



## *Introducing the Assisi Award for Faith-based Conservation*

A new awareness is emerging among the world's religions. Increasing numbers of individuals and organizations recognise that the moral responsibility to protect and conserve all life on Earth is integral to the teachings of their faiths. However, this trend has risen within a secular conservation framework that lacks a global structure for recognizing selfless acts of faith-based service to life on Earth. The Religion and Conservation Biology Working Group (RCBWG) of the [Society for Conservation Biology](#) (SCB) seeks to address this gap by creating the *Assisi Award* for conservation efforts that are motivated by religious faith. The name of the award celebrates a historical meeting held in Assisi, Italy, in 1986 on initiative of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh and at that time President of WWF International. In that occasion, important declarations in favor of the environment were for the first time issued by leaders of all major world religions. The town of Assisi was chosen as the site of the event for its connection to St Francis, a saint ecumenically admired and respected also by non-Christians in virtue of his reverence for nature and tight bond with the natural world.

The *Assisi Award* recognizes that religious and spiritual motivation springs from the depths of being, and is an enduring source of meaning for billions on the planet. As such, it constitutes a fundamental driver of conservation action. This award will reinforce the ongoing dialogue amongst faiths and conservation by acknowledging organizations and individuals that are demonstrating through their successes that faith-based conservation is contributing significantly to the common global effort of conserving life on Earth. The award will target initiatives from around the world that are conceived in the context of both mainstream religious groups and indigenous spiritual traditions.

These are the criteria that will be followed to assign the award:

- Evidence that nominator visited the location site/area of the nominated conservation project(s), including the date of visit(s) and names of the key project(s) participants interviewed. This evidence and the related details may alternatively be collected by a member of the Awards Committee, if the nominator did not personally visit the project.
- Evidence of faith-based conservation activity and description of its spiritual/religious context (e.g., a document describing the project(s), the motivations that drove it, and the names of the communities and key representatives involved; OR a web page providing this information; OR, if pertinent, an announcement of funding and/or a report to a donor regarding project(s) progress/completion). It is key that the conservation activities nominated are fully cognizant with and motivated by the spiritual values of the faith tradition in whose context they have been promoted.
- Evidence of the conservation goal(s) achieved through faith-based initiatives (e.g., report to a funding organization; OR web site describing project(s) results; OR scientific articles(s)/other grey literature). Although not strictly required, quantitative evidence of conservation success shall add weight to the nomination.
- The quality of the supporting material (e.g., evidence of visits to the project(s) location and personnel, audio-visual material, exposure in news and media, social media, articles in scientific journals or grey literature, broader social and/or political impacts).
- The names, affiliations, and contact information of two referees who can attest to the faith-based project(s) being nominated. Evidence that at least one of the referees has visited the project(s) personnel and location shall be required, if analogous evidence was provided neither by nominator nor by a member of the Awards Committee.

For more information and nomination forms contact:

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