

Distinguished Service Citation

Katherine Gross



The Distinguished Service Citation is given annually in recognition of long and distinguished service to the Ecological Society of America, to the larger scientific community, and to the larger purpose of ecology in the public welfare. This year's recipient is Katherine Gross.

Katherine Gross is well known in the ecological community, both for her scientific contributions to plant ecology, and for her many contributions to developing the institutional infrastructure of our discipline. She has made important service contributions, both to the ESA directly and to the ecological community more broadly.

Dr. Gross has served many roles in the ESA, and with great distinction. Her service activities for the Society include serving on various committees, chairing the Future of Long-term Data committee, and serving as Vice President and President of the Society. She has been selflessly involved in many other service activities. For instance, she was very strongly engaged in the initial discussions about forming a “think tank” for ecology. She co-authored the initial white paper crafted for NSF, laying out the rationale and likely structure of such a center; this eventually evolved into NCEAS. Dr. Gross has also been strongly involved in the LTER network.

When Dr. Gross was Vice President in the early 1990's, she led a committee that laid out a vision for the retention of long-term data, including the creation of a directory for many such data sets. There are many tragic stories of carefully documented data sets that have disappeared, and Dr. Gross strongly felt that the ESA had a special responsibility to provide mechanisms for the permanent archiving of important data sets. This was an extraordinarily important project, and Dr. Gross tackled it in a timely and effective manner. The effort continued long after her formal term was finished, and she continued to serve on the committee for the next five years. Her long-term dedication greatly improved the Society's role as a guardian of ecological data.