



2026 AWARDS

***National Conservation
Outstanding
District Professional,
District Planner/Technician,
and
District Board Member***

**Sponsored by the
National Conservation District
Employees Association**

The Sponsor: The National Conservation District Employees Association (NCDEA) was created in 1992. Its mission is to strengthen and promote the conservation district programs by providing assistance, information, and representation and by supporting the professionalism of conservation district employees. NCDEA represents more than 8,000 conservation district employees nationwide.

Purpose of the Awards Program: The Outstanding Conservation District Professional, District Planner/Technician, and Outstanding Conservation District Board Member awards are presented annually **to recognize professionalism and dedication in the people behind the nation's conservation district programs.** The program began in 1998.

Eligibility: All District Employee Professional nominees must have been employed by their District for three (3) years when the nomination is filed with the appropriate state and/or regional organizations. All District Board Member nominees must have four (4) years of board service at the time the nomination is filed with the appropriate state and/or regional organizations. You may resubmit applications that were previously submitted but not selected.

Current NCDEA Board members or candidates for the NCDEA Board of Directors are not eligible to be nominated for the Outstanding District Professional Award until at least one year after they have left the Board of Directors or are no longer a candidate for the NCDEA Board of Directors.

Nomination Process: Conservation district employees, conservation district employee associations, conservation district boards, state conservation agencies, NRCS, NACD, and other associated conservation professionals may submit nominations. Through its conservation district employee association, each state (or province) is eligible to submit one entry to its respective NCDEA region for each of the three awards: Admin/Manager, Technician/Planner, and Board Member. If a state does not have an employee association, interested persons should contact their regional NCDEA representative for submission instructions. Each region is eligible to submit one entry to the NCDEA Awards Program Chair for each of the three awards. All material submitted becomes property of NCDEA. **Evaluating committees' decisions are final and not subject to appeal.** Past national winners are ineligible.

Nomination Deadlines: Submit all **nominations to the respective state employees' association by the date determined by each State Association.** If your state does not have an employees' association, submit directly to the regional board member. All states must submit **nominations to the regional level by October 15.** All regions must submit **nominations to the national level by November 15.** These regional nominations should be sent to the NCDEA Executive Director at 1679 S. Dupont Highway, Dover, DE 19901; or by email to timothy.riley@ncdea.org.

National winners or their nominators will be notified by **December 15.**

Note to Nominator: **These awards are judged solely on the basis of the written information provided. Nominations need to be written clearly and with specificity. NCDEA urges the nominator to review the nomination form after writing it and check for accuracy, adding any items or thoughts they wish to include in their nomination.**

Directions for completing the Nomination Form: Entries must be typewritten. In addition to the Nomination Form, entries may include a narrative addressing the specific questions in the Nomination Form. The additional narrative IS NOT TO EXCEED two (2) pages, 12-point font, double-spaced.

Narratives should be clear, concise, and to the point.

National Awards Presentation: Each national award winner will receive a plaque. A news release will be sent to the winner's local paper and a letter to the winner's board announcing their achievement. The national award(s) will be presented at the NACD Annual Conference and in conjunction with it, at a time determined each year based on the meeting agenda.

Winners will be encouraged to attend but are NOT required to be present to accept their awards.

The award recipient's name will be kept confidential until the time to announce the awards during the NCDEA annual business meeting held during the NACD Annual Conference, if at all feasible.

Other: The Evaluating Committee and NCDEA reserve the right not to award a winner if they feel the nominations provided have not met the criteria.

Awards Program Contact People are the regional board members whose contact information is on the NCDEA website under "Regions" <https://ncdea.us/regions>

NCDEA encourages all states to participate in this awards program

NCDEA Award Nomination Form

Entry Information

_____ District Professional (*Admin, Manager, Educator*)

_____ District Planner/Technician

_____ District Board Member

State Employee Association _____

Name of Nominee: _____

Employment Entry Date: _____

Nominee's Job/Title: _____ Years in Position: _____

Conservation District Name and Address:

E-mail: _____ Phone: _____

Name of Nominator: _____

Address: _____

E-mail: _____

Phone: _____

Association of Nominator to Nominee: _____

Nominee's Local Newspaper

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone # _____ Email Address: _____

Awards will be judged on contribution to professionalism, strengthening and development, initiative, innovation, and resourcefulness, and overall leadership in natural resource conservation as a district employee or official, with the following scale:

40% District Level

30% State Level

10% Regional Level (any work with regional conservation entities is acceptable)

10% National Level (any work with national conservation entities is acceptable)

10% Community Service

A rubric is provided at the end of the application to guide nominators in formulating answers.

