I would like to begin this year’s President’s Message with a heartfelt thanks to Kim Votta, outgoing Waterman Fund President. Having led the Fund for two productive years, we are grateful for her leadership. She remains a great resource and mentor.

OUR 20 YEAR COMMITMENT TO TRAIL WORK
On the eve of 2020, the Waterman Fund is excited to be entering its 20th year! It is a milestone worthy of celebration, reflection, and looking forward to future opportunities. Much changes in 20 years—technology, politics, family, and more; however, many things remain the same. The presence of wildness and wilderness remains an enduring motivation in the lives of those of us at the Waterman Fund. The basic premise to accessing and enjoying the wild in the mountains and hills, however, is the stewarding of trails and its environs. This is what enables so many to enjoy the land without degrading it. As such, the hard and satisfying labor of trail work remains a timeless and very necessary act. Regardless of technological advances trail work still remains, the product of labor, sweat, time, and dedication. Although we have grown smarter in how to move rocks, design trails, and ways to save our backs, when it comes down to it effective trail work remains the product of an enthusiastic individual or crew with tools in hand.

There is something about physical labor such as trail work that can instill a certain sense of confidence and responsibility. The physical labor gives form to our aspirations and values. It is as if we become doubtless in our vision when we apply effort. Dedication coalesces to a long-term vision and a sense of stewardship matures. Such are the efforts of the Waterman Fund. Vision, effort, and continued support has yielded diligent and consistent support of this fundamental work.

ALPINE TRAILS RESTORATION
This year the Fund has awarded $22,000 for alpine trail restoration projects to the Adirondack Mountain Club and the Green Mountain Club (see next page). This is in addition to our annual grants, for a combined total of $31,000 awarded to clubs and organizations. This the highest amount of grant money awarded annually by the Fund since its inception. Because alpine trail work and restoration is costly by its nature—due to remote locations, challenging work conditions, and limited on-site material availability—the Waterman Fund feels it is imperative to leverage funds to address these challenging conditions and financial costs. We believe that supporting this work reverberates far beyond the trail’s tread and contributes towards the fostering of a strong stewardship ethic.
Grants Awarded for Trailwork and Education

By Seth Jones

The Waterman Fund grants program, which was started in 2002, has awarded 98 grants totaling $261,071. These grants have supported trail work, stewardship, education and research across the alpine of Northeastern North America. In 2019 the Fund awarded 4 grants totaling $31,000. This was the first year The Fund offered $15,000 in additional funding towards alpine and sub-alpine trail reconstruction and rehabilitation projects.

TRAIL WORK ON ALPINE SUMMITS

Two of the four grants awarded this year were to help with trail work in the alpine and sub-alpine zone. The Fund awarded the Adirondack Mountain Club $15,000 for their Professional Trail Crew to do trail work on alpine summits in the summer of 2019. Work included rebuilding cairns on Mt. Haystack and dismantling a large rock pile that was created by hikers and damaging vegetation on the summit of Skylight while also rebuilding cairns on that summit also. (see page 4 for Grant Spotlight)

TRAIL REHABILITATION ON MT. MANSFIELD

The Green Mountain Club was awarded $7,000 to complete trail rehabilitation on the Hellbrook Cutoff Trail in Mt. Mansfield’s subalpine zone. The trail is a beautiful alternative to the increasingly popular alpine zone trails, and acts as a respite for hikers seeking solitude. There is a significant backlog of tread improvement which has reached a critical level and must be completed to keep the trail functional.

STEWARDSHIP OF SADDLEBACK AND BIGELOW MOUNTAINS

One grant awarded this year went towards education. The Maine Appalachian Trail Club was awarded $5,000 for the stewardship of Saddleback and Bigelow Mountains. Funds will support expenses associated with the staffing, outfitting and operation of two Appalachian Trail Ridgerunners. From May through October, the Ridgerunners live and work on Saddleback and Bigelow Mountains. They are positioned to reach over 8,000 hikers with alpine education and Leave No Trace outdoor skills and ethics.

