PRPS Recognition and Awards Program
Award Descriptions

Outstanding Achievement Award in Honor of Fred M. Coombs

This is PRPS's highest award. Candidates are current or retired PRPS professional members, with a minimum of 20 years of compensated experience, whose efforts have had lasting value and impact as well as served to increase awareness of the importance of the parks and recreation profession. Service in the following areas will be considered: Speeches, Writing, Research, professional development, community involvement, and contributions to the advancement of the Society through committee work, leadership positions, and initiative development.

Dr. Fred Coombs was a distinguished professor in the Parks and Recreation Department at Penn State University for over 30 years. He was instrumental in establishing community recreation programs throughout the Commonwealth and was a founding member of PRPS, serving as Executive Secretary until a full-time Executive Director was hired in 1977.

Distinguished Member Award in Honor of Robert D. Griffith

Candidates are current professional members with a minimum of 10 years of compensated experience who have consistently contributed to the advancement of the Society through committee work, leadership positions, initiative development, affiliated organizations, or the profession in a variety of ways.

Robert Griffith was the first full-time Executive Director of PRPS. He served the Society in that position from 1977 until his retirement in 2011. During his tenure as Executive Director, Bob helped PRPS grow into not only a professional organization for those employed in the various fields of parks and recreation, but also a champion for parks, trails, greenways, and open space preservation in the Commonwealth.

Outstanding New Professional Award

This award is given to individuals with less than 11 years of full-time, compensated experience in the Parks and Recreation profession. Candidates must be current professional members who have contributed to the advancement of PRPS through committee work, leadership positions, and initiative development, and service to the candidate's employing agency and their community. Past winners of this award demonstrated strong leadership skills, innovative approaches, strong strategic planning, and a proven record of building and sustaining partnerships that benefited their community.

Agency of the Year Award

The PRPS Agency of the Year Award inspires and recognizes exemplary accomplishments in positioning parks and recreation as an essential public service with meaningful community impact. The winning agency offers a fresh perspective on significant parks and recreation issues, demonstrates innovation and collaboration, and has shown a high level of resourcefulness, especially in recent years. The winning agency is required to have at least one member of PRPS in order to qualify for this award and must have demonstrated the achievements, benefits, and outcomes in providing public park and recreation for a minimum of five years.

Community Champion Award

This award recognizes individuals, groups, or partner organizations who have made an outstanding volunteer contribution through their commitment to a parks and recreation-related program, event, or initiative, and have stimulated local, regional, state, or national interest in parks and recreation goals and objectives. PRPS membership is not required.

Green Parks Awards

These awards seek to recognize excellence in both active and passive public parks that demonstrate integration of green and sustainable park practices. Criteria include location, design, landscaping, maintenance, environmental stewardship, and other contributing factors. PRPS membership (of sponsoring agency or person from agency submitting for the award) is required. A specific form is to be used for this nomination.

Awards for Excellence in Recreation and Parks

Recipients of these awards must demonstrate outstanding quality, innovation, range and value of appeal, community support, efficient use of funding, human and material resources in the development, delivery and use of programs, special events, publications and promotions. **Please limit to two nominations per Department.**

Nominations will be rated independently by each member of the Recognition and Awards Committee. The entries will be rated on a scale of 1-5 for each **POWER** principle identified in item # 5. The total number of awards to be presented will be determined by the Recognition and Awards Committee each year.

1. PRPS membership (of sponsoring agency or person from agency submitting the award) is required to submit an entry.

2. The program, event, publication, or promotion must have been offered or produced during the current PRPS membership year.

3. Previous PRPS award-winning programs, special events, publications or promotions may not be resubmitted for consideration unless there have been substantial changes to the content or format. An explanation of these changes is required.

4. Agencies or organizations may submit an unlimited number of entries under Excellence in Recreation and Parks through programming and/or publication and promotions award nominations.

5. Entries will be assessed on how well the project, program, or initiative demonstrates each of the **POWER** Principles.

6. Further information, such as supporting details or photos maybe attached (limit 5 pages.)

Positions public parks and recreation as an essential community service. Tell how the entry advances the role and importance of public parks and recreation, shows the benefits of parks and recreation, and improves the quality of life in the community.

Outcome-based. Describe the problem, issue, or opportunity and how the entry provided a solution to it.

Wow Factor. Explain how the entry advances parks and recreation in the community through a major accomplishment, innovation, or a creative approach to managing and/or providing public parks and recreation. Describe how the entry demonstrates creativity and innovation. This can range from start–up efforts made to establish parks and recreation, or a small but mighty effort to make something happen where parks and recreation is struggling, to the initiative of a well-established parks and recreation organization.

Effects change. Address how the entry deals with an important issue in the field of parks and recreation such as environmental stewardship, connecting people to nature, active healthy living, or social equity. Describe how it demonstrates strategies, resources, and outreach methods to increase public awareness, or other means that produce results.

Resourcefulness. Explain how the entry used creative resources and outreach methods to generate support from a variety of sources, including partnerships in the public, private, and non-profit sectors; use of private funds, lands, facilities, or expertise; or support secured from policymakers or elected officials.

Please note the use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in creating award submissions is not prohibited, but it is strongly discouraged. AI-generated content often appears artificial and resembles other AI-generated material, which can harm your submission.

Submit nominations online: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/YXRTL3Z