The Western Division of the American Fisheries Society (WDAFS) established the annual Riparian Challenge to encourage the conservation and sound management of riparian habitat in the western United States. Each year, the WDAFS recognizes outstanding achievements in riparian management by bestowing “Excellence in Riparian Management” awards on three projects, including one from each of the following categories: U.S. Forest Service projects, Bureau of Land Management projects, and projects completed by other entities.

We are currently seeking nominations for the 2023 Riparian Challenge Awards. To be considered, the nominated project must have positively affected one or more of the following riparian-related resources:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| * Stream bank stability
* Water quality
* Subsurface water supply
* Recreation/aesthetics
 | * Stream flows
* Aquatic/fish habitat
* Vegetative diversity and recovery
 | * Forage production
* Education
* Terrestrial wildlife habitat
 |

*Eligibility*: To be considered for an award, the nominated project must have directly resulted in improved riparian habitat conditions. Projects that did not directly result in on‑the‑ground improvements, such as land use plans, research projects, handbooks or technical guidelines, are not eligible. Winners from the past two years are not eligible. Projects must be completed; projects in planning do not qualify. To simplify comparisons across entries, individual projects (as opposed to programmatic accomplishments) are preferred.

To enter or nominate a project, please complete the attached form. Entries must be type written and must not exceed 6 pages of text (this instruction page does not count towards that total). An additional 3 pages may be included for photographs and maps and should submitted as a separate document. All entries must be submitted as electronic Adobe pdf documents (preferable) or Microsoft Word documents. To reduce file sizes, please compress photographs prior to emailing or converting to pdf files. Hard copies will not be accepted.

The WDAFS Riparian, Watersheds, and Habitat Committee will select award winners based on the mean number of points awarded by multiple judges. Points will be awarded based on responses to questions and issues raised on the form. The Committee reserves the right to disqualify entries that are incomplete or do not follow instructions. One winner will be chosen from each category.

***Please email entries to asacry@geumconsulting.com.***

***All entries must be received by 5:00 pm, February 24, 2023.***

Nominees will be notified of the outcome of the award selection process by April 1, 2023. All nominees are encouraged to attend the 2023 Western Division American Fisheries Society meeting co-hosted by the Idaho Chapter and Western Division May 8-11 in Boise, Idaho. The Winners of the award who attend the meeting will receive $500 to offset their travel costs and will be publicly recognized at the WDAFS business luncheon during the meeting, and in the 2023 summer issue of the Tributary, the WDAFS’ quarterly newsletter. If you have any questions, please contact WDAFS Riparian, Watersheds, and Habitat Committee Chairperson, Amy Sacry (asacry@geumconsulting.com; 406-381-0858).

*To enter or nominate a project for the 2023 Riparian Challenge, please complete this form. The maximum number of points possible is given in italics for each field. Be sure to answer each question completely – fields will expand to accommodate your text. Please limit your total entry form length to six pages (information page does not count towards total page limit).*

*Up to three pages of supplemental information may be submitted as a separate document.*

**GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION**

*5 points (max) for completion of this section*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Project Title: |       |
| Agency or private industry name: |       |
| Location:(Name of BLM Field Office or Resource Area *or* name of USFS Ranger District and National Forest) |       |
| Date the plan was initiated: |       |
| Project completion date: |  *If it is a multi-phase project, please only submit for the portion of the project that is complete. Monitoring and adaptive management activities may be on-going beyond the completion date.*      |
| Award Category: | Choose an item. |
| Primary Contact Person |  |
| Name: |       |
| Phone: |       |
| Email: |       |

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

*40 points (max) possible in this section. Please only include information for completed phases of the project.*

State the project need. Please include the goals and objectives related to addressing the project need.

*Up to 6 points, based on description of goals and objectives*

The Riparian Challenge encourages interdisciplinary processes and partnerships. List the names and agencies of project participants: Federal government, state government, private landowners, corporations, conservation groups, etc. Please include a description of multi-agency cooperation (if applicable) as well as type of expertise provided by each project partner.

*Up to 4 points, based on number and breadth of participating stakeholders*

List species of fish and wildlife affected by this project.

*Up to 4 points, based on number and range of fish and wildlife species*

Does the project address habitat for threatened or endangered species?

*(up to 3 points, based on number and range of T&E species)*

List resource values that were improved by this project. A resource value may include, but is not limited to, habitat, aesthetics, recreation, water quantity/quality, and other ecosystem services.

*(up to 5 points, based on number and range of resource values improved)*

How many stream miles and/or acres of riparian habitat were improved?

*(up to 3 points based on quality, type, and connectivity of habitat improved)*

Describe the plan for monitoring this project.

*(up to 4 points)*

Describe the plan for disseminating information about this project to the public.

*(Up to 3 points)*

Up to 8 additional points will be awarded based on the overall application. This includes, but is not limited to, clarity and thoroughness of answers, quality of writing, impact of project, and benefits of project not addressed by other scoring criteria.

*(Up to 8 points)*