INTERACTIVE DISPLAY EXHIBIT

The final grant that was awarded to the Museum of the White Mountains ($4,000) for an exhibit titled, “Walking in the Whites: Why Do We Hike?” which will be an important element of a major exhibit at the Museum entitled, “Walking into the Whites: A Poet/Painter Dialogue. Why Do We Hike?” The project, as part of the larger exhibit experience, will involve the creation of an interactive display designed to engage visitors in wilderness ethics.
Grant Spotlight: Professional Trail Work in the Adirondack Alpine Zone

By Seth Jones

The Waterman Fund was pleased to support the Adirondack Mountain Club (ADK) doing trail work on two alpine summits in the Adirondack Mountains of New York in 2019. This was the first year The Fund offered $15,000 in additional funding towards alpine and sub-alpine trail reconstruction and rehabilitation projects.

ADK reports: There were two main objectives of the work that the Waterman Fund supported. The first was to remove a large pile of rocks on Mt. Skylight. These rocks were placed on the summit by the public as a result of folklore that encouraged placing a rock on the summit will keep rain from falling. This rock pile had grown so substantially that it was spilling onto the alpine vegetation and damaging it.

The second objective of this project was to rebuild the cairns on Haystack Mountain, as they were not easy to see in the summer months, and completely obscured when there is any snow accumulation on the ground. Both projects work to protect fragile alpine vegetation and the spirit of wilderness, which are tenets of The Waterman Fund’s mission, by delineating the trail and removing excess rocks from the summit. This project was a team effort between Adirondack Mountain Club’s Professional Trail Crew, the Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Program, and ADK’s Volunteer Trails Program.

All of the stones placed on Mt. Skylight were removed and relocated below treeline. In addition, the Professional Trail Crew was able to build four cairns on the summit of Skylight over the course of five days. On Haystack Mountain, the Professional Trail Crew spent a total of two weeks constructing 14 cairns. This project challenged ADK’s Professional Trail Crew due to remoteness and rugged nature of this worksite. Another challenge was the hike in and out of the worksite on Haystack Mountain.

Laura Waterman’s First Foray Into Fiction: Starvation Shore

In the summer of 1881, the twenty-five men of the Lady Franklin Bay Expedition watched their ship sail for home from Discovery Harbor, just 500 miles from the North Pole. Commanded by the ambitious yet underqualified Adolphus W. Greely, this crew represented the first U.S. attempt to engage in scientific study of the Arctic. The frigid landscape offered the promise of great adventure—and unknown dangers. It was an expedition Greely eagerly anticipated long before it began. Standing there on that sunny summer afternoon, no one could have known how much would go wrong.

Drawing upon historic records, diaries, and letters of the men who inhabited the makeshift shelter they called Camp Clay, Laura Waterman reimagines the true story of polar explorers fighting for their lives and their sanity under dehumanizing conditions. This gripping, tragic tale of hunger, fear, and hope is told through the eyes of men at their worst—and most desperate—moments.

Waterman’s book was published in March 2019. Visit indiebound.org or laurawaterman.com for purchasing information to supplement your wintertime reading!
This Year’s Essay Winners

By Annie Bellerose, Val Stori, Bethany Taylor, and Laura Waterman

The Waterman Fund is proud to announce the winners of our tenth essay contest. This year our selection committee, comprised of current and former board members, outside readers, and the editor of Appalachia, chose two co-winners for our essay contest for 2019, Jennifer O’Connell’s “Valley of the Bulls,” and Alex Pickens’, “The Do’s and Don’ts of Trail Running in the Appalachian Mountains.” For our honorable mention we awarded John Anderson for his “Humor in the Wild.”

Our theme for 2019 asked our essayists to consider what we have all experienced: the mountain world can bring humor into our experience, perhaps because the mere act of being in the mountains provides an antidote to the daily bombardment of the news cycle and the traumas of modern life. Perhaps because being in the mountains heightens all the human experience. Perhaps because being in the mountains helps us to remember that life is full of the absurd and the unexpected. Does laughing, or just a bemused smile bring us closer to wildness? Is laughter a natural reaction to the wildness—the wild within responding to the wild outside? How and when does humor intersect with our experience with changes to the wild and changes in nature, and through our annual contest, the Waterman Fund seeks new voices on the role and place of wilderness in the modern world.

