

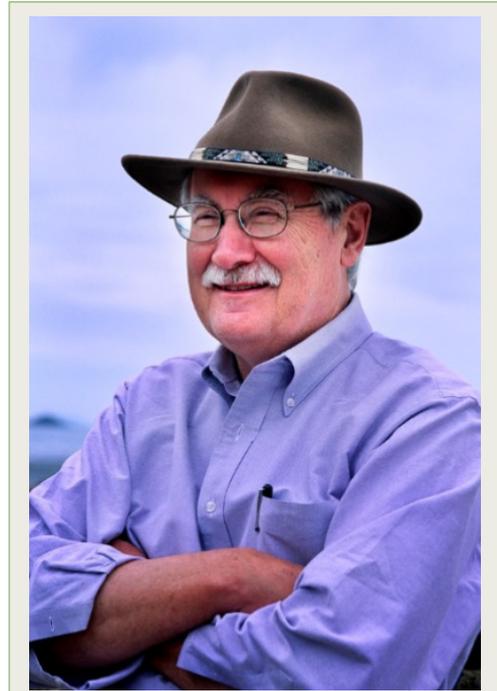
Eminent Ecologist Award: Jerry F. Franklin

The Eminent Ecologist Award honors a senior ecologist for an outstanding body of ecological work or sustained ecological contributions of extraordinary merit. Jerry Franklin is renowned in the field of ecology for applying forestry research to management, challenging clear-cutting practices to mold a “new forestry” in the later 20th century attuned to healthy forest ecosystems. He taught foresters to value snags, fallen trees, and woody debris and urged forest managers to learn from natural patterns of disturbance and regeneration in forests. His emphasis that old-growth forest is not “decadent wasteful stands” just needing a thorough clear-cutting, but instead a vital component of a healthy mosaic of forest types in managed landscapes, was revolutionary in forestry. He was instrumental in linking early landscape ecology to forestry, helping to develop landscape ecology as a discipline.

Dr. Franklin’s strong record of ecological scholarship on the old-growth and regenerating conifer forests of the Pacific Northwest stretches back to 1961. His work on the role of coarse woody debris in forest dynamics, and on articulating landscape and site-specific characteristics of successional dynamics, has been very influential, with implications ranging from biodiversity maintenance to carbon storage. Several of his papers have been cited thousands of times. He has been a leader in analyzing the return of plant life to Mt. St. Helens following the 1980 eruption, developing influential ideas of “ecological memory” or biological legacies in ecosystem recovery from natural catastrophe.

Born in a small town on the coast of Oregon, an early love for the woods led Dr. Franklin to forestry and a lifetime study of ecology, starting with the USDA Forest Service in 1959. He earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees in forest management from Oregon State University in 1959 and 1961, going on to complete a doctorate in botany and soils at Washington State University in 1966. He has mentored the careers of a wide range of professionals, both in and out of the academy, as a teacher at Oregon State University and at the University of Washington in Seattle, where he has been a professor of ecosystem analysis in the College of Forest Resources since 1986. He served as President of the Ecological Society of America in 1993–1994.

Dr. Franklin has played a highly significant role in developing major, multi-institutional programs aimed at forest ecology at the broadest scale, including the International Biological Program (IBP) in the 1960s and early 1970s, and later the Long-Term Ecological Research Program (LTER). As the first program officer for the Ecosystem Studies Program at the National Science Foundation (NSF), he helped nurture the LTER network around the country. He had a particularly significant influence in fostering research and teaching at the Andrews LTER site, widely viewed as one of the best in the LTER network, and the Wind River Canopy Crane Research Facility. The long-term studies that Dr. Franklin presciently set up many years ago have already produced outstanding scientific insights and will be paying intellectual dividends for decades to come.



Jerry Franklin