

Eugene P. Odum Award for Excellence in Ecology Education:
Carolyn L. Thomas and Bob R. Pohlrad



Bob Pohlrad and Carolyn Thomas

Odum Award

recipients demonstrate their ability to relate basic ecological principles to human affairs through teaching, outreach, and mentoring activities. Bob Pohlrad and Carolyn Thomas have been a passionate and committed team of educators in the field of ecology for almost four decades. While the work of either alone would be worthy of recognition with the Odum Award, this married team represents such an outstanding example of long-term

mutual support and collaboration, both professionally and personally, that their colleagues who submitted their nomination feel that a shared award is the most appropriate way to honor their legacy in ecological education.

In their work as professors at Ferrum College, Drs. Thomas and Pohlrad focus on integrating technology and research experiences into the ecology classroom. For decades, they have engaged students and local citizens in sophisticated, long-term, water quality monitoring projects in regional lakes, serving as pioneers in citizen science. They mentored K-12 science teachers through the School Yard Ecology Project, providing professional development for teachers to communicate ecological concepts in effective and engaging ways to younger students. They are founding members of the Collaborations through Appalachian Watersheds Project (CAWS) and the Ecological Research as Education Network (EREN), both large-scale endeavors focused on developing innovative ways for ecologists and their students at primarily undergraduate institutions to collaborate and learn through authentic, multisite research projects. Finally, they have both served the Ecological Society of America as Chairs of the Education Section, giving generously of their time to help other ecologists educate more effectively.