



# 2026 Awards and Recognition Program

## Hugh Hammond Bennett Award

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### **Selection Guidelines:**

- Past award winners may not reenter for a period of five (5) years after receiving an award. Commissioners are not eligible for Teacher of the Year Awards. Associate Commissioners are eligible for Teacher of the Year Awards.
- Regional Nomination forms must be received by SCACD no later than Tuesday, June 30, 2026, to be considered. If mailing nominations, please mail at least one week in advance to ensure receipt by the deadline. SCACD is NOT able to accept entries received after Tuesday, June 30, 2026.
- If, in the judgement of the judging panel of the Awards Committee, there is no nomination at hand that meets the criteria for a SCACD award, no award will be given.
- You MUST include a Cover Sheet with each nomination that includes the following detail: Award Category, Nominee's Name, Nominator, Date Submitted.
- Electronic files will be accepted as supplemental materials to the application. They will not be accepted in lieu of an application. Electronic files may include: newsletters, scanned letters of recommendation, photo files, Word documents, etc. Please do not submit more than 2 pages of electronic files per application.
- If submitting a nomination electronically, please consolidate all files into one PDF for each nomination.
- Please email your completed nomination to [awards@scacd.org](mailto:awards@scacd.org) or mail a hard copy to SCACD, 5 Geology Rd. Columbia, SC 29212.
- Guidelines for each award must be strictly adhered to in order to be considered for the award.

### **Judging Panel of the Awards Committee:**

The judging panel for the 2026 SCACD Regional Awards will be comprised of Area District Commissioners (up to 4), the SCDNR Conservation Districts Area Coordinator, the SCACD Area Representative, an NRCS Regions Representative (volunteer), and one Area District employee (volunteer).

Area Award winners will be submitted for statewide awards. Statewide winners will be nominees for National awards.



# 2026 Awards and Recognition Cover Sheet

**Award Category:**

**Nominee's Name:**

**Nominated By:**

**Date Submitted:**



# 2026 Hugh Hammond Bennett Award Application

## Description:

The National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) created the Hugh Hammond Bennett Award for Conservation Excellence in 2017 to honor the legacy of Hugh Hammond Bennett by recognizing producers and conservation planners from within the NCP partnership who have exemplified outstanding service through development and implementation of sound conservation planning and other conservation techniques.”

## Criteria:

- **Commitment to Conservation;** Nominee’s commitment to conservation, showing they have a current conservation plan and demonstrate commitment to following and monitoring their plan.
- **Civic Engagement;** Demonstrating commitment to civic engagement and service at the local, state or national level. This includes their length through elected or appointed service to a local soil and water conservation district; a resource conservation and development council; a local or state government body; or membership or service in other local, state, or national organizations.
- **Pioneer New Approaches to Conservation Planning and Implementation;** Embracing and incorporating into their management strategy new and innovative conservation planning tools (i.e., Field Print Calculator, 4-R Nutrient Stewardship, etc.).
- **Advancement of Soil Health Adoption;** Nominees not only have adopted soil health practices on their own land or operation but have also championed soil health through a variety of community outreach and educational activities.

## Nominations Must Include:

- General information about the nominee.
- Picture of the nominee.
- A letter of recommendation that includes the following: a summary of the nominee and how they are meeting the above criteria; an explanation of how this nominee is contributing to the conservation of South Carolina’s natural resources.

**Candidate’s Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**District or Group Submitting Nomination:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator’s relationship to Nominee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominator’s Contact Information:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate’s Address, City, State, Zip:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Candidate’s Cell Phone:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Communication:** Provide details of the nominee’s ability to communicate effectively and cultivate personal and professional relationships with diverse groups of farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, state, local and tribal government officials, non-profit organizations and businesses relative to conservation planning and implementation techniques.

**Relations:** Describe the nominee's working relationship and development of partnerships with diverse groups of farmers, ranchers, forest landowners, state, local and tribal government officials, non-profit organizations and businesses relative to conservation planning and implementation techniques.

**Education and Training:** Describe the nominee's accomplishments in youth and/or adult education and training of others in conservation planning and implementation techniques including other staff, partners, local farmers, ranchers and forest landowners. The nominee should also demonstrate a commitment to professional development.

**Application of Conservation Planning and Implementation:** Describe the nominee's assistance and technical contributions that have led to the application of outstanding conservation planning, implementation, and monitoring techniques demonstrating innovation on a variety of land uses that address local resource concerns and improve environmental performance.

**Complexity of Work and mix of Achievements:** Describe the nominee's work complexity and highlight the mix of accomplishments in each type of activity. The write up should illustrate the nominee's commitment to and responsibilities in conservation planning and implementation of techniques to address resource concerns that improve environmental performance.

**Professional Activities:** Describe the nominee's activities and involvement with professional conservation organizations that have contributed to the nominee's outstanding application of conservation planning and implementation techniques. Examples include, but are not limited to, the Soil and Water Conservation Society, Society of American Foresters, Ecological Restoration Society, The Wildlife Society, Society for Rangeland Management, American Society of Agronomy and American Forage and Grassland Council, etc.

Please send your completed applications to [awards@scacd.org](mailto:awards@scacd.org). You may include up to two pages of supporting documents (photos, newspaper articles, etc.) in addition to this application, the letter of recommendation and photo.