

CRITERIA FOR BUNCOMBE ENVIRONMENTAL LEADERSHIP AWARD (BELA)

The BELA seeks to honor men, women, children and businesses whose actions and leadership have made a positive impact on the environment. Whether by helping to improve the management of natural resources, demonstrating new ways to tackle climate change or raising awareness of emerging environmental challenges, the BELA should serve as an inspiration for transformative action across Buncombe County. The recipients of the BELA will be models for environmental awareness, protection and advocacy.

CATEGORIES

There are up to four award categories designated to honor a broad scope of participants for their achievements in environmental stewardship, education and action. Winners will be selected from the following categories:

Individual

The recipient of this award will be an individual who has provided notable contributions to an environmental cause or organization in one or more of the following: leadership, innovation, volunteer efforts or financial contributions.

Business

The recipient of this award will be a business entity (for profit or non-profit) who has demonstrated one or more of the following conditions:

- Incurred costs and/or risks that would have been avoided had they followed standard protocol, such as:
 - Invested in specialized equipment that conserves natural resource
 - Devoted time to education and training related to environmental awareness or conservation
 - Assumed risk in the ability to recoup additional costs
- Implement a policy or systematic change in operations and procedures that would have a positive impact on the natural environment
- Demonstrated leadership, innovation or volunteerism for environmental causes

Youth

The recipient(s) of this award will be an individual or group under the age of eighteen (18) that demonstrated natural resource conservation in one or more of the following categories: water, wastewater, reuse water, residuals and biosolids, land, air quality, or stormwater. This award is geared towards youth who are making a concerted effort to protect, serve and educate on behalf of the environment. Such factors indicated in "Individual" award category are also considered exemplary.

Institutional

The recipient of this award will be an institution (government entity, or any public or private school within Buncombe County) that has been innovative in any area of environmental awareness, protection or stewardship. This includes demonstrated leadership in green principles, reduction of its ecological footprint, and/or energy innovation.

ELEGIBILITY

- To be eligible for consideration, nominees must either be residents of or operate within Buncombe County.
- Businesses may be non-profit or for profit and do not need to be headquartered in Buncombe County. Businesses must operate within Buncombe County. Locally-owned businesses are encouraged.
- Elected officials are not eligible while they are serving in public office.
- Environmental actions should be voluntary or demonstrate a unique attention to, and innovative implementation of, mandated processes.

SELECTION PROCESSES

The selection of award winners will be coordinated by the Environmental Advisory Board. A minimum of six (6) people will sit on the selection committee. The committee will consist of a minimum of five (5) EAB members, plus one (1) representative of the Buncombe County Commissioners (selected by the Commissioners). Members of the selection committee will be residents of Buncombe County.

SELECTION CRITERIA

Top scoring candidates will be considered by the selection committee. Nominations will be scored based on the criteria and scoring listed below. Projects will be evaluated as much as possible on the quantifiable results that positively affect the environment.

- **Need & Implementation** (0-30 points)
 1. A clear and compelling environmental need
 2. Overcome challenges to complete
 3. Support existing environmental initiatives or plans (please cite the plan and describe the way it is supported)
- **Innovation, creativity and originality** (0-20 points) - How innovative were the methods, strategies and ideas applied?
 1. A clearly innovative, creative and original approach to environmental stewardship
 2. Creative solutions to common problems
- **Partnering and Cooperative Conservation** (worth 0-15 points) - Create or further sustaining relationships with other parties to achieve shared environmental goals
 1. Communication with multiple stakeholders interested in the action
 2. Executed actions in partnership with another organization or group

- **Scope of Project Impact** (worth 0-15 points) - How has the applicant demonstrated vision, foresight and persistence? Were there measurable results? How has the applicant improved the capacity for our ecosystems to provide us with resources (clean air, clean water, fertile soil and biodiversity, etc.)?
 1. Contributions of actions significantly improves the environment
 2. Ability to have others replicate your actions
 3. Institutionalized actions into business or educational model
 4. Impacts had significant impact within Buncombe County and may extend beyond one community and/or into adjoining counties
 5. Demonstrated outstanding environmental leadership

NOMINATION & AWARD TIMELINE

Nominations will be solicited at the beginning of the year and the winners will be presented the awards at a regularly scheduled meeting of the Buncombe County Commissioners.

January – Call for nominations

March 1 – Nominations closed

March 16 – Jury Review & Notification

April 17 (Approximate Date) – Presentation of Awards (to be determined by Buncombe County Commissioners)

APPLICATION PROCESS

It is asked that nominations do not exceed more than three (3) typed pages expressing how each nominee addresses the criteria above. Please include the following in each submittal: name and contact of the nominee, name and contact of person making the nomination, relationship of person making nomination to the nominee, organization making the nomination and that of the nominee, and the award category .