

34th Annual Emerald Awards

Nomination Guidelines

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About the Emerald Awards

The Emerald Awards showcase the organizations, projects, and individuals across Alberta working to address environmental challenges and build a more resilient and sustainable future.

Since 1992, the Emerald Awards have showcased nearly 400 recipients and 900 finalists who are raising the bar in addressing environmental and climate change issues. These environmental awards are the only program in Canada to recognize environmental excellence across a diverse range of sectors.

What do Emerald Award Recipients receive?

- **Provincial Recognition:** Your work will be highlighted across Alberta through our website, social media channels, and at the Emerald Awards ceremony increasing visibility for your project or organization
- **A Sustainable Trophy:** Recipients are awarded a sustainable and locally crafted Emerald Award trophy
- **A \$1500 Grant:** Recipients receive a grant to further support and expand their environmental initiatives or donate to the environmental charity of their choice
- **A Feature in the Emerald Documentary Series:** Your story of environmental excellence will be featured in the Emerald Documentary Series, highlighting the impact of your work

1) Nomination Requirements

To nominate for the Emerald Awards, you must meet the following requirements:

- Your organization, project, or initiative must be based in or directly impact Alberta
- Nominations must be first-party, except for our Lifetime Achievement Award
 - **For example:** *If you think “Non-Profit A” is doing great work in the community and want to nominate them in the Community Group or Nonprofit Category, you cannot do so, as this would be a third-party nomination. However, if Non-Profit A nominates themselves, it qualifies as a first-party nomination*
- Nominations must include a third-party reference letter
 - *We define a third party as any group or person who is not directly involved in the administration or operation of a project or organization nominating for the awards. We encourage nominees to get references from people, groups, or organizations who have benefitted from your work and can speak to the impacts*

2) Nomination timeline and details

Nominations for the 34th Annual Emerald Awards open November 1, 2024 and close February 10, 2025, at 11:59 PM MST

Once you’ve decided to nominate for the Emerald Awards, follow these steps to get started on your nomination:

- Choose your category:** Review the 15 Emerald Award categories (**listed below**) to determine which one aligns best with your organization, project, or initiative
- Fill out the online form:** Get started on your nomination using our [online form](#). You can save your progress and return later
- Gather your supporting materials:** You can upload up to five attachments, such as photos, videos, or additional letters of support
- Upload your reference letter:** A third-party reference letter is required to submit your nomination
- Submit your nomination:** Once all sections are complete, submit your form by 11:59 PM MST on February 10, 2025

After you submit your nomination, it will be reviewed and scored by our [third-party panel of volunteer judges](#). The scoring will focus on the environmental and social impact demonstrated through your answers in [sections 3-7](#) of the nomination form. **Please note:** While only these four sections are scored, the judges will evaluate and consider your entire submission during the review process.

After each nomination is reviewed and scored, the judges will shortlist up to three candidates in each category. The shortlisted nominees will be announced on March 21, 2025.

3) Award Categories

Legacy Categories	
<i>Celebrating individuals or organizations that have made a lasting impact through sustained excellence in addressing local, regional, or global environmental issues.</i>	
Business	Recognizing businesses that integrate environmental sustainability into their core operations, driving both economic success and positive societal impact.
Community Group or Nonprofit	Recognizing community groups and nonprofits that support a resilient and sustainable future by addressing environmental challenges.
Education	Recognizing educational organizations and institutions that inspire and empower learners to engage with environmental issues, cultivating environmental stewardship.
Government	Acknowledging government bodies that lead by example, implementing policies and initiatives that prioritize environmental sustainability, setting a standard for governance that benefits all communities.
Youth	Celebrating young leaders 25 and under who are driving environmental change through their voices and/or actions, helping to shape our collective future.
Lifetime Achievement	Honouring individuals who have dedicated their lives to advancing environmental causes, leaving a lasting legacy through years of innovation, leadership, and stewardship.

Project and Initiatives Categories	
<i>Showcasing projects and initiatives that demonstrate excellence in addressing and mitigating local, regional, or global environmental challenges.</i>	
Water	Recognizing projects and initiatives that steward, manage, and/or protect water, ensuring the resiliency and sustainability of this vital resource.
Air	Recognizing projects and initiatives that improve air quality by reducing emissions, contributing to cleaner and healthier communities.
Land	Recognizing projects and initiatives that improve the land through conservation, restoration, and/or responsible management practices.
Energy	Recognizing projects and initiatives that contribute to the positive transformation of our energy systems, promoting innovation, efficiency, and the adoption of sustainable solutions.
Waste Management	Recognizing projects and initiatives that demonstrate innovation in waste reduction and help contribute to the circular economy.
Infrastructure	Recognizing projects and initiatives that change the way we develop and design roads, buildings, and other critical infrastructure while balancing economic, social and environmental implications.
Wildlife & Biodiversity	Recognizing projects and initiatives that protect, restore, or conserve natural habitats and/or wildlife, promoting biodiversity and fostering ecosystem resiliency
Public Engagement & Outreach	Recognizing projects and initiatives that actively engage, educate, and empower the public, providing the tools and knowledge needed to make informed environmental decisions and inspire collective action toward a more sustainable future.
Shared Footprints	Recognizing collaborative projects and initiatives between diverse groups or individuals to achieve positive environmental outcomes.

