

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
MARYLAND PARK SERVICE**

**AGENCY POLICY 21-12
1 July 2021**

AWARDS PROGRAM

I. General

A. The purpose of this program is to recognize employees, volunteers, private citizens and organizations that bring distinction to the Maryland Park Service.

B. The objective of the Awards Program is to recognize the effort, devotion and acts of valor performed by employees and other individuals or groups. Awards should not replace commendation and recognition from supervisors for a specific task or assignment that constitutes a part of an employee's normal duties, but instead recognizes the performance of acts or deeds beyond normal requirements.

C. The awards included in this program are:

1. Letter of Commendation
2. Certificate of Commendation
3. Valor Award
4. Superintendent's Commendation
5. Honorary Ranger
6. Certificate of Appreciation
7. Trail of Fame
8. Edmund Prince Award
9. MPS Ranger School Awards – Ranger Award / Dean's Award
10. Outstanding Service Award
11. Wye Oak Legacy Award

D. Nominations must be in writing, and may be in the form of an email, letter, or the online nomination form provided for this purpose.

E. A copy of the nomination letter / form, award letter, certificate and/or plaque issued to the employee will be placed in the employee's personnel file.

II. Awards Criteria

A. Letter of Commendation

1. This award provides immediate recognition for accomplishments at the park or regional level. The supervisor shall place a copy of this commendation letter in the employee's official personnel file.

2. Guidelines

- a. Issued to employees, volunteers, citizens or groups, using standard letterhead.
- b. For outstanding work, not normal duties.
- c. Awarded at any time throughout the year.
- d. Coordinated at the direction of the Regional Manager.
- e. Presented at the park level.

B. Certificate of Commendation

1. This award provides recognition for accomplishments at the park, regional or headquarters level. The supervisor shall place a copy of the certificate in the employee's official personnel file.

2. Guidelines

- a. Issued to employees and volunteers, using standard certificate.
- b. For outstanding work, not normal duties.
- c. Awarded at any time throughout the year.
- d. Nominations may be made by any employee, through the chain of command, to the Regional Manager or Deputy Superintendent.
- e. Presented at the headquarters, regional or park level.

C. Valor Award

1. This award is intended to primarily recognize acts of valor, but is not limited to that specific term. The award is intended to recognize the performance of an extraordinary action which is attributable to saving a life, attempting to save a life, preventing (or attempting to prevent) property or resource loss, or involving public safety.

2. Nominations shall follow this process:

a. The Park Manager nominates an individual, through the chain of command, to the Deputy Superintendent.

b. The Superintendent and Deputy Superintendent will determine Valor Award recipients.

3. Presentation shall be made at an appropriate gathering, as soon as practical following the act. The employee will receive a plaque and pin. The pin may be worn while in uniform or in civilian clothes. The employee's supervisor will coordinate publicity with the news media and place a copy of the nomination letter / form and award plaque in the employee's personnel file.

D. Superintendent's Commendation

1. This award recognizes top-of-the-line performance of an employee who distinguishes the Maryland Park Service. Employees, volunteers, private citizens, or groups may receive this award. Consideration for the Superintendent's Commendation will focus on efforts that exemplify the mission, objectives and goals of the Service, or performance that is otherwise worthy of the Superintendent's recognition. Examples include, but are not limited to, developing and/or implementing a new statewide program or service, opening new facilities, and developing, instituting or administering programs or strategies that have a significant impact on park operations, natural resources management, or visitor services.

2. Nominations shall follow this process:

a. The Park Manager nominates an individual, through the chain of command, to the Deputy Superintendent.

b. The Superintendent makes the determination.

3. Presentation shall be made at an appropriate gathering, as soon as practical following the act. The employee will receive a plaque and pin. The pin may be worn while in uniform or in civilian clothes. The employee's supervisor will coordinate publicity with the news media and place a copy of the award plaque and nomination letter / form in the employee's personnel file.

E. Honorary Ranger Program

1. In creating the Honorary Ranger awards program the Maryland Park Service recognizes that the duties, tasks and characteristics of the Ranger are reflective of the highest form of service that can be given. This program is designed to recognize citizens who have given superior support and who are exceptionally dedicated to carrying out the mission of the service, thus earning the title "Honorary Ranger." There are two types of Honorary Ranger awards - an individual award, and a group award.