We’d like to think that wilderness and wilderness can withstand the test of time, the change of political regimes, the evolution of technologies, the ebb and flow of social organization, and the cultural zeitgeist. But can it? How has the spirit of wilderness and wilderness itself endured over the last twenty years? In this short time, we saw over 548 million acres protected across the nation under former President Obama—the most habitat protected by any president in American history; and we’ve also experienced rollbacks to National Monuments and the preference for corporate interests over conservation under President Trump. At the turn of the century, we were lamenting the shrill tones of cell phones in the mountains and a decade later lamenting the chasm that the digital, virtual age has created between the younger generation and the wild. And now, we see a resurgence of interest in and passion for the wild. Across the country, the number of hikers has increased dramatically—45 million people went hiking in 2017, up from 30 million in 2006. Ironically, social media—one of the virtual realities we hypothesized would distance Millennials and Gen Z from the wild—has helped connect people to the wild. How have cultural shifts impacted the wild in the last two decades? What have they been?

Similarly, we are interested in your personal experience with changes to the wild and changes in perceptions of the wild in the last twenty years. What aspects of the wild endure the tests of time?

We welcome personal, scientific, adventure, or memoir essays, fiction, poetry, or songs not eligible for this contest. More information about the Waterman Fund and on the essay contest is available at watermanfund.org, Facebook, and our essays@watermanfund.org. We welcome all inquiries.

From Jennifer O’Connell’s “Valley of the Bulls”

The collective drops us at the trailhead at the end of a bumpy dirt road. The gate is locked. A park ranger steps out of the thatched hut at the entrance and nods to a large stone wall. There’s a moment of confused gesturing (Over it? you want us to climb over it? Yes, over it. really? Yes, really) and then we’re hoisting our backpacks up and over the wall and scrambling after them. Lucy has been one of my best friends for a decade now, and she knows that when I invite her and her boyfriend, Eric, to meet me in Peru and say “maybe bring a backpack just in case,” it means “bring the good shit, we’re going somewhere.” In this case it’s the Cordillera Blanca, the “white range” — over seven hundred glaciers, several peaks about 19,000 ft., and Huascaran, the highest mountain in Peru, its summit the place on Earth with the smallest gravitational force.

From Alex Pickens’ “The Do’s and Don’ts of Trail Running in the Appalachian Mountains”

Do be prepared to eat flies and run through spider webs. Given their astronomical population and their infinitesimal size, the odds are not in your favor, especially since you will be sucking air as you barrel through the forest. Think of them as unintended supplemental protein to your diet for your workout. Gym jockeys may gazelze oversized protein shakes, but you have gone organic and turned hunter-gatherer of bugs, accumulate your prey by merely leaving your mouth ajar as you run. They will be sufficiently shaken in your intestines as you progress along uneven trails to rival any beverage concocted by health experts. No better way to kick-start your morning jog than an unintended aphid smoothie!
THE YEAR in Photographs

1. The alpine zone in the Whites. (June Hammond-Rowan, photo)
2. An ADK volunteer works a display table at the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering. (Seth Jones, photo)
3. An onlooker reviews a display board about Diapensia lapponica at the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering. (Seth Jones, photo)
4. Laura Waterman addresses the gang at the Northeast Alpine Stewardship Gathering. (Seth Jones, photo)
5. Young people enjoy a day on the Presidentials. (Will Kemeza, photo)
6. Laura Waterman celebrates 80 years with friends!
7. Ryan Harvey and Laura Waterman on the Gulfside Trail. (Dave Govatski, photo)

On a beautiful October day near her home, a robust gathering of friends and colleagues celebrated Laura’s 80th birthday. Happy Birthday Laura! Wishing you continued years of good work and health!
Kayla White’s Positive Attitude Serves Adirondacks’ Alpine Environment

By Brendan Witte

I came to know Kayla White during the summer of 2013 when she started working with me at Johns Brook Lodge (JBL). Working in a backcountry lodge requires a strong tolerance for being in close contact with other people for extended periods of time. The JBL crew wakes up together in a small cabin at 6 a.m. each morning to start breakfast for the guests. They spend the day cleaning the lodge and preparing dinner, work together to move 50-gallon barrels of human waste around, serve dinner, and tidy the lodge for the next day. Then they head back to their small cabin where they sleep in a common room in bunks. Hardly an hour goes by where another crew member isn’t a short distance away.

