



EMPLOYEE AWARD DESCRIPTIONS

BEHIND THE SCENES HERO AWARD

This award is given to salute an employee or team whose tremendous efforts, skills, and talents have repeatedly and consistently **supported and enabled others** to advance the Sierra Club's mission, vision, or values in a significant way; Or accomplish a large and important project. This employee or team is an invaluable contributor who can be consistently relied upon by others for their highest service standards.

Purpose and Eligibility: This award was developed to recognize the contributions of an employee or team that is internally facing or support staff to lift up those that work behind the scenes whose fantastic work would not otherwise be recognized; Current National or Chapter employees who have at least one year of service are eligible or a team of employees.

CHANGEMAKER AWARD *(Formerly the Community Service Award)*

This award is given to acknowledge an employee who is committed to transformative change by developing just relationships inside Sierra Club and in the communities we work in; and/or by helping others through public service or community involvement. A Changemaker is a resilient, kind, collaborative person who inspires others to follow in their path.

Purpose and Eligibility: Recognition of work within and reaching beyond Sierra Club, which may include interacting with partners or outside communities to help build a more just world and help Sierra Club live out its values; Lifting up the [Jemez Principles](#) in Sierra Club's work; Current National or Chapter employees with at least 2 years of service are eligible.

NEW CHAPTER AWARD: GRASSROOTS CHAMPION AWARD

Sierra Club's Chapters' connection to local, regional and state issues enables us to uniquely and powerfully engage at the grassroots level across the country. Chapter employees are most directly involved with supporting and empowering Sierra Club's volunteers, who have been an integral part of almost every environmental victory in the U.S. over the last century. It is for this reason that Sierra Club has dedicated an award to celebrate and acknowledge the critical work of Chapter staff to advance the Sierra Club's mission at the grassroots level. This award is given to a Chapter employee or to a Chapter team who has demonstrated incredible spirit and tenacity in the work they do at the local and regional level.

Purpose and Eligibility: Recognizing and celebrating the unique work of Chapter employees as an integral part of Sierra Club's work at the grassroots level; Current Chapter employees with at least 2 years of service are eligible or a team of Chapter employees

LARRY MEHLHAFF AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

This award was created in honor of Larry Mehlhaff, Sierra Club's first organizing representative, to recognize an individual or team's excellence in any area of their work. The recipient(s) has a distinguished record of achievement in any of the following: advancing our programmatic work; developing new ideas and strategies; implementing systems, programs and/or services through collaborations or team efforts that move us toward a more just, sustainable world. This award honors staff that advance the Sierra Club's mission while modeling respect, integrity, reliability, a collaborative spirit, humility and good humor.

Purpose and Eligibility: Individual or team's work whose work has reflected and strengthened Sierra Club's vision, values, and mission for protecting the natural and human environment, and/or recognize an individual or team's excellence in any area of their work; models respect, integrity, reliability, a collaborative spirit, humility and good humor; Current National or Chapter employees with at least 3 years of service are eligible or a team of employees

History: Larry Mehlhaff joined Sierra Club field staff in 1984 and led the Sierra Club's efforts to block oil and gas leasing and development in national forest roadless areas and wilderness. Larry helped organize the passage of the Wyoming Wilderness Act and assisted wilderness and wild river campaigns in Colorado, Wyoming, Utah, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Nebraska. Larry approached his work with a combination of deep knowledge, dedication, smart strategy, inclusiveness, equity, professionalism, humility, humanity and good humor.

As Deputy National Field Director, Larry was a key leader in moving the Conservation Department (now the Program Department) to become a best in class organizing program. Larry was instrumental in the design of our organizing program and was a mentor and trainer in the craft of organizing for many Sierra Club staff and volunteers. In addition, while Larry served in this role he worked hard to bring together in a collaborative spirit the work of the Conservation Department and relatively new Advancement Department major gifts program.

Larry was loved and respected by the staff and volunteers of the Sierra Club he interacted with. He operated from a place of respect, integrity, professionalism and hard work, bringing in an equal amount of strategy, strong listening skills, experienced insight, and a little bit of mischievous humor -- that always helped to move Sierra Club forward. He was always good on his word and when he said

he would deliver, he delivered. "Larry has spent his life speaking for the prairies, mountains and wildlife with passion and good cheer. More importantly, he inspired others to join that work", said by Executive Director Carl Pope in awarding Larry with the John Muir Award in 2006. Larry sadly passed away from brain cancer in 2006. This award was created to honor the spirit of Larry Mehlhaff and his commitment to excellence in his Sierra Club work.

VIRGINIA FERGUSON SPIRIT AWARD

Virginia Ferguson was the very first employee of Sierra Club. This award was created in her honor to recognize an employee whose spirit, integrity, and distinguished service are an inspiration to the rest of the staff. Commitment to the organization is demonstrated not only through competence but with an extraordinary spirit, and unquestionable integrity that makes this recipient's performance an inspiration to the rest of the staff.

Purpose and Eligibility: This award was developed to recognize an individual with an inspirational spirit, distinguished service and commitment to Sierra Club's mission, vision and values; Current National or Chapter employees with at least 5 years of service are eligible

History: Virginia Ferguson was the first employee of Sierra Club. A distinction which she would hold for the next 25 years until the hiring of Sierra Club's first Executive Director. This award honors an employee who has demonstrated consistent and exemplary service to Sierra Club.