2. Honorary Ranger – Individual Award

a. This award recognizes individual citizens who have given exemplary support to the Maryland Park Service over a sustained period of time. Volunteer Rangers are eligible for this award, but this award is not limited to honoring a single category of volunteers.

b. Process

i. This award is recommended by the Park Manager, Regional Manager, Headquarters Chief, or Deputy Superintendent, and approved by the Superintendent.

ii. The recipient will be awarded an Honorary Ranger cap and a plaque at a public ceremony to be determined by the Regional Manager and the Superintendent. If possible, it should be presented at an event attended by co-workers and other volunteers.

iii. There is no limit on the number of nominations which can be made in a year, but this is a very high level of award which should only be given to a very few exceptional individuals.

3. Honorary Ranger - Group Award

a. This award is given to a group or club that has given exceptional support to the Maryland Park Service through unusual special

activity which significantly enhances or protects public lands. Examples include, but are not limited to, a group that fights a forest fire, builds a fishing pier or constructs a new trail. This award should be given to a group that conducts its activity over a sustained period of time.

b. Process

i. This process is the same as the one for the Honorary Ranger Award.

ii. All members of the group will receive Honorary Ranger caps and a Certificate of Appreciation.

F. Certificate of Appreciation

1. A Certificate of Appreciation is awarded to individuals or groups that undertake short-term projects. These certificates can be awarded by the Park Manager, Regional Manager, Headquarters Chief, or Deputy Superintendent.

2. These certificates will be available through Headquarters.

G. Trail of Fame

1. This award is presented to an individual, group or club that has given exceptional support to the trails in the Maryland Park system. Examples include, but are not limited to, trail maintenance, trail construction, and volunteer work in the areas of education and/or fund-raising for trail improvements.

2. Process

a. This award is recommended by the Park Manager, supported by the Regional Manager and MPS Trail Manager, and approved by the Superintendent.

b. The recipients of this award are honored by having their names engraved on the "Trail of Fame" plaque in Headquarters, and they also receive plaques of their own.

H. Edmund Prince Award

1. This award recognizes a Maryland Park Service employee who epitomizes the role of the Ranger, and personifies the culture, heritage and tradition of the Maryland Park Service. Consideration for the Edmund

Prince Award will be restricted to those individuals whose career or lifetime service to the mission, objectives and goals of the Maryland Park Service has been one of dedication, selfless service and performance above and beyond the call of duty.

2. Nominations shall follow this process:

a. The supervisor nominates an individual, through the chain of command, to the Deputy Superintendent.

b. The Superintendent makes the determination.

3. Presentation of a plaque shall be made at an appropriate gathering. The employee's supervisor will coordinate publicity with the news media and, if a current employee, place a copy of the award plaque and nomination letter / form in the employee's personnel file.

I. MPS Ranger School – Ranger Award and Dean's Award

1. These awards recognize scholarship, leadership and achievement by Rangers attending the MPS Ranger School.

2. Recipients of the Ranger Award and Dean's Award will be determined by the Ranger School Dean's Staff, in consultation with the MPS Training Division.

3. Presentation shall be made at the Ranger School graduation ceremony. Both students will receive a plaque and the recipient of the Ranger Award will receive a pin. The Ranger Award pin may be worn on the uniform for one year after it is awarded. The Ranger School staff will coordinate publicity with the news media and place a copy of the award plaque and nomination letter / form in the employee's personnel file.

J. Outstanding Service Award

1. This award recognizes outstanding service by any Maryland Park Service employee that improves, streamlines, promotes, or enhances park programs, operations, procedures, facilities, or resources, and that demonstrates an effort and commitment beyond the scope of an employee's normal duties. The service may be provided to co-workers, colleagues, volunteers, or visitors, and should stand out as a significant effort with meaningful results. Examples include, but are not limited to, completing an important restoration project, managing and executing a special assignment, administering a program that improves the efficiency

of park maintenance operations, or improving the safety and security of park visitors.

2. Nominations shall follow this process:

- a. Nominations may be made by any employee, through the nominated employee's direct supervisor and chain of command, to the Regional Manager and Deputy Superintendent.
- b. The Superintendent makes the determination.

3. Presentation shall be made at an appropriate gathering, as soon as practical following approval of the nomination. The employee will receive a plaque. The employee's supervisor will coordinate publicity with the news media and place a copy of the award plaque and nomination letter / form in the employee's personnel file.

K. Wye Oak Legacy Award

- 1. This award recognizes a full career of service (25 or more years) by an employee of the Maryland Park Service, and is presented as a token of esteem and appreciation upon the employee's retirement.
- 2. The Superintendent makes the determination as to the retiring employee's eligibility for this award.
- 3. Presentation shall be made at the employee's retirement event, or another appropriate gathering. The employee will receive a plaque made from wood obtained from the Wye Oak. The MPS will coordinate publicity with the news media.