



2023 CONSERVATION EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Nominations Open for Elementary & Secondary Educators

Purpose and Eligibility

The purpose of the Teacher of the Year contest is to recognize the outstanding conservation education efforts of Virginia's teachers.

Elementary (grades K-5) and secondary (grades 6-12) educators will be recognized in separate categories. All teachers in public, parochial and private schools in Virginia are eligible to participate in the program.

To be eligible for the contest:

- Educators must be teaching full-time in the classroom during the school year prior to application submission.
- A candidate's nomination must be endorsed by the conservation district in which he or she is teaching.
- Teachers who are conservation district directors cannot compete, but associate directors may.
- Team teachers are eligible, but awards will only be made to the designated leader.
- Educators who have won a first-place VASWCD award in the last ten years are not eligible to compete again at the state level.
- Educators and Districts who submit and do not win a state award may resubmit their entries the following year.

Requirements

Any teacher who meets the eligibility requirements may enter the contest. Teachers can nominate themselves, or someone else in the district may nominate them. To enter the contest:

- Submit a typewritten or digital narrative which addresses the five items under "Application."
- Enclose 1 letter of recommendation – separate from the District's letter.

Application

Applications should be completed to include contact information and narrative to address the five items listed on this page. The response for each item must not exceed two pages and each should be treated as a separate section. Any relevant supporting materials should be located after each response.

1. Describe your program for involving students in the betterment of natural resources; and describe the areas of study incorporated in your conservation education program. (20pts)
2. Describe any assistance received from community organizations or resource specialists from local, state or federal agencies or organizations. (20pts)
3. Explain how the program is being extended to other grades, other areas and to people in the community. (20pts)
4. Document how your students have applied their knowledge of natural resource conservation to individuals, groups, schools and community projects. (20pts)

5. To be completed by the local SWCD: Outline why you are nominating this teacher for the Conservation Education Award (List special projects, student involvement, conservation benefits to the community, and/or other information as appropriate, etc.) (20pts)

Judging Criteria

A review committee will be established by the VASWCD. Judging is based on data provided in response to items under "Application" and on supporting materials. All materials should support the following question: How has the teacher shown concern, scope and originality in incorporating natural resource conservation into his or her curricula? Judges' decisions are final.

Deadlines

Nominations must be received by September 8, 2023 and may be sent to the VASWCD Office at 7308 Hanover Green Drive, Suite 100, Mechanicsville, VA 23111 or emailed to maura.christian@vaswcd.org

Recognition

Teachers in both elementary (grades K-5) and secondary (grades 6-12) categories will be recognized on state and local levels by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

Educators who win at the local level should be recognized by their local conservation district.

Local winners are then sent to the state competition. An elementary winner and a secondary winner will be selected. These state winners receive a State Teacher of the Year certificate and \$250.00 provided by the VASWCD Educational Foundation and any other awards or recognition the state deems appropriate.

Sponsors

The Conservation Education Awards are cosponsored by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts Educational Foundation and Local Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

2023 Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award Application

Teacher's Name: _____

Category: _____ Elementary (grades K-5) _____ Secondary (grades 6-12)

School: _____

Grade level/subject: _____

Local SWCD: _____

As part of the process, all applicants will be required to provide a narrative including responses to the questions below. Although not required, you may include pictures and other information as appropriate. Please include a letter of reference from a school administrator, co-worker, community organization, etc. Applications may be submitted as a hard copy or single pdf file via e-mail.

1) Describe your program for involving students in the betterment of natural resources; and describe the areas of study incorporated in your conservation education program. (20pts)

2) Describe any assistance received from community organizations or resource specialists from local, state or federal agencies or organizations. (20pts)

3) Explain how the program is being extended to other grades, other areas and to people in the community. (20pts)

4) Document how your students have applied their knowledge of natural resource conservation to individuals, groups, schools and community projects. (20pts)

5) To be completed by the local SWCD: Outline why you are nominating this teacher for the Conservation Education Award. (List special projects, student involvement, conservation benefits to the community, and/or other information as appropriate, etc.) (20pts)

All nominations should be received by September 8, 2023 to:
Virginia Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts
7308 Hanover Green Dr., Suite 100
Mechanicsville, VA 23111
Maura.christian@vaswcd.org