



# 2020 PARTNERSHIP AWARDS

*Celebrating the Best in Public Lands Partnerships*

## About the Partnership Awards

The Public Lands Alliance Partnership Awards Program recognizes individuals, organizations, publications, products, programs and services that **embody leading edge achievements in the preservation of public lands and the enrichment of visitors.**

**This program recognizes excellence in public lands partnerships, innovative solutions to challenges and outstanding programs and events that enhance the visitor experience on public lands.**

Since 2003, the Public Lands Alliance (PLA) has led this program to celebrate public lands partners. The award program categories include:

- Agency Leadership
- Corporate Stewardship
- Public Lands Partners
- Innovative Product of the Year
- **Outstanding Public Engagement**
- Publication of the Year

Award Winners and Honorable Mentions are selected by a volunteer awards committee and the PLA Board of Directors, and announced at PLA's annual Convention and Trade Show.

All public lands nonprofit organizations, affiliated companies and agency partners are welcome to submit entries to this program, regardless of membership, corporate partnership or affiliation.

As the national organization for public lands nonprofits, PLA welcomes entries from a diverse range of partners supporting national forests, parks, recreation areas, refuges, state and local parks and other public lands.

## 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

The 2020 Partnership Awards received 65 entries. In total, PLA presented 16 Award Winners and 10 Honorable Mentions, plus one popular vote winner at the 2020 Convention and Trade Show in **Arlington, VA on March 4, 2020.**

Congratulations to this year's recipients for their exceptional efforts to communicate the value of our public lands. Thank you to all those who submitted to this program, who volunteered their time to evaluate entries and who joined us in Arlington to celebrate public lands partnerships.

# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

## Agency Leadership Award

This award recognizes a public land management agency employee for outstanding accomplishments in championing, cultivating and leading partnerships. The award is presented to an individual currently employed by a federal or state public land management agency.

This year, the program recognized three individuals:

### **Janet Carrier Ady, Bureau of Land Management (Retired)**

Janet, recently retired from the BLM, served as the Chief of the Education, Interpretation and Partnership Division, providing national level program support, training and products for environmental education, interpretation, volunteer management and partnership programs.



Janet previously worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as an environmental education and training specialist, the Chief of the NCTC Division of Education Outreach and a Senior Advisor.

She was also a vital member of the Public Lands Alliance's Effective Partnerships Task Force in 2016-2017.

### **Christopher Davis, Cuyahoga Valley National Park**

Chris Davis has had a transformational impact on the Cuyahoga Valley National Park and northeastern Ohio through his innovative and collaborative approach to natural resource management through partnerships.

In Chris's role as the park ecologist, he is in charge of all vegetation management and restoration activities. He has cultivated a huge volunteer workforce in partnership with the park's volunteer management office, which is co-managed by the NPS and the Cuyahoga Valley National Park Conservancy.



In 2019 alone, 2,028 volunteers contributed 11,900 hours toward Chris's habitat restoration projects, and Chris has worked with and through the Conservancy as fiscal agent to garner more than \$600,000 in funding for these restoration projects through grants.

### **Ashley Nettles, White River National Forest**

Throughout Ashley's tenure as a wildlife biologist with the Dillon Ranger District of the White River National Forest, she has excelled in working with nonprofit and community groups to find innovative solutions to complex environmental problems.

To address the problem of growing resident populations and thus busier roadways in her district, Ashley initiated a stakeholder and data-driven process to create the Summit County Safe Passages Connectivity Plan for Wildlife.



The Plan identifies several important areas for wildlife throughout the county and provides recommendations for protecting wildlife movement corridors and reducing wildlife vehicle conflicts in each priority area.

# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

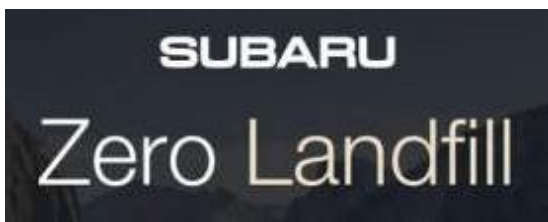
## Corporate Stewardship Award

This award recognizes a company that has demonstrated exceptional achievement to enhance the quality of the visitor experience in our public lands. It is presented to a company that has made an impact through activities like product development, cause marketing and philanthropic support.

This year, the program recognized two companies:

### Subaru of America, Inc.

**Nominated by Denali Education Center**



In 2004, Subaru of Indiana Automotive became the first automotive assembly plant in America to achieve Zero Landfill status.

