VISIONARY LEADER AWARD

2027 Nomination Announcement

About the Award: The Visionary Leader Award (VLA) is presented by PARC's Joint National Steering Committee (JNSC) to recognize an individual who exemplifies extraordinary leadership, vision, and commitment to PARC in a manner that has elevated PARC to new heights. Award recipients, if eligible, will receive a cash prize of $1,000 and an engraved, commemorative plaque. Please visit https://parcplace.org/about/parc-awards/parc-visionary-leader-award/ to learn more about the award and past recipients.

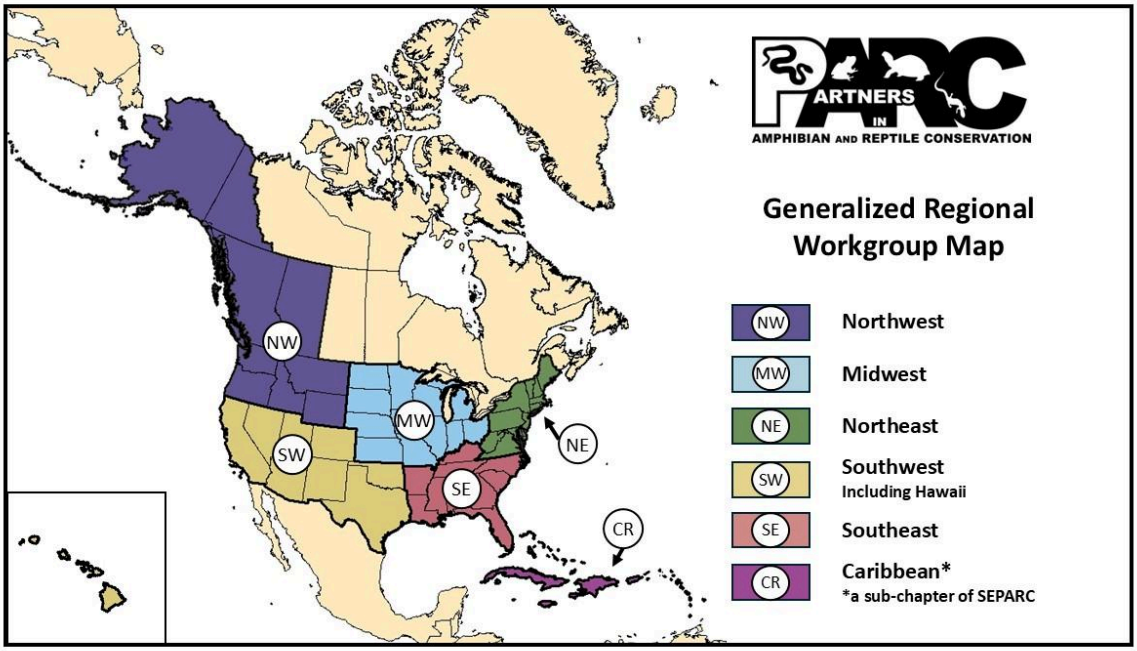


Figure 1. Map showing active PARC areas. In practice, many PARC regions cross political boundaries and partners work across regions. These are generalized areas.

Eligibility:

At this time, only U.S. citizens are eligible for receiving the cash award associated with the Visionary Leader Award. Current JNSC members (Table 1.) are not eligible to receive the Visionary Leader Award.

Award Criteria:

Nominations for the VLA will be made **by the JNSC members, in collaboration with regional, federal, state, and other member partners.** The award shall be presented no more than once per year (though not necessarily each year) based on the merit of candidates nominated. Please work with your Regional JNSC representatives (see Table 1 below) if you would like to be a part of a nomination. Nominees must meet at least one of the two following criteria:

1. Has made distinguished, sustained contributions (i.e., multi-year, valuable, repeated contributions/efforts) that carried PARC to new heights.
2. Has demonstrated **extraordinary** leadership, vision and commitment to PARC in a manner that is inspiring to their peers while forwarding the PARC mission. This award targets individuals who go **above and beyond**.

Additionally, all nominations must also include:

- A required statement regarding the Nominee's perspective, experience, or contributions to increase diversity and advance inclusion of under-represented groups of people in herpetofaunal conservation.

PARC is dedicated to promoting inclusivity and collaboration as core values, with a strategic focus on improving equity within the herpetofaunal conservation community. We strive to create diverse and inclusive environments and networks for those involved in herpetofaunal conservation. PARC's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Team (DEITT) actively works with our membership to integrate these principles throughout the organization. In addition to recognizing excellence in the field of herpetology, the Visionary Leader award highlights the nominee's commitment to this core value.

