matthew Zierenberg was honored with the Forest Stewardship Achievement Award. The Mark Blake Family received the Forest Landowner of the Year.

## Forest Stewardship Achievement Award – Matthew Zierenberg, Wasatch High School

Matthew Zierenberg, affectionately known as “Mr. Z” by his students, was honored with the 2022 Forest Stewardship Achievement Award. Zierenberg has promoted the importance of good forest/agroforest management among the students at Wasatch High School and strives to teach the importance of stewarding and help create future leaders in natural resource management.

With the support of the Spring Creek Nursery, Zierenberg was awarded a Forestry, Fire and State Lands Outdoor Learning Grant to support his vision for student learning in the field of forestry. With the help of these grants, Zierenberg created a hands-on, outdoor classroom program called Innovative, Discovery-based, Educational, and Agricultural Leadership, also known as IDEAL Farms. Students at Wasatch High School can get their hands dirty and learn industry skills that can make them competitive.

IDEAL Farms is home to a native plant nursery, a fruit orchard, vegetable grow boxes, and an aquaponics greenhouse. Last year the program sold over \$15,000 of inventory to the local community from their nursery and aquaponics greenhouse, promoting conservation and the use of native plants and trees in the local community.

Recently, Zierenberg partnered with the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands to conduct an urban forestry inventory of all the trees on the high school campus. This has led to implementing a “Forest Team” at the high school and has led Wasatch High to be the first K-12 school in Utah to be designated as a Tree Campus through the Arbor Day Foundation.

## Forest Landowner of the Year Award – The Mark Blake Family, Richfield, Utah

The Mark Blake Family received this year's Forest Landowner Stewardship Landowner of the Year Award. The Blake family has been working with the Division of Forestry, Fire and State Lands since 2018 on implementing a Forest Stewardship Plan on 480 acres of forest property near Magleby Reservoir, located on Monroe Mountain. The stewardship plan for Tabernacle Ridge has been implemented by the division and the National Resources Conservation Service.

To date, approximately 300 acres of land has been treated on the property, which has met the goals outlined in the stewardship plan. As with any project, there have been roadblocks and issues that have risen unexpectedly. Throughout the entire process, the Blake Family has met the challenges and provided solutions to assist both agencies where needed.

Mark Blake has shown leadership throughout this process and within the small Magleby community as he helps promote the benefits of completing projects within a stewardship program.

Each recipient was honored at an awards luncheon during the Utah Association of Conservation Districts annual convention on November 1. The award winners were nominated by their Area Forester, and the nominees were voted on at the Forest Stewardship Coordinating Committee meeting in September.

## FFSL Resources

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