

# imagine excellence

*Imagine Excellence: The 2017 George Wright Society Awards*

CONNECTIONS ACROSS PEOPLE, PLACE & TIME

*The 2017 George Wright Society Conference  
on Parks, Protected Areas, and Cultural Sites*

NORFOLK, VIRGINIA • THURSDAY, APRIL 6, 2017

# Connections Across People, Place & Time

*The 2017 George Wright Society Conference  
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## **Imagine Excellence: The 2017 George Wright Society Awards**

*Norfolk, Virginia • Thursday, April 6*

### **Master of Ceremonies**

Nathalie Gagnon

*President, George Wright Society*

### **Presentation of the Awards**

*Members of the GWS Board of Directors*

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WHAT IS OUR *praise and pride*  
BUT TO ***imagine excellence,***



AND *try to make it?*

— RICHARD WILBUR

## The George Wright Society Communication Award

ROLF DIAMANT

Over the past forty years, Rolf Diamant has consistently used writing, speaking, and civic engagement to advance national park and protected area conservation. Throughout his career with the National Park Service he has worked to encourage dialogue among colleagues and academic partners, and to reach out to a broader public to promote active engagement and stewardship. Rolf's writing has provided a critical perspective on key issues facing protected areas, and has often provided historical contexts for analyzing current challenges, ideas, and innovations.



2 | His “Letter from Woodstock,” a regular feature in *The George Wright Forum*, covers topical, and often controversial, issues such as Yosemite’s lost trademarks and the display of Confederate battle flags in national parks. Some letters have critically reviewed the release of major reports such as *Revisiting Leopold: Resource Stewardship in the National Parks*, and *Imperiled Promise: The State of History in the National Park Service*. Others have focused attention on current topics generally relevant to the park and protected area community.

He recently co-edited *A Thinking Person’s Guide to America’s National Parks*, a brilliantly illustrated collection of probing essays on the growth, diversity, meaning, and challenges facing the national park system in its second century. Written for the general public, this book was designed to engage readers in a wide range of urgent and compelling issues not covered in more conventional guidebooks.

— nominated by Dwight T. Pitcaithley

*A movie slipped by last year with relatively little notice entitled “Genius” — an account of Max Perkins’ days as book editor at Scribner, where he edited the compendious work of Thomas Wolfe, among others. I certainly do not compare myself in any way with the likes of Thomas Wolfe (in particular I hope I don’t share any of his less appealing personality disorders displayed in the film). However, I certainly do share Wolfe’s heartfelt appreciation for a partnership with a really extraordinary editor. In my case, my Max Perkins is Dave Harmon. It was Dave who first suggested I revive Bill Brown’s “Letter from Gustavus” column that he wrote in the 1990s for The George Wright Forum. Five years and fifteen essays later, my “Letter From Woodstock,” still is as it always had been: a close collaboration of ideas and words.*

*Dave is an all-weather, all-purpose editor: all-weather, because he is never discouraged by any challenge (when his fellow co-editors of A Thinking Person’s Guide to America’s National Parks disagreed, they turned to Dave for a solution); all-purpose, because Dave is a first-rate copy editor, photo editor, and publication designer. His ability to invariably find just the perfect word is also an attribute of an accomplished writer, which Dave is.*

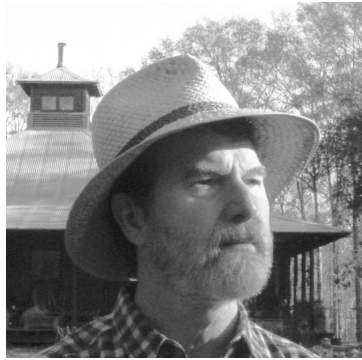
*I wish to say thank you to Dave, Rebecca Conard, the Forum’s able co-editor, and the Board of the George Wright Society — not only for this very thoughtful award, but also for the greatest gift of all, the privilege of writing for the Forum and its readers.*

✂ **Rolf Diamant**

## The George Wright Society Cultural Resource Achievement Award

EDWARD J. CAZAYOUX, FAIA

Eddie Cazayoux is the principal of EnvironMental Design, in Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, and professor emeritus in the School of Architecture & Design at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), where he taught for 30 years and was the director for 13 years. As an early proponent of environmental design, a lifelong admirer of vernacular architecture and history, and a natural teacher, Eddie has had a wide impact



on students and on preservation of cultural resources across the Gulf Coast region. He has preserved numerous historic buildings ranging from grand plantation houses to modest vernacular structures. His contemporary designs are informed by historical examples and benefit from a thorough understanding of local environmental conditions that results in truly sustainable and resilient architecture.