Nominations should be for individuals whose efforts at the **REGIONAL** *or* **NATIONAL** level broadly contributed to or benefited PARC in terms of accomplishment(s) and leadership provided and resulting impacts of the work, regardless of age or professional experience of the nominee.

Nominees must observe and uphold the highest standards of scientific integrity and professional behavior, and must uphold PARC's Code of Ethics and Meeting Code of Conduct.

Nominee:

Name:
Mailing Address:
PARC Area(s) of Contribution (Region(s) or National):
Phone:
Email:

Nominated by:

Name:
PARC Region(s) and/or National:
Phone:
Email:

Nomination:

Please adhere to the word and page limits (6 Total), or the nomination will not be considered.

1. **In 200 words or less**, please describe and provide examples of:

    a. The distinguished, sustained contributions (i.e., multi-year, valuable, repeated contributions/efforts) that carried PARC to new heights,

    AND / OR

    b. How the nominee has displayed extraordinary leadership, vision and commitment to PARC in a manner that is inspiring to their peers while advancing the PARC mission.

2. **In 2 pages or less**, please provide brief biographical information that documents long-term efforts, accomplishment(s), leadership provided, and examples of the resulting impacts of the work initiated by the nominee.

3. **In 200 words or less,** describe the nominee's perspective, experience, or contributions to increase diversity and advance inclusion of under-represented groups of people in herpetofaunal conservation.

4. [*OPTIONAL*] **Using no more than 6 pages total,** you may provide a letter or letters of support. This page limit is inclusive of signatures (i.e., you cannot submit a 6-page nomination with 2 pages of signatures for 8 pages total). Recommended formatting for nomination packets is 12-point font with 1-inch margins. Nomination packets should be submitted as a single PDF file. Please adhere to the word and page limits, or the nomination will not be considered.

Please note that nominees are evaluated on the merit of the nomination, not on the number of letters of support or the number of supporting signatures per each letter.

Submission:

Please complete and submit nomination packages through the **PARC Visionary Leader Award Nomination Form**.

Deadline for Submission: January 8, 2027

Nominations received after this date and incomplete forms will not be considered. The award winner will be notified in Spring 2026.

Selection Process:

PARC JNSC members (Table 1.) will review nominations, evaluate carefully against the criteria, and vote anonymously to determine the selection.

Table 1. Current voting members on PARC's Joint National Steering Committee.

JNSC MEMBER	PARC ROLE	TITLE AND AFFILIATION
Executive Committee		
Melissa Youngquest	JNSC Senior Co-chair	Reptile and Amphibian Conservation Coordinator, Florida Fish and Wildlife Commission
Dede Olson	JNSC Junior Co-chair	Research Biologist, John G. Shedd Aquarium
Mark Mandica	DEI Representative	Executive Director, Amphibian Foundation
Michelle Christman	National Federal Agencies Coordinator	Fish and Wildlife Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Brad O'Hanlon	JNSC Ex-officio Chair	Southwest Program Coordinator, Amphibian and Reptile Conservancy
Midwest PARC		
Callie Klatt Golba	Senior Co-chair	Associate Professor, St. Cloud State University
Mic Rohde	Junior Co-chair	
Northeast PARC		
Beth Schlimm	Senior Co-chair	Amphibian and Reptile Program Leader, West Virginia Department of Natural Resources
Harrison Goldspiel	Junior Co-chair	Graduate student, West Virginia University
Northwest PARC		
Daniel Trovillion	Senior Co-chair	Veterinary Medical Officer, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Jason Reilly	Junior Co-chair	Fish Biologist, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Southeast PARC		

Houston Chandler	Senior Co-chair	University of Central Florida
Cyndi Carter	Junior Co-chair	Director of Science, The Orianne Society
Southwest PARC		
Cassidy Lee	Senior Co-chair	Biologist, Project Manager, US Fish and Wildlife Service
Dalton Neuharth	Junior Co-chair	Lead Biologist, Origin Ranch Texas
DoD PARC		
Dave McNaughton	DoD PARC Representative	Natural Resources Specialist, US Navy
Chris Petersen	DoD PARC Representative	Senior Natural Resources Specialist, US Navy
At-large Members		
Sara Walker	Zoos and Aquariums Representative	Senior Advisor on Wildlife Trafficking, Association of Zoos and Aquariums
Federal Agencies Steering Committee		
Brad Jost	Federal Agencies Steering Committee Senior Co-chair	Wildlife Biologist, US Bureau of Land Management
Amy Commens-Carson	Federal Agencies Steering Committee Junior Co-chair	Southern Region Fisheries Program Manager, USDA Forest Service
AFWA Amphibian and Reptile Committee		
David Golden	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Committee Chair	Director, New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
Becky Gwynn	Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies Amphibian and Reptile Conservation Committee Vice-Chair	Deputy Director, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources