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## Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Development™ Coalition Awards Program Policy Manual

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### 1 Purpose

The Purpose of the Stewardship Development Awards™ Program is to award developers that go beyond compliance in their efforts to protect water quality, preserve wetlands and open space, use green building techniques, and educate the public about their efforts.

### 2 Award Categories.

There are three levels of awards that may be bestowed upon an applicant.

- 2.1 **Outstanding Stewardship Award** is the highest level of distinction available in the Stewardship Development Program™. This honor is only bestowed on projects that have achieved high marks in all applicable criteria as determined by the selection panel. The project must be substantially complete and demonstrate accomplishment of project goals to receive Outstanding Stewardship status.
- 2.2 **Significant Achievement Award** is the next highest level of award for a project that may not be eligible for Outstanding Stewardship. A project may not be eligible for the Outstanding Stewardship Award for a variety of reasons. This is based on 1) level of project completion or 2) accomplishment of applicable criteria. Note that if a project falls short on one or more of the Outstanding Stewardship criteria, the Selection Panel may recommend recognition of specific aspects of a project with a Significant Achievement Award.
- 2.3 **Special Recognition** shall be awarded if a project does not qualify for the Outstanding Stewardship or Significant Achievement distinction, but the project does have elements that qualify for some level of recognition. For example, a project could receive "*special recognition for innovative site planning*" for a project with an approved site plan, even if construction has yet to commence.

### 3 Basic Requirements

In order to qualify for any award issued by the Stewardship Development Coalition (SDC), the project must meet the following basic requirements:

- 3.1 Project must be located in New Hanover, Brunswick, or Pender Counties.
- 3.2 Project must be in compliance with or exceed all applicable local, state, and federal regulations.

- 3.3 Participating Developer/Owner must allow visits to site by the Judges and the Awards Committee and provide additional information as requested for evaluating the project.
- 3.4 Project is subject to periodic evaluation by the Awards Committee.
- 3.5 Project must be a residential subdivision, commercial, or public sector development to qualify. Individual homesites do not qualify.
- 3.6 No sponsor may be considered for an award in a year during which they have made a monetary contribution to the SDC.

#### **4 Application Process**

Applications shall be accepted at any time up to the deadline of the year for which the project is being considered. Each year the application deadline will be the *last business day in July*, and any applications submitted after the deadline will be considered for the following year's Award Program. In order for applications to be complete, they must contain all information listed on the application checklist (Appendix I) and must include a project narrative that demonstrates how the project meets the evaluation criteria (Appendix II).

#### **5 Judges Panel**

A panel of independent review judges will be selected by the Governing Council upon recommendation of the Awards Committee. The Judges Panel shall be comprised of professionals in the fields of engineering, natural resources sciences, planning, architecture, landscaping, and others as deemed necessary by the Awards Committee, based on the applications under consideration. The Governing Council will make the final determination of recipients of the awards from recommendations of the Awards Committee based upon a review of the Judges Panel evaluations.

##### **5.1 Conflict of Interest.**

- 5.1.1 An individual has a conflict of interest if he or she has a financial interest as owner, member, partner, officer, employer, stockholder, contractor of, or other participant in a private business or professional enterprise that will be affected by the outcome of any project under consideration. Personal conflict of interest includes an interest arising from blood or marriage, by consanguinity or affinity within and including the third degrees.
- 5.1.2 It is the responsibility of any Judges Panel member, any Awards Committee member, or any Governing Council member to declare a conflict and to remove themselves from any proceeding concerning the project that generates the conflict.
- 5.1.3 No sponsor may be considered for an award in a year during which they have made a monetary contribution to the SDC for sponsorship.

## 5.2 Judging Process

### 5.2.1 Applicant Screening

After the July 31 deadline, the Awards Committee will meet to review whether the submitted applications are eligible for consideration for the award program. *Examples* of ineligibility include:

- incomplete application,
- project does not meet basic program criteria,
- project previously received an Outstanding Stewardship award,
- project is not located within Brunswick, New Hanover or Pender County,
- project was reviewed for an award in a previous year and no substantial changes have been made.

