



**CREA Board President Ellen Bennett Awards Founders' Award
to Ron Strand at 2021 Annual Meeting**

One person, among the many that comprise Team CREA, stands out for special recognition this afternoon - Ron Strand. Our team would like to share just some of the work Ron has spearheaded on behalf of CREA and its membership.

Ron is a constant presence at the Ecology Center and Preserve and in all seasons, often several times a day. His ongoing activities include:

1. He mows and weed whacks the area around the EC and the entrance stairs.
2. He walks the trails to monitor for blowdowns which he'll clear himself with handsaw and loppers if he able to do so.
3. He monitors condition of bog bridges and repairs/replaces as necessary.
4. He ensures that handwashing barrels used for summer camp are filled and hauls water from his house when necessary.
5. He ensures the Ecology Center is open for volunteers to work in and that it is locked up afterwards and the alarm system is activated.
6. He maintains the solar panel system to sure power for the EC which is totally off the grid.
7. He maintains the wood pellet stove and often gets it started, sometimes quite early, when Sarah and Carey are hosting classes there on cold days.
8. He repairs and maintains Rensenbrink Way, including finding gravel and moving it to the site.
9. He warmly greets visitors to the EC and trails often becoming the "face" of CREA for visitors.

He also manages "Special Projects". For example, in 2019:



- He replaced numerous wooden steps from parking area to Rensenbrink Way, often requiring hours to work on a single step leading to CREA finding funding for the new granite steps.
- He built 6 of the original StoryWalk storyboards.
- He coordinated and participated in building the bridge adjacent to vernal pool.
- In 2020:
 - He built steps to the shed.
 - He built drainage ditches along Rensenbrink Way and Barnes Leap Trail to facilitate passage by visitor,
 - He moved the entire contents of the EC to storage do floor could be refinished and moved all back when refinishing done
 - He disassembled bulky wooden shelving and repurposed as outdoor display tables.
 - He found and hauled gravel to create a smooth path from the base of the new steps to Rensenbrink Way
 - He cleared shrubs adjacent to EC to create 2 parking spaces for special use as needed.
 - He organized volunteers and participated in the painting of the exterior of the EC.
- In 2021:
 - He built and installed structures for summer camper backpacks.
 - He did a full inventory of the Ecology Center equipment (and there's a LOT in the Ecology Center).
 - He solicited and coordinated volunteers to help build storyboards for the new Storywalk at the Ecology Center.
 - He cleared a large area near the start of Barnes Leap trail of brambles and other debris for use by summer campers.
 - ...and that's just so far this year...



Ron, I have been communicating with Carla and John Rensenbrink who send their very best. Carla visited the Ecology Center for the first time in a while recently and she was amazed by all the improvements. They are so pleased to honor you with the Founders' Award in 2021.

We are giving you this certificate, suitable for framing, which reads, "The Founders' Award to Ron Strand for his dedication to CREA and its mission, his tireless efforts to ensure the community has a wonderful on-site experience by maintaining the Ecology Center and its trails in pristine condition, and for warmly welcoming all who visit."

Ron will be the first to tell you that he didn't do all of this alone – and he didn't. Joann Strand has been a tireless volunteer, along with David Vaughn and Bob Perry. I know there are others.... Thank you ALL. And if you haven't been down to the EC in a while, please go and marvel at our steps from the parking area, the kiosk, and the beautiful building – inside and out.