In such close quarters I had the opportunity to quickly learn who Kayla is. She’s an exceptionally hard worker who is not afraid to push others to improve the quality of work they are doing. This strong work ethic was contrasted by a light-hearted and fun-loving personality. I can’t recall a time when I’ve seen Kayla with anything but a smile on her face, even when elbows deep in a grease trap at the lodge. Her love of the mountains also shone through during the summer we spent working together. It’s easy to take the little bit of free time found at JBL to read or lay by the brook. Kayla spent her time exploring her new home, the Johns Brook valley. By the end of the season she had been up all of the surrounding High Peaks, as well as to many hidden gems tucked away in the valley.

“I find my strength and humility on the mountains; they have become the best parts of me.”

Kayla has a bachelor’s degree in philosophy with a minor in comparative literature. She started working at the Adirondack Mountain Club in 2012 on the Loj Crew. After a summer at JBL, she transitioned to the Summit Steward Program, her first season being 2014. Perhaps she had enough of living in close quarters with six other people and a dog. When Julia Goren (Past Waterman Fund Board Member & 2016 Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award Winner) moved from being the program coordinator to the Education Director in 2015, Kayla was promoted to Chief Summit Steward. She had big shoes to fill, but the most perfect mentor as well. She served in that role for two years before being promoted to Summit Steward Coordinator, a role she has served in for three years.

continued on next page

Announcing...
The Emerging Alpine Steward Award

This year, the Waterman Fund was pleased to receive outstanding nominations for the first recipient of the Emerging Alpine Steward Award.

This award—open to anyone who has been an active steward of the mountains of the Northeast for five years or fewer—honors and thanks people who have begun to demonstrate a commitment to preserving both the physical landscape and the spirit of wilderness in the mountains of the Northeast. The 2019 recipient of this award, Kayla White, perfectly embodies these qualities. Meet Kayla, below, and to nominate someone see back cover for information.

Kayla White receives the Emerging Alpine Steward Award during the 11th Annual Alpine Stewardship Gathering in October.

“The mountains have been there for millions of years, the alpine plants for thousands. It’s going to be okay. Just do your best.”

Kayla White ... continued

As the Johns Brook Property manager, I was bummed to lose Kayla to the Summit Steward Program, but as a former Chief Summit Steward I knew it was the right fit both for her and the program. Her strong work ethic, interpersonal skills, and infectiously positive attitude would serve her and the alpine environment well. Over the years, I’ve enjoyed watching Kayla’s career advance. Seeing her grow into the leader of one of the most successful environmental stewardship programs in the northeast has been wonderful. I’ve also seen her love for wilderness grow deeper.

Several years ago, as New York State was debating how to handle a large acquisition of land called the Boreas Ponds along the southern boundary of the High Peaks Wilderness, Kayla was among several young residents of the park, that working with others who saw the value of this parcel of land, began speaking for a full Wilderness classification of the Boreas Ponds. The group formed under the name Adirondack Wilderness Advocates. They turned out hundreds to public hearings, and thousands of letters submitted to the Adirondack Park Agency. Kayla went on to help shepherd that group into a 501(c)3 and is one of the founding board members. In speaking to Kayla about her work, she said to me, “I find my strength and humility on the mountains, they have become the best parts of me.”

When I asked Kayla what advice she would give to young stewards as they face the challenges of working in a harsh environment and interacting with thousands of visitors, she said, “It’s going to be okay. The mountains have been there for millions of years, the alpine plants for thousands. It’s going to be okay. Just do your best. I’ve also had enough of living in close quarters with six other people and a dog. When Julia Goren (Past Waterman Fund Board Member & 2016 Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award Winner) moved from being the program coordinator to the Education Director in 2015, Kayla was promoted to Chief Summit Steward. She had big shoes to fill, but the most perfect mentor as well. She served in that role for two years before being promoted to Summit Steward Coordinator, a role she has served in for three years.