This focus led Subaru to approach the National Park Service in 2015 with interest in supporting long-term investment in national parks by assisting with reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills.

In 2016, the National Park Zero Landfill Initiative was launched with the objective to use Subaru's expertise and financial support to identify, test and promote practices that reduce the amount of trash parks send to the landfill.

### Teva®, a Division of Deckers Brands

**Nominated by Grand Canyon Conservancy**

In honor of the Grand Canyon National Park's Centennial, Teva launched a footwear collection, "GC100," celebrating the Centennial through Teva's

"\$100K for 100 Years" pledge donation to the Grand Canyon Conservancy.

Honoring Teva's commitment to fostering adventure in the outdoors, a portion of the donation went to the Canyon Field



School, providing scholarships for underserved youth to attend immersive educational experiences at the Park. The other portion was used to fund restoration work on Bright Angel Trail, their most heavily trafficked trail.

## Public Lands Partner Award

This award recognizes an exemplary partnership for a stunning achievement to protect and preserve our public lands and enhance the experiences of their visitors and users.

This year, the program recognized three recipients and their partners:

### The Conservancy for Cuyahoga Valley National Park and Cuyahoga Valley National Park



In October 2019, the Boston Mill Visitor Center opened as the new front door to Cuyahoga Valley



# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

National Park (CVNP), marking the first time the park has been able to welcome guests at a centralized visitor center in their 45 year history.

For this 10 year project, the Conservancy for CVNP raised \$7.1 million, purchased and donated the property and managed planning, design and construction of the visitor center buildings, grounds and exhibits.

The NPS worked alongside the Conservancy at all stages of their work and provided \$1.6 million in funding for parking and the railroad crossing, as well as managed its construction.

## Discover Your Forest and Deschutes National Forest



Discover Your Forest has been the official friends group for the Deschutes and Ochoco National Forests for six years.

In September 2019, Discover Your Forest and Deschutes National Forest worked together to provide a stewardship component to REI's Leadership Conference, which enabled over 300 volunteers to provide extensive clean-up support to Cabin Butte Pit, a long-neglected forest area popular with ATV riders and hikers.

## Save the Redwoods League and California National Parks

Since 1918, the Save the Redwoods League has protected 216,000 acres, created more than 60 public parks with protected forestland and connected billions of visitors to the redwoods.



The League has partnered with the National Park Service and California State Parks to launch Redwoods Rising, an accelerated, collaborative and large-scale effort to restore 70,000 acres of logged forests.

The League has also supported the Giant Sequoia Parks Online Resources for Teachers and Students, a distance learning program that lowers the economic, geographic and social barriers to K-12 state park visitation.

## Innovative Product of the Year

This award recognizes an interpretive product created in partnership by a nonprofit organization and a land management agency that embodies a path-breaking approach to achieve a public lands mission.

### Award Winner

## Grand Canyon Polaroid Camera by Grand Canyon Conservancy and Parks Project

The Grand Canyon Polaroid Camera, refurbished from retro polaroid cameras, allows people to experience a landscape without a screen, but also with

# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

the immediate satisfaction of having a photo in hand to share with friends and family.

Developed through a partnership between the Grand Canyon Conservancy, Parks Project and Retrospekt, the camera was an absolute success, selling out of all 192 units within two months of the product launch and reaching audiences nationwide.



In the words of our judges: “Great way to call attention to the parks and attract both newer and younger audiences for which Polaroid cameras have become retro-hip, and older generations

## Award Winner

### The Recreation Impact Monitoring System by Colorado Mountain Club

In 2019, the Colorado Mountain Club (CMC) launched the Recreation Impact Monitoring System (RIMS) mobile application to allow agency staff and trained volunteers to collect detailed information on recreation infrastructure, activity and impacts on public lands.



By leveraging trained volunteers and outdoor enthusiasts as citizen scientists using this “pocket sized volunteerism” tool, CMC gained access to real-time data that would have taken staff decades to collect.

In just 4 months, CMC trained over 200 volunteers who collected 1,600 assessments on public lands in Colorado, identifying over 700 trails and dispersed camping issues.

## Outstanding Public Engagement

This award recognizes exemplary products, displays, programs or services created in partnership by a nonprofit organization and a land management agency that advance meaningful and sustainable connections between individuals and America’s public lands.

There are two sub-categories for Outstanding Public Engagement.

- Product or Display
- Program or Service

This year, the program recognized two Award Winners and two Honorable Mentions for Outstanding Public Engagement, Product or Display:

## Award Winner

### America’s Best Restroom 2018 by Ding Darling Wildlife Society



Restrooms are some of the most visited “spaces” in public lands, and they can be a major missed opportunity for educating visitors ranging from all ages.

# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

What was once a blank white slate in the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge Visitor Center & Education Center is now an immersive educational space, which visitors will remember and take that messaging home.

In addition to educating visitors about wildlife and habitat, the restrooms emphasize the importance of water quality and water itself as a vital resource to our livelihood and local economy.

In the words of our judges: “What an incredible idea. Very catchy exhibit with excellent photos and illustrations. Interpretive info is short but sweet to take best advantage of the opportunity in this closed environment.”

**Award Winner**  
**HPPA Annual Report**  
**by Hawaii Pacific Parks Association**



After a tremendously challenging year of natural disasters that resulted in the evacuation and temporary closure of Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park, Hawaii Pacific Parks Association (HPPA) recognized an opportunity to make new and stronger connections with the community.

The goal of HPPA's 2018 Annual Report was to create a timeline designed to showcase these extraordinary events and the ways in which HPPA and

the NPS continued to fulfill their missions while still supporting the other five park partners in Hawai'i and American Samoa, despite having lost access to their main offices and warehouse.

The digital version of the report was widely shared, promoted by the local news and embraced by the community, increasing awareness of the vital roles of publiclands nonprofits.

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This year, the program recognized two Award Winners and one Honorable Mention for **Outstanding Public Engagement, Program or Service:**

**Award Winner**  
**Celebration of East Bay Regional Park District's 85th Anniversary and Regional Parks Foundation's 50th Anniversary by East Bay Regional Park District & Regional Parks Foundation**



The East Bay Regional Park District's Anniversaries Celebration plan was built upon the desire to express gratitude to and engage with t dedicated stakeholders.

Their goal of public engagement was accomplished through an agency-wide collaboration among all departments, the Regional Parks Foundation as well as agency partners, community leaders and local businesses.

In celebration, a broad spectrum of programs and activities were implemented, including a 5-day Special Parks Districts Forum, a 3-day Children and Nature Conference, an Honoring the Founders commemoration, Free Park Fridays and a series of free concerts and festivals.



# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

## Award Winner

### **“We the Keepers” - Zion National Park’s Centennial Celebration by Zion National Park Forever Project**

The “We the Keepers” Centennial Campaign was unique in that it revised typical events for a centennial to maximize the experience for existing visitors while developing new events far outside the park boundaries, seeking to engage a new audience specifically interested in National Park preservation.



In total over 100,000 new donors were engaged in the Centennial fundraising event, and a combined total of over 20,000 were reached in events outside of the park.

In the words of our judges: “Zion engaged in creative solutions to address a problem of not being able to hold events in the park. Working with park partners and their surrounding communities, they were able to instill enthusiasm for their mission, while positively affecting their bottom line, donations and raising awareness.”

## Honorable Mention

### **The National Park Experience Pavilion at the Tucson Festival of Books by Western National Parks Association**

## Honorable Mention

### **The Crystal Cave Tour for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Visitors Project by Sequoia Parks Conservancy**

## Honorable Mention

### **Vietnam Women’s Memorial 25th Anniversary Commemoration by Eastern National**

## Honorable Mention

### **Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge STEM Showdown by New Mexico Highlands University**

## Publication of the Year

This award recognizes a book or other publication created in partnership by a nonprofit organization and a land management agency that embodies innovation in educating and interpreting public lands to its readers and impacts a substantial audience.

Two awards are granted for this category. One is granted to a nonprofit whose gross revenue is less than \$1.5 million per year and one is granted to a nonprofit whose gross revenue is more than \$1.5 million per year.

For nonprofits with less than \$1.5 million per year gross annual revenue, the program recognized one Award Winner and two Honorable Mentions:

## Award Winner

### **I Spy... Isle Royale by Isle Royale & Keweenaw Parks Association**

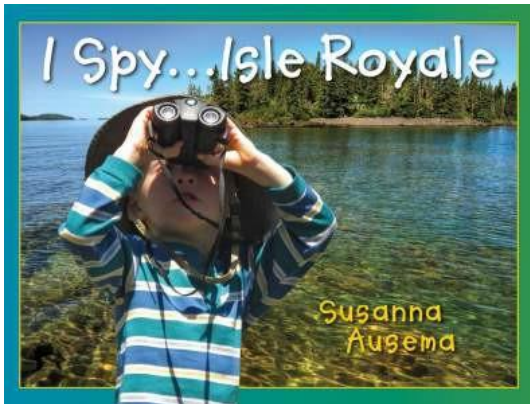
This book was specifically designed for children under 10, an underserved audience for accessible information about public lands and especially about the remote Isle Royale National Park.