4) Nomination Process

To get started on your nomination [click here!](#)

A. Nomination Form Overview

There are nine sections within the nomination form:

1. Category selection
2. Introduction
3. Nomination Overview
4. Environmental Benefits and Impact
5. Community Impact
6. Alignment with the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#)
7. Alignment with [The Seventh Generation Principle](#)
8. Supporting materials
9. Reference letter

B. Supporting Materials

At the end of the nomination form, you can include digital materials to support your nomination. You can select up to five attachments to include. Here is a list of acceptable file types: .pdf .docx, .jpg, .jpeg, .tif, .tiff, .png, .mp3, .m4a, .wav, .mp4, .mov, .zip, .xls, .ppt, .pptx, .xlsx

Out of respect for the capacity of our third-party panel of volunteer judges, we ask that you keep your support materials concise (ie. please don't attach a 30-minute-long video or a hundred-page document)

In the past, nominees have included a variety of support materials to bolster their nomination, here are some examples:

- A short video giving an organization/project overview
- A short PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the project/organization's impact
- News articles

- Promotional pamphlets
- Additional letters of support

C. Reference Letter

As mentioned under [‘nomination requirements’](#), you must include a third-party reference letter in your nomination.

- *We define a third party as any group or person not directly involved in the administration or operation of a project or organization nominating for the awards. We encourage nominees to get references from people, groups, or organizations who have benefitted from your work and can speak to the impacts*

This reference letter is intended to provide external validation and confirmation of your work and its impacts. Think of it as your opportunity to have a third party boast about how wonderful your organization/project is and why it deserves to win an Emerald Award!

D. Word Limits and Formatting

To ensure clarity and fairness for all nominees, we have set word limits for each section of the nomination form. These limits help focus your responses on the most important details of your project or initiative. Please keep the following in mind:

- **Be concise:** Use the word count to your advantage by providing clear and focused answers. Avoid unnecessary details and stick to key points that highlight the significance of your work.
- **Edit for impact:** After drafting your responses, review them to ensure every word serves a purpose. This will help you make the most of the word count while keeping your narrative concise and compelling.
- **Use supporting materials wisely:** If applicable, use supporting materials like images or charts to reinforce your written responses
- **Bullet points and lists:** Bullet points can make your responses more readable and organized. However, ensure that each point still conveys a complete thought and supports the key information you're presenting

E. Writing a Strong Nomination

To make your nomination stand out, follow these tips to ensure your submission is clear, impactful, and memorable:

- **Explain your work as if speaking to someone unfamiliar with it:** Our judges may not have the same background knowledge as you, so it's important to present your project or organization in simple terms. Avoid excessive acronyms or jargon, and ensure your story is accessible to all.
- **Highlight innovation and uniqueness:** What sets your nomination apart? Showcase any innovative approaches, technologies, or methodologies that contribute to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Emphasizing what makes your work unique is key to standing out.
- **Demonstrate continuous improvement:** Share how your project has grown or evolved over time. Talk about lessons learned, any adjustments made along the way, and/or your ongoing efforts for improvement. This shows your commitment to long-term success and adaptability.
- **Include both qualitative and quantitative data:** Combining qualitative stories with quantitative metrics gives a fuller picture of your impact. Whether it's environmental improvements or community engagement, using both types of data helps the judges see the complete scope of your work.
- **Proofread before submitting:** Always take a moment to review your nomination before you hit submit. Reading it out loud or sharing it with a colleague for feedback can help catch any errors and ensure your message is clear and polished.

5) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

a. Can previous recipients nominate again?

As long as you are nominating for a scope of work that is outside of what you previously received an award for, you can nominate again.

For example: if you received an award in 2015 for your watershed conservation project and now you want to nominate your outreach project that educates citizens on the importance of watersheds, you are able to nominate.

b. Can I nominate multiple projects from the same organization?

Yes, as long as they are in different categories.

c. What if my project/organization fits into multiple categories?

Choose the category that best aligns with your primary focus and impact. While you must select one main category in your nomination form, you can indicate a secondary category; This allows our third-party panel of volunteer judges to move your nomination to the secondary category if they believe it's in your best interest

d. Can I nominate a project that is still in progress?

Yes, as long as there is demonstrable progress and measurable impacts that can be evaluated. Highlight any early results and future potential.

e. Will I receive feedback on my nomination if I am not selected?

Yes, all nominees not selected for the shortlist will receive feedback from our third-party panel of volunteer judges.

6) Contact Information for Support



Sabrina (Bri) Huot

Communications & Engagement Specialist
sabrina@emerald.foundation.ca



Marisa Orfei

Executive Director
marisa@emerald.foundation.ca



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Accelerating environmental excellence since 1992