

Canadian Paleontology Division Advocationalist Paleontologist Award: Nomination Form

What is the Avocational Paleontologist Award?

Great discoveries are made, and great things are done by people who have no formal training in paleontology, but are passionate about ancient life, fossils, and the preservation of fossil sites. Whether it is donating a fossil collection to an institution, protecting and/or maintaining a site of paleontological importance, volunteering in fossil prep or outreach, or fundraising to build a fossil museum, avocational paleontologists play a huge role in the Canadian palaeontology community.

The Paleontology Division (PD) of the Geological Association of Canada (GAC) has created this new award to recognize the role of avocational paleontology in Canada. This new yet unnamed award will recognize and celebrate the contributions of non-professional paleontologists to the field, helping to send the message that avocational paleontologists of all ages are important and valued.

The new Avocational Paleontologist Award will be the fourth award offered by the Division, along with the Billings Medal for Lifetime Achievement, the *Pikaia* Award for Early Career Researchers, and the Thomas E. Bolton Award for an exceptional student presentation at the Canadian Paleontology Conference (CPC). The awards will be offered in a three-year cycle, excepting the Bolton Award which is awarded annually at CPC.

In 2025, we are calling for applications for the Avocational Paleontologist Award. The Award will be presented at the virtual 2025 CPC.

Who Can Be Nominated?

The Advocational Paleontologist Award is presented to an individual who is not a professional paleontologist (is not paid to do paleontology), but who has made tangible contributions to paleontology. Nominees must either be Canadian or have been engaged with Canadian fossils. There is no age guideline. Groups or organizations may also be nominated.

Evaluation Criteria

The GAC-PD will be evaluating the applications based on a set of criteria. Both the nominee's biography (see 'What to include' below) and the letters of reference should address one or more of the points below.

Be as specific as you can when addressing these points in your nomination and/or letter of support.

Area of Contribution	Examples (Not limited to these examples!)
Advocacy	- Drawing public/ specific attention to paleontological resources in an area -Lobbying for paleontology to be included in school curriculums - Allowing access to private land for paleontological exploration

	- Acting as a go-between with paleontologists and industries that frequently encounter fossils (i.e. gravel mining, pipestone construction)
Fossil/ Fossil Site Protection	- Lobbying government/private parties for the protection of fossil sites - Highlighting issues in government or industry policies that affect paleontological resources - Donating/leasing land for the purposes of paleontological research -Bringing paleontological resources and issues (i.e., black market fossil trade) to the public's attention -Guardianship of fossil sites
Education/ Outreach	-Establishing or supporting local fossil museums or visitor's centers - Providing exceptional public outreach (in person or virtual) for a museum or paleo organization -Contributing local paleontological knowledge to interpretive programs in parks, natural areas etc. - Establishing fossil-based programs in schools - Providing educational fossil kits for school programs
Philanthropy/ Fundraising	- Providing or raising funds to support paleontological education (pre- and post-secondary) - Offering to apply for grants to support paleontological activities - Providing funds to support paleo programs in universities or museums - Establishing scholarships/ grants for paleontology - Donating land for paleontological protection or exploration - Organizing fundraising activities in support of paleontology
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion	- Advocating for diversity in paleontology / STEM disciplines - Providing education on the role of colonialism in paleontology - Establishing connections with First Nations groups
Research	- Contributing to peer-reviewed studies in paleontology - Donating fossil specimens/ collections for research - Providing information (i.e. locality data, collection history) for a research study

What should a Nomination Package Include?

A complete nomination package should include the following:

1. Information form on the candidate (Form Provided)
2. A Code of Conduct declaration form the nominee to declare are in good standing to receive the award. (Form Provided)
3. TWO letters of recommendation (2-page max) from people who support the nomination. Digital files/images of separately signed nomination pages (e.g. in .pdf format) are acceptable.
4. A brief biography (2-page max) describing the candidate's accomplishments in paleontology. Please ensure to talk about anything relevant to these points

Where should a nomination package be sent?

If you wish to submit a nomination, please send the above documentation in a digital format (Word or PDF) to gac.paleontology@gmail.com

Deadline: Monday, November 3rd, 2025