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EMERGING ALPINE STEWARD AWARD

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Alpine Stewardship Gathering: Packed with Inspiration and Information Sharing

By Sean Robinson

With a record number of participants (107!), the 11th Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering was a great success. Held at the High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid, NY on October 25-27, this year’s Gathering was hosted by the Adirondack Mountain Club and The Waterman Fund with financial support from a number of sponsors who helped make the weekend affordable for anyone who wanted to attend.

After filling our bellies at a Mac and Cheese Bar (yes, this is a real thing!), the weekend started with an inspirational opening address by Tom Butler (Vice President for Conservation Advocacy for Tompkins Conservation and past board president of the Northeast Wilderness Trust) who made a call for a reconnection to the natural world around us to which, he reminded us, we are a part of. This was followed by a stimulating day of talks, discussions, forming new networks across organizations, and reconnecting with good friends and colleagues. Highlights of the day included plenary sessions on alpine research, stewardship, and visitor use; a panel discussion on how best to manage high use while still preserving a sense of wildness in our natural areas; reports from each of the northeast’s stewardship programs; the celebration of the 30th anniversary of the Adirondack Summit Stewardship Program, and the 50th anniversary of the Adirondack Mountain Club and The Waterman Fund with financial support from a number of sponsors who helped make the weekend affordable for anyone who wanted to attend.

Friday evening included the presentation of The Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award to Charlie Cogbill, Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award winner, with Laura Waterman and Ryan Harvey, president of the Waterman Fund.

Charlie Cogbill, Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award winner, with Laura Waterman and Ryan Harvey, president of the Waterman Fund.

Trace is Addressing Increasing Impacts for a Sustainable Future,” presented “some of the modern drivers of increased recreation on public lands,” and explored “the transferability of specific tactics for effectively educating the recreating public in order to provide tangible solutions for meeting the current challenges faced by our shared public lands.”

Providing inspiring examples of alpine stewardship, Saturday evening included the presentation of The Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award to Charlie Cogbill, of Beyond Ktaadn and Harvard Forest, (and “consummate scientist”), and the first ever Emerging Alpine Steward Award to Kayla White, Adirondack High Peaks Summit Stewardship Coordinator.

The weekend ended with a selection of field trips on continued on next page

The Waterman Fund thanks the generous sponsors of the 2019 Northeastern Alpine Stewardship Gathering:

The High Peaks Resort in Lake Placid, NY, for welcoming our 11th Northeast Alpine Managers Gathering with unstinting hospitality. Thanks yous are also in order to all of the staff of the Adirondack Mountain Club, and Kayla White and Seth Jones, whose work on the front lines resulted in a wonderful program.

Ben Lawhon of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, for inspiring us with his keynote speech.

Tim Butler, Tompkins Conservation, whose address on Friday night got the Gathering off to a super start.

Bethany Taylor and former board members Annie Bellerose and Val Stori who jointly and brilliantly run our Essay Contest, along with unstinting assists from Alice Tufel, and former board member Rebecca Oreskes. With a special thanks to Chris Woodside who publishes our winning essay in Appalachian.

As the Fund gears up for its 20th anniversary year in 2020, it is our great pleasure to thank former board presidents, Carl Demrow, Rick Paradis, and Charlie Jacobi as well as former board member Rebecca Oreskes for their skillful guidance to help us celebrate.

Brian Post, with gratitude for hosting the Fund’s website and ensuring its safety.

Anne McKinsey of AMCK Web & Print Design, who brings our Alpine Steward to life.

Alpine Stewardship Gathering ... continued

Sunday morning including a trip to the ASRC Whitewater Mountain Field Station and Alpine Zone; a look at the new trail up Cascade mountain; a drive down Rt.73 to discuss managing parking by recreationists in our public lands; and a boreal bog walk at Paul Smith’s Visitor Interpretive Center.

Overall, this year’s Gathering provided a refreshing and inspiring weekend for all who attended that justified the work we are doing and provided new information and techniques to better our stewardship of the places we call home.