The rhyming text and simple watercolor images appeal to younger children while the inclusion of scientific

# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

and historical information make the book informative to people of every age.

The book's publication has made a significant contribution to educating and interpreting Isle Royale for children and adults, selling around 350 copies in its first six months.



In the words of our judges: "This book creates a nice reading experience for both children and adults. The combination of the poetry style content and the more concrete, factual content provides a nice balance that I think would engage children and adults, and allows for deeper conversation on each page between the readers."

## Honorable Mention

**Marking Milestones: Progress in Conserving Lands in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed**  
by Chesapeake Conservation Partnership

## Honorable Mention

**The Jewel Cave Adventure: 50 Miles of Discovery Under South Dakota**  
by Black Hills Parks and Forests Association

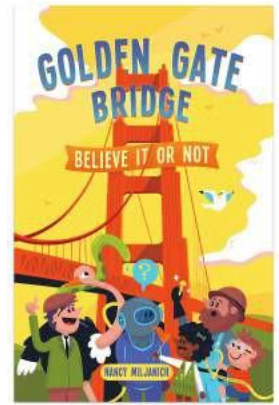
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For nonprofits with greater than \$1.5 million per year gross annual revenue, the program recognized one Award Winner and two Honorable Mentions:

## Award Winner

**Golden Gate Bridge: Believe It Or Not**  
by Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

This collection of 43 short stories, aimed at young readers, was published to achieve the Conservancy's goals of welcoming new audiences to the Golden Gate Bridge, encouraging diverse learning styles and sharing multi-vocal stories from the Park.



The book's innovative format, including an interactive quiz and a comic book style illustration, helps to tell a wide-ranging history of the famous bridge and the lands surrounding it.

In just three weeks of sales, over 200 copies were sold. In the words of our judges: "The overall design is modern and engaging. It is delicate to balance cartoon illustrations that aren't overly childish, but this book does just that. Each spread is thoughtfully laid out and unique, while still cohesive to the overall theme. The content truly does bring each story to life in a way that is both detailed and accessible to readers of all ages."

## Honorable Mention

**Wildheart: The Daring Adventures of John Muir**  
by Yosemite Conservancy

## Honorable Mention

**Torry in the Land of the Arches**  
by Canyonlands Natural History Association



# 2020 Award Winners and Honorable Mentions

## Partners Choice

The Partners Choice Award is an opportunity for the public to vote online for their favorite submission to the Innovative Product of the Year, Outstanding Public Engagement of the Year and Publication of the Year categories. One winner with the most votes is recognized as the Partners Choice Award Winner.

Applicants were encouraged to share the opportunity with their networks and more than 3,000 votes were tallied for 2020's online round of voting.

### Award Winner

#### **Millers Historical Demonstrations by Great Smoky Mountains Association**

In today's age of modern machines, many don't often see the inner workings of items important to our history. Yet, at Minus and Cable Mills in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the public can view the rushing waters and spinning parts that allow the mills to function.



The Great Smoky Mountains Association (GMSA) employs full-time millers at these locations who interact visitors and speak to them about the functions and significance of these mills.

Through their interpretive skills, GSMA's millers enhance visitors' understanding of the mountain communities, how people raised and stored their own food, how they used a barter system and how their resourcefulness allowed them to accomplish impressive things, like building a mill.

## Thank You!

Thank you to the PLA Board of Directors for evaluating nominations to the Agency Leadership, Corporate Stewardship and Public Lands Partner categories and to the awards committee for evaluating entries to the Innovative Product of the Year, Outstanding Program of the Year and Publication of the Year categories.

### 2020 Partnership Awards Committee

Laurel Alyn-Forest  
Carol Cole  
Heidi Doyle  
Geoff Elliot  
Jessica Green  
Debbie Ketel Speas

Bonnie Lippitt  
Debbie Piscitelli  
Beth Pratt  
Adonia Ripple  
Lulu Santamaria  
Mark Tilchen

No member of the awards committee participated in evaluating entries for which their organizations or companies submitted to this year's program.

## Thank You to Impact Photographics

For over 35 years, Impact Photographics has been bringing nature's beauty to the world through the art of photography. Impact has gained its reputation for excellence by combining beautiful images by world renowned photographers with the highest product quality materials and workmanship.

Impact Photographic's support gave PLA the opportunity to promote this program, manage the submission of entries, raise awareness about the work of public lands partners and grant customized award plaques to this year's Award Winners.