

How to prepare a strong award nomination: Advice for nominators

CERF Awards Canvassing Subcommittee
April 3, 2025



Why should YOU prepare an award nomination?

- Celebrates the dedication, hard work, and contributions by our colleagues
- Recognition has positive benefits (e.g., career advancement, continued funding, strengthened communities)
- Professional achievement awards are typically unevenly and inequitably distributed* ...we can all work to improve this by cultivating a nomination mindset

*(Holmes et al. 2020; Lagisz et al. 2023; Muller-Karger et al. 2022)

Canvassing committee goals

- Increase number and breadth of nominations for awards
- Encourage representation across entire CERF community
- Support nominators with training and advice

Background

Outcome of 2023 CERF achievement awards committee workshop (ACCESS+ grant)

Follows Holmes et al. (2020) recommendations for improving equity in professional society awards

CERF Achievement Award Categories

<https://www.cerf.science/cerf-achievement-awards>

Odum Lifetime Achievement Award

“Recognizes the **lifetime achievements** of an outstanding estuarine scientist. It honors an individual whose **record of sustained accomplishments** has made **important contributions** to our understanding of estuaries and coastal ecosystems.”

Year	Awardee
2023	R. Eugene Turner , <i>Louisiana State U.</i>
2021	Robert J. Orth , <i>Virginia Inst. of Marine Science and College of William & Mary</i> ; Kenneth L. Heck Jr. , <i>Dauphin Island Sea Lab & U. of South Alabama</i>
2019	Iris Anderson , <i>Virginia Inst. of Marine Science and College of William & Mary</i>
2017	James E. Cloern , <i>US Geological Survey</i>
2015	Joy Zedler , <i>Univ. of Wisconsin</i>
...	
1997	Donald Pritchard , <i>Johns Hopkins Univ</i>

Cronin Early Achievement Award

“Recognizes the **significant accomplishments** of an estuarine scientist who is in the **early stages of their career development.**”

Note: Nominees must be within 6 years of receiving their PhD

Year	Awardee
2023	Michael Sievers , <i>Griffith University</i>
2021	Hamed Moftakhari , <i>University of Alabama</i>
2019	Christine Angelini , <i>University of Florida</i>
2017	Damien Maher , <i>Southern Cross University</i>
2015	Autumn Oczkowski , <i>US Environmental Protection Agency</i>
...	
1997	Samantha Joye , <i>University of Georgia</i>

William A. Niering Outstanding Educator Award

“For an individual who has played a particularly **important role in education at any level** -- from primary school to the graduate level, inside or out of the classroom, or in the education of the general public through outreach activities.”

Year	Awardee
2023	Pedro Morais , S2AQUA - Collaborative Laboratory, Assoc. for a Sustainable and Smart Aquaculture
2021	Katharyn Boyer , San Francisco State University
2019	Susan Bell , University of South Florida
2017	Drew Talley , University of San Diego
2015	Peggy Fong , UCLA
...	
2001	Joy Zedler , University of Wisconsin

Margaret A. Davidson Stewardship Achievement Award

“Recognizes an individual that demonstrates **extraordinary leadership, service, innovation, and commitment to the management** of estuarine and coastal systems.”

Note: Nominees should have at least 10 years of leadership experience in management and policy

Year	Awardee
2023	David Eggleston , <i>North Carolina State University</i>
2021	Christine Baumann Feurt , <i>Wells National Estuarine Research Reserve</i>
2019	Merryl Alber , <i>University of Georgia</i>
2017	William Dennison , <i>University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science</i>

Coastal Stewardship Award

“Recognizes specific projects, programs and organizations for their **exemplary stewardship activities**, including success in management, policy, restoration, and conservation efforts.”

Note: Awarded to an organization or group rather than an individual.

Year	Awardee
2023	The Nature Conservancy, Alabama Chapter
2021	Buzzards Bay Coalition
2019	Tampa Bay Nitrogen Management Consortium of Tampa Bay NEP

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice Award

“Recognizes the **significant contributions of an individual who has worked for greater diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice** in estuarine and coastal science, management, education, and/or stewardship. It honors a person who demonstrates exceptional **long-term or emerging leadership and commitment** to the principles and ideals of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion and to positive change.”

Year	Awardee
2023	Tiara Moore , <i>Black in Marine Science</i>
2021	Ashanti Johnson , <i>East Central University & STEM Human Resource Development</i>

Components of a nomination package

1. Nomination letter describing qualifications and accomplishments of nominee (5 pages maximum)
2. Nominee's CV
3. Supporting letters (2 pages max per letter)
 - Two letters required for most awards
 - Four letters for Niering Outstanding Educator Award
 - Five letters for Odum Lifetime Achievement Award

Submission guidelines

<https://www.cerf.science/cerf-achievement-awards>

- Submit through online portal on CERF website or contact info@cerf.science
- Nominators attest that the nominee has not violated the CERF [Code of Ethics](#) or [Code of Conduct](#)
- CERF membership not required (for nominators or nominees)
- No posthumous nominations
- No self-nominations currently, but an option to self-nominate will be phased in beginning 2027

What Have I Gotten Myself Into?

**Lora's Top Ten: Advice for Assembling a
Strong Nomination Package**

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4. **Have a meeting with your team to identify the work and divide up the tasks.**
 - a. *Provide some homework before the meeting*
 - b. *Confirm and collect details for your nomination letter*
 - c. *Identify external letter writers*
 - d. *Find a CV*
 - e. *Make a calendar of team deadlines*

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6. **Write your letter!**

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6. Write your letter!
7. **Contact external letter writers giving at least 1 week notice**

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8. **Incorporate quotes and review your draft nomination letter**

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9. **Make sure multiple eyes look at all materials.**

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8. Incorporate quotes and review your draft nomination letter
9. Make sure multiple eyes look at all materials.
- 10. Hurray! Submit your nomination package!**

Thank you for being a nominator!

Reach out if we can help

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Questions and Discussion

Outline

Canvassing committee purpose

CERF Achievement Awards and past awardees

Tips and tricks for preparing a nomination package

Q&A