- 1. Describe the specific accomplishments and contributions the nominee has made at the local district level. Highlight any initiatives that have significantly impacted local conservation efforts. Please provide measurable outcomes, such as improvements in conservation practices, community engagement, or local partnerships.**

Please refer to the individual as “applicant” or “nominee,” not by their name or he/she.

Please do not use specific state or region names.

2. **Detail the nominee's contributions at the state level, focusing on how their work has advanced conservation goals and policies within the state. Include examples of collaboration with state agencies, leadership in statewide initiatives, and the impact of their efforts on broader conservation objectives.**

Please refer to the individual as “applicant” or “nominee,” not by their name or he/she.

Please do not use specific state or region names in the narrative.

- 3. Briefly summarize the nominee's involvement at the regional level. Emphasize any significant contributions that have influenced regional conservation strategies or practices, but with a focus on how these contributions have supported their local or state efforts. This does not need to be NCDEA specific.**

Please refer to the individual as “applicant” or “nominee,” not by their name or he/she.

Please do not use specific state or region names.

4. **Provide an overview of the nominee’s participation in national conservation activities, if applicable. Highlight any roles or recognitions that underscore their commitment to conservation, while focusing on how their national involvement has benefited local and state efforts. This does not need to be NCDEA specific.**

Please refer to the individual as “applicant” or “nominee,” not by their name or he/she. Do not use specific state or region names.

- 5. Describe the nominee's community service efforts, particularly those that integrate conservation practices or raise awareness of environmental stewardship. Emphasize the impact of these activities on local communities and how they complement the nominee's professional role.**

Please refer to the individual as "applicant" or "nominee," not by their name or he/she. Please do not use specific state or region names in the narrative.

Optional Additional Narrative – Maximum Two Pages

Use this section only to provide additional information that does not fit within the five sections above or to provide an overall perspective on why the nominee is deserving of national recognition. Do not repeat information already provided in the application. This narrative is not to exceed two (2) pages, 12-point font, double-spaced.

Here is a detailed rubric for the application review team to use in scoring submissions. **Reference this rubric as you complete your nomination form.**

NCDEA Awards Application Scoring Rubric

Category	Criteria	Weight	Score (1-10)	Weighted Score
Local District Level (40%)	Impact on Local Conservation Efforts: Assess the nominee's specific contributions and initiatives within the local district. Evaluate the effectiveness, innovation, and outcomes of their work. Community Engagement and Partnerships: Consider the nominee's ability to engage the local community, foster partnerships, and influence local conservation practices.	25%		
State Level (30%)	Advancement of State Conservation Goals: Evaluate how the nominee's work has furthered conservation policies, goals, and initiatives at the state level. Collaboration with State Agencies: Assess the nominee's collaboration with state agencies, their leadership roles, and the impact of these efforts on statewide conservation strategies.	20%		
Regional Level (10%)	Contribution to Regional Conservation: Briefly evaluate the nominee's role in regional conservation efforts, focusing on how these contributions support local or state initiatives.	10%		
National Level (10%)	National Involvement and Recognition: Consider the nominee's participation in national conservation activities, and how this involvement benefits their local and state-level work.	10%		
Community Service (10%)	Impact of Community Service: Evaluate the nominee's community service efforts, particularly those that promote conservation practices and environmental stewardship at the local level.	10%		

Final Score Calculation

- **Local District Level:** (Total Score for Local District Criteria / 20) × 40 = **Weighted Local District Score**
- **State Level:** (Total Score for State Level Criteria / 20) × 30 = **Weighted State Level Score**
- **Regional Level:** (Score for Regional Level Criteria / 10) × 10 = **Weighted Regional Level Score**
- **National Level:** (Score for National Level Criteria / 10) × 10 = **Weighted National Level Score**
- **Community Service:** (Score for Community Service Criteria / 10) × 10 = **Weighted Community Service Score**

Total Score: Sum of all Weighted Scores

Scoring Guide:

- **10-9:** Outstanding – Exceeds expectations with clear, compelling evidence and significant impact.
- **8-7:** Excellent – Strong evidence of impact and leadership; meets all criteria effectively.
- **6-5:** Good – Adequate evidence, meets most criteria with solid contributions.
- **4-3:** Fair – Limited evidence or impact; meets basic criteria but lacks depth.
- **2-1:** Poor – Insufficient evidence or minimal impact; does not meet criteria effectively.