Eddie is the author of many articles and books, including *A Manual for the Environmental & Climatic Responsive Restoration & Renovation of Older Houses in Louisiana*. He has received awards from the US Department of Energy, National Park Service, AIA Louisiana, and State of Louisiana. He was elevated to a Fellowship in the American Institute of Architects and is an active member of the US Green Building Council. He holds a Masters of Architecture and a Masters of City Planning from Georgia Tech and received his architecture degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana (now ULL). He has received many grants for his research and work in historic preservation and sustainable design and has presented papers on French colonial architecture & settlements throughout the world.

— nominated by Andy Ferrell

*I want to thank the George Wright Society for existing; for protecting and supporting the natural and cultural places of the world. And I especially want to thank them for this unexpected award.*

*I believe that access to special natural and cultural sites is a gift we all deserve and should take advantage of. It gives us a chance to connect with the natural environment and our cultural past. Who we are and how we developed are special observations that make us more human and social. We developed, as a human race, with a very close relationship to the natural environment. The natural environment is part of our soul and psyche. We have constantly removed ourselves from this with help from television, air conditioning, the automobile, and all the technology that we have developed over the years. We were a different culture when we lived WITH the natural environment. The George Wright Society protects those places where we can reconnect to the natural environment and culture. These places help us appreciate who we are and provide a stage that allows us to dance to the rhythms of the changing seasons.*

*A dance that brings mankind a little closer to the wonders of the natural world. A dance that makes life richer, and “not, when we come to die, discover that we had not lived.”*

— Henry David Thoreau

✦ **Edward J. Cazayoux, FAIA**

## The George Wright Society Natural Resource Achievement Award

JOHN DENNIS

Often the front-line defense of National Park Service (NPS) resources rests with the knowledge, skills, and commitment of field resource managers and superintendents. We duly recognize these frontline champions. Yet for a coherent approach to resource management across the diverse national park system it is vital that up-to-date science-based natural resource management policies be in the hands of every field manager. That this has been the case is a reflection of John Dennis.



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John has shepherded the evolution of NPS natural resource policies through decades of rapidly expanding ecological understanding of natural systems and the building local, regional, national, and global impacts to them. Spanning “primitive vignettes” to “dynamic systems,” John has acted as a synthesizer and interpreter of science, and often the crafter of policy language that guides managers in attaining the Organic Act’s high resource protection ideals. Many of NPS’s forward-thinking policy developments (for example, natural sounds/soundscapes) reflect John’s direct hand. John’s tenacious dedication has been particularly important in maintaining consistent, science-based, and defensible natural resource policies through periods of intense political challenge. Because of his reputation for both intellect and objectivity, John was chosen as the final arbiter in strengthening the natural resources sections of the Management Policies in 2006. While still an Alaskan field researcher at heart, it is John’s steadfast engagement as an objective professional in developing and overseeing the evolution of NPS Management Policies that has resulted in them being based on sound and up-to-date science. The value of John’s quiet dedication and determination is as great as it is up to now unheralded.

— *nominated by Michael Soukup*

## ***Career-Long Partners in Learning***

*One learns from park experiences, whether writing or exploration,  
Dropping radio in lake, poor start for effective communication.  
On horseback, forest so dense, not like chopper, over tundra so tree less,  
Writing EIS instructs so clearly — keep raw data out, avoid conundrum's mess.  
Seeing science in park — mark/recapture mosquitoes — it can be done,  
With bears and humans — learn persistence, and coexistence can be won.*

*One learns by teaching, then seizing advantage from two way street,  
Instruct about policy — then policy formulation becomes so clearly discreet.  
Talk resource management — it's managing humans, not resources, of course,  
Teach wilderness science — discover must trammel, must develop, to preserve nature's force.*

*One learns as substitutable widget — can't be beat,  
Arctic guy, spending time in Hawaii, despite the heat.  
City guy, exploring Canada's parks, from mountains to coastal flat,  
Park guy, studying at Merchant Marine Academy, how weird is that?*

*Learning from colleagues is key to it all,  
Government is team, together, wall to wall.  
Collegial discussion — creativity among diverse minds,  
In office, on travel, wherever, making friends — of all kinds.*

*One learns from mentors, receiving wisdom, veritable spice of life,  
Friendly words, kindly thoughts, say be gone to unwanted strife.  
New experiences, new ways of working, new channels of thought,  
Myriad pathways, untrodden trails, new opportunities to be caught.*

*George Wright got us started, down park's intellectual trail,  
GWS expands our learning, broadens experiences, without fail.  
I thank my partners, colleagues, mentors for this recognition,  
It reflects commitment, among us all, to collaborative expedition.*

✍ **John Dennis, January 17, 2017**



## The George Wright Society Social Science Achievement Award

**KERRI CAHILL**

In her 15-year tenure at the National Park Service Planning Division, Kerri Cahill has been a tireless advocate for advancing social science in parks. In that time she has been a champion for planning and research related to visitor use in parks and protected areas. She has been involved with plans related to visitor capacity, visitor use impacts, crowding, and overall use of national parks. She has been able to retain



some of the most qualified names in the nation to conduct social science studies that helped inform plans and enabled managers to make sound, scientifically based decisions about visitor use.

