



The Louisiana Wildlife Federation has been conducting a conservation achievement recognition program for almost 50 years. Because LWF solicits nominations broadly and relies on an elaborate process of judging by peers rather than hand-picking those to be recognized like many organizations do, chance has much to do with whether or not worthy nominations are received in every category. It is always disappointing when categories go without winners for lack of a strong nomination. And these days, it seems like it is getting harder and harder to persuade folks to take the time and effort to nominate themselves or others they know to be deserving of honor. That is a shame. We hope to overcome that by providing these tips to make you feel more comfortable and capable to submit a winning nomination.

Focus on Recent Achievement

The LWF awards highlight accomplishment during a single year, rather than cumulatively over many years or a lifetime. This means: 1) the year for which the work/accomplishment of the nominee is being nominated (which is the year prior to the presentation of the award) is the year during which the effort of the nominee comes to fruition; or 2) regardless of the final outcome of the work (which may not be realized until a future year) the effort was so impressive or extraordinary to warrant recognition in and of itself. So, a nominee may have done many years prior work but the purpose of the effort is substantially achieved in the year for which the nomination is made; or a nominee has done impressive work during the year that is likely to produce an important conservation outcome in a future year; or a nominee has done impressive work with important conservation outcomes during the same year. The work and accomplishment for which a nomination is made must have currency to be eligible, therefore a nomination can be made based primarily on past (previous to the nomination year) work if that work produced conservation benefits in the nomination year.

Conservation Broadly Defined

What qualifies as “conservation work” is broadly considered and includes almost anything that advances, in word or in deed, the conservation and wise use of natural resources or protects or improves the quality of the environment. The work a nominee is nominated for does not have to focus solely on conservation. Even if conservation is a collateral outcome of an effort intended primarily to achieve some other benefit, that effort is eligible for nomination in this program.

Scouting for Prospects & Why Make the Effort

The LWF Conservation Awards Program is based on the premise that the

recognition of conservation work encourages the continuation and growth of such work. That is a good reason by itself to seek and nominate good candidates for recognition. But in addition to that, and the obvious purpose of giving due praise to the nominated individual, group or business doing the work, it's good for the nominator. The nominator receives appreciation from the nominee and the larger community in addition to the personal satisfaction of having done a good deed. Prospective nominees are all around – in civic and professional organizations, schools and youth groups, universities and agencies, business and industry and yes, even in political office. Some will be so excited you noticed their good work that they will detail their own resources to assist you with the nomination.

Résumé' of Achievement & Documentation

The nominee's résumé of achievement is limited to 3 single-spaced, typed pages or about 2,000 words. It can be shorter. What the judges want to know in this document is what the nominee did to advance conservation and why the outcome of the work is important. Since there is a level of detail required in describing the nominee's work, it may be necessary to ask the nominee to provide that information. Most nominees will be honored if you to ask them to help put their nomination together. The résumé should not be merely a listing of the work done and milestones reached. It is best to include such a listing as an addendum to the résumé so it does not take up résumé space but provides a quick reference for the judges.

The nomination résumé should be constructed just like any good story. It should answer the questions of who, what, when, where, why and how, with emphasis on what the nominee did and why that is important within the context of conservation. Pretend that you are presenting the award. What would you say to the audience about your nominee to make them understand and appreciate the importance of his/her/their efforts? The judges need to hear that and more. Although all judges are qualified by being a past award winner, an acknowledged expert in a field of conservation, or a leader of a major state, regional or national conservation organization, they are not familiar with every kind of conservation work, so a nomination should sell the judges on the worthiness of the nominee. Make a strong, persuasive and passionate "pitch" for your nominee.

Although documentation is required, it does not have to be extensive. Media coverage of the nominee's work in the form of newspaper clippings and printouts of stories posted on the Internet suffice nicely. Testimonial letters vouching for the nominee's work from persons familiar with it also are good if available. It is not necessary to compile a voluminous "scrapbook" of documentation.