Once the Awards Committee has preliminarily approved the applications, all eligible applications will then be forwarded to the panel of judges. Applicants will be notified of their eligibility/ineligibility. Applicants will be advised of the reasoning for any ineligible determination. Site visits and applicant presentations will be scheduled at this time. All applicants will be given an opportunity to present their projects' merits to the panel of judges either on the project site or at a neutral location. At the discretion of the Awards Committee, site visits may be waived if a project has not begun work on the ground.

### 5.2.1 Evaluation Process

The Judges Panel will evaluate how well applicants meet the specific criteria established in several principle areas as established by the Awards Committee based on all the information submitted in the application in addition to site visits and presentations by applicants. If a project has been reviewed in the past and did not receive an award or received a lower award, the judging panel will review the evaluation notes from the prior judges and any substantial changes to the project since last reviewed into consideration in evaluating the project. The Judging Panel will review applications to determine projects worthy of Outstanding Stewardship, Significant Achievement, Special Recognition awards and make their recommendations to the Awards Committee. A standard evaluation form will be used to rate the degree to which a project meets relevant criteria. Applications will be judged on the overall creativity, design, and mitigation of environmental impacts of projects. Primary emphasis will be placed on the criteria applicable to each specific project.

### 5.2.2 Award Decision

After site visits have been conducted and judges have submitted their project evaluations, the Awards Committee will meet to go over the judges' recommendations and make final award determinations.

After determinations are made, the Awards Committee will report award recommendations to the Stewardship. Applicants will be notified as to whether they receive an award at least two weeks prior to the Awards Banquet and/or prior to the RSVP deadline. After the Awards Banquet, all eligible applicants will receive a letter thanking them for participation in the program. The letter will include all of the recommendations submitted from the judging panel.

## **6 Award Benefits**

### **6.1 Outstanding Stewardship**

The Outstanding Stewardship awardee will be presented with a yard sign displaying the SDC logo that may be used on site at the award winning project only. The sign is not transferable to other project sites or to other locations. Upon receipt of an Outstanding Stewardship Award, a recipient will be conferred a digital image of the SDC logo which may be used by the recipient in association with the award winning project only and may not be used in general marketing or other ways by the recipient that are not directly related to the award winning project.

### **6.2 Significant Achievement**

The Significant Achievement awardee will be presented with a plaque identifying the project that receives the recognition. There is no right, express or implied, to use the logo of the SDC on any marketing materials or on any other materials. The awardee may make a claim of the award in materials related specifically to the subject project only.

### **6.3 Special Recognition**

The Special Recognition honoree will be presented with a certificate acknowledging the element of the project that merits the recognition. This recognition confers no rights to use the trademarked logo or name of the program in any way in marketing materials. Any reference to receipt of the Special Recognition must clearly be limited to the specific elements receiving recognition.

## **7 Right to Use of Logo**

The logo and name of the Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Development Awards™ Program are deemed a trademark owned by the SDC and shall be used only with the express permission of the SDC Governing Council and for only the purposes granted. The right to use the logo may be revoked at any time at the discretion of the Governing Council upon finding that it is being used in a manner inconsistent with these bylaws or upon a recommendation from the Judges Panel or Awards Committee that the project no longer meets the criteria for continued recognition of the project.

## **8 Retraction of Award**

The SDC, at its sole discretion, reserves the right to revoke any award or recognition for failure to comply with program requirements or criteria. All applicants for awards are required to sign a statement indicating agreement to return any award and forfeit all benefits if it is found by the SDC Governing Council that the subject project failed to maintain the level, nature, and quality development represented in the application. It is understood in applying for the Stewardship Development Awards™ that the applicant authorizes the SDC to make future periodic evaluations to ensure that project continues to meet the standards of the award. Failure to keep a project in compliance with, all applicable local, state and federal environmental regulations or substantial change to a project relative to the elements that resulted in conferring the award are grounds for retraction of an award.