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Her body of work has elevated the profile of social science at the national level, and demonstrated the strategic importance of social science data to park management. Most recently, Kerri spearheaded the initiative to form the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council, which is charged with integrating social science into park planning and management across all six member agencies. The fruits of this endeavor have produced the new Interagency Visitor Use Management Framework, which will help parks and protected areas address 21st-century issues at a national level. She has built up a team of visitor use specialists at the Denver Service Center from one, five years ago, to six today—which in the current political environment is amazing.

Kerri embodies what the national parks are about. She strives every day to find the best way, often through scientific inquiry, to provide visitors with the best possible experience while still maintaining the integrity of the resources.

— *nominated by Jeffrey Skibins and Ryan Sharp*

*Supporting the National Park Service mission is an amazing career, so receiving the social science achievement award from the George Wright Society is a truly special honor. I sincerely appreciate the nomination by Ryan Sharp and Jeff Skibins.*

*There are many mentors and colleagues who have been a vital part of my journey — I share this honor with all of them. To the talented professionals at the Denver Service Center, I'm so proud of our efforts to help advance planning and visitor use management within the NPS. Special thanks to the visitor use management team for sharing their expertise and unflagging enthusiasm with so many parks and programs. You inspire me every day. I'm also grateful to my first NPS mentor, Marilyn Hof, a true pioneer in visitor use management. Also, thanks are due to Patrick Gregerson, along with other agency leaders that have supported the need to further NPS efforts in visitor use management. To my colleagues on the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council, thank you for your innovation and unwavering dedication to sharing knowledge and working across agency lines. Thanks also to park staff and researchers for their partnership and continued advancement of this important discipline.*

*Significant thanks are due to my graduate advisor, Jeff Marion, who helped me fully appreciate the value and intricacies of integrating science into land management.*

*Finally, I'd like to thank my family, particularly my husband, Kevin, and my parents, Joe and Donna, for their shared love of parks, and unwavering encouragement and support.*

**✦ Kerri Cahill**

## The George Melendez Wright Award for Excellence

LORAN FRASER

Loran Fraser has long been at the cutting edge of building a progressive agenda for the US national park system. He first played a pivotal role as the National Park Service Chief of Policy to transform the National Park System Advisory Board into an expert working group capable of tackling vital policy issues and new ideas. Loran briefly left the NPS for the National Geographic and National Parks and Conservation Association where he was responsible for conceiving the idea of, marshaling support for, and then directing the National Parks Second Century Commission. This effort produced a fresh vision for the future of the system and NPS, and shaped an action agenda for the incoming Obama Administration.



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Loran then returned to the NPS, as Senior Advisor to the Director, to take charge of a new Advisory Board constituted with many Second Century Commissioners to carry forward the recommendations of the commission. Loran skillfully coordinated working committees to produce a plan for the future expansion of national park system, an updated version of the “Leopold Report” in the era of climate change, a strategy to revitalize lifelong learning and educational innovation and collaboration, a credible system for “economic valuation,” and a 21st-century “urban agenda” for NPS. The success and influence of these efforts is documented in the numerous citations to these works in scholarly journals, including *The George Wright Forum*. When Loran retires (presumably for good this time) he will leave behind a remarkable legacy of change and reform that has gone a long way toward achieving what he would describe as the “higher purposes” of the National Park Service.

— *nominated by Rolf Diamant, Denis Galvin,  
Brent Mitchell, and Nora Mitchell*

*I am deeply honored to receive the 2017 George Melendez Wright Award for Excellence.*

*Over the course of my career, I have been privileged to staff numbers of panels comprised of distinguished citizens, representatives of professional organizations, conservationists, scientists, educators, businesspeople, and leaders with governmental experience whose collective policy recommendations have inspired advances in the stewardship and educational work of the National Park Service. I am indebted to legions of highly dedicated former and current NPS leaders whose collaborative participation in this work has assured our successes along the way.*

*The National Park Service — one hundred years old in 2016 — today pursues purposes that have evolved to extend beyond management and protection of the magnificent, continent-spanning national park system. Administering a broad portfolio of assistance programs, the modern NPS engages with communities across the country to support investments in local parks and cultural sites, work that creates jobs and stimulates local economies, fosters education, promotes civic engagement, advances public health, and enhances ecosystem services. This is a multifaceted mission providing vital public services that improve the quality of our lives. Promoting expansion of the national park idea has been an animating career-long passion.*

*Thank you very much for honoring me with this truly wonderful award.*

**✍️ Loran Fraser**



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