



# OWAC

Excellence in Craft Awards  
2021

The **Excellence in Craft Awards (EIC)** presented by the **Outdoor Writers Association of California (OWAC)** is a program designed to recognize excellence in the field of outdoor journalism and media communications by media professionals on topics related to the Outdoors. Given annually by OWAC, these awards represent the best achievements in 15 categories as established by the OWAC Board of Directors.

In keeping with OWAC's mission, "to expand public information on outdoor recreation and conservation," these awards are a recognition of excellence as adjudicated by peers in the field of outdoor media communications.

The awards are given for original works published in the prior calendar year (2020) that have a clear connection to the outdoors, including, but not limited to: outdoor recreation, wildlife, public lands, outdoor sports, nature, travel and other outdoor subjects. The majority of the categories focus on writing published in any medium – traditional (print and free-to-air broadcast) or new media (all digital platforms), plus categories for audio, visual, multimedia, and digital communication.

This year the OWAC Board of Directors is offering **cash prizes** and digital certificates for the top places in each category, as merited by the adjudication panel. This is in addition to the pride and prestige of recognition by the leading organization of outdoor media professionals in the West.

Cash Prizes as merited will be given to:

1<sup>st</sup> place = \$75  
2<sup>nd</sup> place = \$50  
3<sup>rd</sup> place = \$25

This year the EIC Awards program will be conducted online, hosted by the digital platform Judgify.me. [The contest website and can be found here.](#)

Please refer to the Contest Rules below for full clarification.

## CONTEST RULES

- 1. The 2021 EIC Awards open for entries at 06:00 on Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 and close at midnight on Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. No extensions will be given.**
- 2. The EIC is open to OWAC members only, whose dues are fully paid at the time of entry.** Previous members whose membership has lapsed are encouraged to pay their dues and renew their membership in order to enter the contest. Please [email the contest coordinator](#) to request a link to renew your membership. Non-members who are active outdoor media professionals are encouraged to apply for professional membership in order to submit entries to this contest. [Please apply for membership here](#). We will endeavor to expedite applications during this contest window.
- 3. Cash prizes and digital certificates will be awarded in each category as merited.** At the discretion of the Judges and the EIC Committee, awards will be given for 1<sup>st</sup> place = \$75, 2<sup>nd</sup> place = \$50, and 3<sup>rd</sup> place = \$25. The committee reserves the right not to award any prizes in a category, or from one to three prizes as determined by the adjudication panel, regardless of the number of entries. *All decisions of the judges are final.*
- 4. OWAC Board of Directors will promote winning entries via traditional media sources and social media platforms.** Entrant is responsible for providing media sources to be notified on behalf of winning entrant.
- 5. There are 15 awards categories for 2021.** See Categories below for specific details about each one.
- 6. Entrant must have received payment for the submitted work.**
- 7. An entry fee of \$15 is required for every submission in each category,** except for category #15, Writer of the Year. See details about category #15 below. *Entry fees will NOT be refunded.*
- 8. The 2021 EIC Awards will be conducted on a digital platform.** See Submission Guidelines below for information about the platform and how to register and enter.
- 9. All entries MUST be original works with a clear connection to the outdoors and must have been FIRST published (posted or broadcast) during the 2020 calendar year.** Contestants must attest to authorship and, if necessary, have approval from the publisher for entry into this awards program. *Honor system prevails.*

10. **A maximum of two (2) entries may be submitted per entrant in any given category, and every entry must be unique, i.e.: the same work may not be submitted in more than one (1) category.** If an entrant submits more than two (2) works in one category, the last entered work will be removed. If any work is submitted in more than one (1) category, the last entered work will be removed. All entries are automatically date and time stamped by the online platform. *All decisions are final.*
11. **Members who are co-authors must register separately and may submit the same work separately in the same or a different category as suitable.** That is, one entry per co-author, per category. If both authors each submit the same work, please be sure to remove all attribution of both authors in each entry, per point 12 below regarding 'blind' judging.
12. **All entrants are responsible for the accuracy of their submissions and calculating the total entry fees due.** See Submission Guidelines below for how to enter and pay the fees.
13. **All entries will be prescreened for adherence to the Outdoors theme and appropriateness to the category entered.** The EIC committee reserves the right to move an entry into a more suitable category or disqualify the entry if it does not meet all the criteria. *Entry fees will NOT be refunded.*
14. **Judging of entries is done 'blind' and entrants are required to submit entries with all personal and identifying familial or collegial attribution removed, as is possible.** All entries will be reviewed for adherence and, where possible, returned to entrants for further scrubbing of personal information. Entries may be disqualified if entry is determined to not adhere to the guidelines. *All decisions are final.*

