

2027 ILCN Conservation Visionary Awards

Background

Every three years, the ILCN holds a Global Congress bringing together conservation practitioners, policymakers and decision-makers advancing private and civic land conservation to share insight and good practices on topics such as conservation finance, law and policy, governance and leadership, land stewardship, and large landscape conservation.

At each Global Congress the ILCN celebrates the achievements of private and civic land conservation practitioners, organizations and initiatives in the host country and internationally by honouring visionary leaders and organizations who are setting strategically significant global precedents.

Past Awardees

The ILCN is dedicated to recognizing "whole of society" conservation efforts that reach across national territories and a wide range of social sectors, including First Nations, government agencies, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, private corporations, and academic institutions. Past awardees include:

The Minister of the Environment of Chile, Marcelo Mena, accepting recognition on behalf of his government for its collaboration with Kristine and Douglas Tompkins and Tompkins Conservation in establishing what has become a 28-million-acre conservation corridor in Patagonia; and subsequently, Michele Bachelet, President of the Republic of Chile at the ceremony in Patagonia at which the agreement regarding the Ruta de los Parques was signed to accept the award;

Humberto Delgado Rosa, Director for Biodiversity in the European Commission's Directorate General for the Environment, accepting recognition for the EC's leadership role in creating the Nature 2000 initiative- one of the world's largest official networks of protected lands- as well as for the EC's role in the establishment of the European Land Conservation Network;

Miquel Rafa Fornieles, conservation director at the Fundacion Catalunya la Pedrera, accepting the honour on behalf of the public, private, academic and NGO sectors of the Province of Catalonia in Spain, in recognition of Catalonia's historic protection of more than 30% of their territory over the past half-century;

Jack and Laura Dangermond, founders of Esri, the largest Geographic Information System software supplier in the world, in recognition of Esri's donation at no or low cost of GIS software to land conservation NGOs around the world, and in recognition of their funding and ongoing support of The Nature Conservancy's Dangermond Preserve on the coast of California;

Mandy Gull-Masty, Grand Chief of the Grand Council of the Crees (Eeyou Istchee) and Chairperson of the Cree Nation Government, on behalf of the many individuals who contributed to the implementation of the Cree Regional Conservation Strategy; and

Anne Richardson, Chief of the Rappahannock Tribe in Virginia, for her leadership in returning her tribe to their ancestral lands along the Rappahannock River and preserving—in perpetuity—their natural and cultural importance.

2027 Conservation Visionary Awards

Two Conservation Visionary Awards will be presented by the ILCN at the 2027 ILCN Global Congress co-hosted by the Australian Land Conservation Alliance (ALCA) in Naarm (Melbourne), Australia. The awards will honour ambitious and exemplary initiatives whose remarkable contributions are achieving lasting conservation impact.

One visionary leader, organization or initiative will be selected from each of:

- Australia (the host country), and
- outside Australia.

Selection Criteria

Awardees will be chosen based on the following criteria:

Visionary Leadership: Advances a compelling conservation vision that inspires others, with a demonstrated long-term commitment to land and water and /or community-led conservation.

Strategic Global Impact: Serves as an inspiring example for conservation initiatives worldwide, with significant relevance for policy, practice, or innovation in conservation in multiple geographies.

Enduring Contributions: Demonstrates ability to sustain large-scale, long-term conservation outcomes and lasting impact.

Collaborative and Inclusive Approach: Reflects engagement with, and respect for, local communities, Indigenous Peoples, NGOs, and all other partners, for inclusive, equitable, and relationship-based conservation strategies.

Alignment with ILCN Mission: Embodies ILCN's mission to advance civic and private land conservation, through collaborative, cross-boundary approaches.

Nominations

Nominations may be submitted through this [online form](#). Nominations close on September 1, 2026.

Selection Process

An Awards selection committee comprised of ILCN and ALCA representatives and partners will review nominations and make a final recommendation to ILCN.

Please contact Robin Beckham, Policy Analyst at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, at rbeckham@lincolninst.edu with questions.