

# President's MESSAGE

## From Arborist to Angler

When thinking of what I could write for my first President's Message, it became clear that volunteerism is what I should talk about. It was the last topic our past president wrote about, and I want to discuss it while the annual conference is fresh in our minds.



First of all, I want to say thank you to all of the folks who worked so hard to make the conference possible. It takes a lot of dedicated people working together, communicating and sacrificing their time to make an event like our annual conference successful.

Second, I want to address the reason why I believe most people are willing to get involved and stay involved in this organization. When I first left the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point and became employed as a climber, I was interested in attending the WAA events because it was time off of work. And of course, the annual conference provided beer and food, a chance to hang out with my friends, and an opportunity for continuing education credits.

Later, while working for Cassity Tree Service, Brian Cassity asked me to help him with his role as certification chair. All I needed to do was become a test proctor and help him with a few office chores. I thought this would be easy enough, and it might look good on my resume.

What I didn't realize at the time was how eye-opening this volunteer experience would become. I realized how many people were needed to make the WAA function and how each volunteer, from a president to a student who helps with conference registration, was a vital piece of this organization and the programs we offer. I found myself surrounded by quality individuals who have a true passion for seeing arboriculture and the WAA succeed.

What was driving those passionate individuals is now a driving force in my own life. I found out that investing a fraction of my time would pay great dividends both professionally and personally. This is the reason why volunteers get involved, and stay involved, with the WAA.

The beer, food, fun, and learning at the annual conference is just the hook. And I have become an angler; fishing for volunteers who want the same enriching experience of being a part of something much bigger than ourselves.

Now is the perfect time to contact any board member and find out how you can help the WAA grow through volunteering just a bit of your time. Take an active role to help the membership work toward a common goal: that of promoting the industry and helping those in arboriculture succeed.

Josh DePouw,  
*WAA President*