Thank You … Laura Waterman from Page Hollow

The Alpine Steward NOVEMBER 2019

Sean Robinson Joins the Board

Sean grew up in Queensbury, NY and started working for the Adirondack Mountain Club in 1992. After working at the Adirondack Loj and Johns Brook Lodge during the summers of 1997 and 1998, he worked as a summit steward in 1999 and 2000. He then went on to get his M.S. at SUNY-ESF and his Ph.D. at the University at Albany, specializing in bryology (the study of mosses, liverworts, and hornworts).

In 2018, he joined the Biology Department at SUNY Oneonta in Oneonta, NY. He teaches courses in Botany including Bryophyte Biology, Vascular Plant Systematics, and Dendrology. His research is focused on understanding how the mode of reproduction in plants, particularly bryophytes, affects colonization of new habitats, range expansions, and gene flow within and between island populations.

The alpine summits of northeastern North America have been the primary site for his work. Sean also conducts research focused on vegetation dynamics in alpine plant communities.

Gathered for a meeting at Laura’s Page Hollow are board members June Hammond-Rothen, Laura Waterman, Sean Robinson, Ryan Harvey, Nancy Kiger and Will Kemeza. Missing are Seth Jones, Brendan Willis, and Kim Vistlia.

Alpine Stewardship Gathering ... continued

Saturday evening included the presentation of The Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award to Charlie Cogbill, Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award winner, with Laura Waterman and Ryan Harvey, president of the Waterman Fund.

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2019 Treasurer’s Report

By Nancy Rigter

The Waterman Fund reports the following for fiscal year April 2018 - March 2019: annual contributions totaled $17,444, up from the previous year’s total of $14,156. Income from investments was non-existent as investments lost $2,016 due to the dive in the stock market during the spring of 2018. However, to date investment income has rebounded and the income gained has replaced that which was lost in stock market fluctuations. Total Fund programs expenses for the fiscal year are $29,536, which includes $19,208 awarded in annual grants. Operating expenses came in under budget at $5,676. The Waterman Fund’s net worth at the close of the fiscal year is $398,509, a slight decrease of 0.18% from the previous fiscal year.

In an effort to recognize the importance of trail stewardship, for the fiscal year April 2019-March 2020, the Fund has allocated up to $15,000 specifically dedicated to supporting trail work. This will be in addition to $16,000 to be granted for research & education projects. This brings the total projected grant awards for the current fiscal year to $31,000. Due to this new initiative and the launching of the strategic planning process, the Fund will be using interest earned on its endowment for these initiatives in conjunction with annual contributions.

The Waterman Fund has remained committed to keeping operating expenses low and is projected to end the current fiscal year well poised to uphold its commitment to both new initiatives and reoccurring, annual projects.

INCOME

ANNUAL CONTRIBUTIONS 100%
INVESTMENT INCOME 0% *
BOOKS INCOME 1%

EXPENSES

GRANTS 61.5%
FIELD TRIP 1%
ESSAY CONTEST 6.6%
BOOKS 2.9%
STEWARDSHIP AWARD 1.5%
ANNUAL DINNER (actd) 0.3%
ALPINE GATHERING 8%
OPERATING EXPENSES 18.2%

*Investment income net loss of $2,016

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Please make your check payable to The Waterman Fund and mail to: P.O. Box 1064, East Corinth, VT 05040

If your donation is for $200 or more, we are pleased to offer you a signed copy of Forest and Crag, 3rd edition. Check box if you would like us to mail you a book.

The Waterman Fund is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All contributions are fully tax deductible.

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Joan Rising
Ben Rose & Lori Fisher
in memory of Robin Nquist
Peter Rowan
in memory of Reidun Nuquist
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in memory of Reidun Nuquist

Many thanks to you for supporting The Fund!
To nominate someone for the Guy Waterman Alpine Steward Award and/or the Emerging Steward Award, please send nomination letters to the Waterman Fund (forms available on our website), citing specific examples of the nominee’s stewardship of the Northeast’s wilderness, along with other relevant personal or professional experience. If you have nominated someone in the past, the nomination remains in our files and is reviewed annually.  

**Nominations are due January 15, 2020.**