## CATEGORIES

**Unless otherwise specified, the medium in which an article is published can be in any traditional or new media.**

1. **News Article:** A fact-based article with verifiable attribution about a timely subject.
2. **Feature Article:** An in-depth article about an issue, situation, event, or adventure – usually focusing on the human-interest elements of the story.
3. **Column or Blog:** A regular column or blog article written in the first-person providing an opinion or account of a relevant subject or issue.
4. **Newsletter:** A regular report published at least three times per year with news and information from, about, or to a specific interest group. Three examples from the award year (2020) must be submitted. Please submit one file containing all three examples.
5. **Book:** A fiction, non-fiction, how-to, or guidebook in any format: digital, audio, or hardcopy. The latter must be mailed to: P O Box 50136, Oxnard, CA 93031 postmarked on or before April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Please review the note regarding this category in the online submission form.
6. **Feature Image:** A featured photograph or graphic artwork about an issue, situation, event, or adventure – usually focusing on the human-interest elements of the associated story.
7. **Action Image:** An action photograph or graphic rendering capturing a unique moment-in-time, or real-life event that could never be exactly duplicated, recreated, or repeated.
8. **Audio:** A report, story, podcast or interview presented solely via the spoken word, with relevant sound effects, either stand-alone or episodic.
9. **Video:** A report, story, or interview presented in multimedia video format, either stand-alone or episodic.
10. **Digital Platform:** A website, mobile app, internet technology, or any other digitally accessed platform offering content or solutions with a clear connection to the outdoors.
11. **OWAC Conference related work (closed):** Due to COVID-19 the 2020 OWAC conferences were cancelled and therefore this category is closed.

12. **Phil Ford Humor Award:** Named after OWAC charter member Phil Ford, this category honors work that exemplifies Phil's style of capturing the outdoor world with a wink and a grin – written, image, audio, or multimedia works in any format are accepted.
13. **John Reginato Conservation Award:** Named after OWAC co-founder John Reginato, this category honors work that exemplifies his life-long passion to restore and conserve fish or wildlife resources damaged from neglect – written, image, audio, or multimedia works in any format are accepted.
14. **Medium of the Year:** Any California-based medium that exemplifies excellence in outdoor reporting or content delivery. OWAC members may nominate any outdoor medium for which they work, are contracted to produce content, or simply believe is worthy of this award. Submitters should prepare a short motivation with images and / or links contained within a PDF document to be uploaded for consideration. The recipient of this award will be selected by the EIC Committee. *All decisions are final*
15. **Writer of the Year:** This category is closed for entry. The recipient of this award will be selected by the EIC Committee for a body of work, as entered into these awards and scored highly by the judges. *All decisions are final.*

## SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

The OWAC 2021 EIC Awards can be found [online here](#). The contest is open for registration and submission of entries from Monday, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 at 06:00 to Thursday, April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at midnight.

This contest is open to paid-up OWAC members only. Please check our website for your membership account. Please renew your membership if it is not current or apply for membership at [www.OWAC.org](http://www.OWAC.org) if you wish to join OWAC and enter this contest.

1. Please read all rules prior to registering.
2. Logon to the awards page to register and check the consent boxes in order to be accepted into the contest.
3. You will receive an email confirming your registration and then you can begin submitting entries. All submissions do not need to be made all at once. You can save your work and return to your submissions page at any time to continue. If need be, you may change or withdraw your entry as needed.
4. Entries are limited to two (2) entries per entrant, per category. Maximum number of entries for the 2021 EIC awards is twenty-six (26) in total.
5. An entry fee of \$15 per entry in each category is required to complete your participation in this contest.
6. Once you have finalized all your entries please calculate the total amount owed for all your entries and make a payment via the payment options provided. *Entry fees will not be refunded.*
7. No extensions will be given for late entries.
8. Every entry must have a file uploaded for adjudication. Please read the entry details on the entry forms carefully and upload the correct file type for each category as follows:
  - a. Document files: pdf or txt
  - b. Image files: jpg, jpeg, png, tif, or tiff
  - c. Multimedia files: mp3, mov, or mp4Maximum files size for each upload is 50 MB.
9. A link to the original content may be supplied as reference.

## JUDGING CRITERIA

The EIC Committee will review every entry for adherence to the outdoors theme, suitability for category as entered, and removal of attribution where possible. Entries may be returned, moved, or disqualified at the discretion of the committee.

Once this process has been completed the appointed judges, peers in the outdoor media profession, will be given access to their assigned categories for adjudication.

Judges will review entries and judge each for: 1) originality of subject, 2) quality of content, 3) quality of presentation, and 4) level of professionalism – along with other characteristics pertinent to the category. Aspects such as story construction, grammar, flow, spelling, presentation, reader/user engagement, quality of audio and visuals, and more, will be judged.

The full set of judges' criteria will not be made available for perusal by contestants. This information is reserved for use by the EIC committee and judges.

## TIMELINE

March 1st : Contest opens for submissions at 06:00

April 15th : Contest closes for submissions at midnight

April 16 - 23 : Entries prepared for adjudication

April 24 - May 16 : Judging by peer outdoor media professionals

May 17 - 31 : Tabulate scores, establish winners, prepare announcements and prizes.

June 1 : Announcement of winners in newsletter, website, press releases, and social media.

Winners will also be personally notified. Cash prizes and certificates will be issued after winners' details are confirmed. OWAC Board of Directors will promote winning entries via traditional media sources and social media platforms.