SER UPDATES AND CERP PROGRAM OVERVIEW

AUGUST 2018
Society for Ecological Restoration

- More than 2,700 members across 80 countries
- 13 chapters, 2 thematic sections, and many student associations
- SER advances the science, practice, and policy of ecological restoration
  - Publish the peer-reviewed journal Restoration Ecology
  - Organize an Island Press ecological restoration book series with 28 titles
  - Publish reports and guidelines on ecological restoration
    - SER Primer
    - International Standards
  - Facilitate communication and information exchange
    - World Conference and chapter conferences
    - Workshops, continuing education, webinars
    - E-communications and online forums
  - Inform decision-makers
    - Participating in world forums (e.g. Convention on Biological Diversity)
International Standards

- Released in 2016
- Reviewed by more than two dozen restoration ecologists, including practitioners, from across the world.
- Provide a framework for guiding the development and implementation of ecological restoration projects in any ecosystem, in any country, anywhere in the world.
- The Standards include a 5-star rating system ranging from the implementation of restorative actions to full ecological restoration.
International Standards

Recovery wheel is used to evaluate the degree to which the ecosystem under treatment is recovering over time.

Relies on a five star rating system, assigned to 18 sub-attributes, grouped in six main attributes:

1. Absence of threats
2. Physical conditions
3. Species composition
4. Structural diversity
5. Ecosystem function
6. External exchanges
Restoration Resource Center

- Launched in February 2018
- Project Database
- Resource Database
SER 2019 World Conference
Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP) Program

• Launched in 2017
• Members have expressed interest in certification since 1990s
• SER members wanted credentials that recognize their education, training, knowledge and experience
• SER wanted to improve the standards of practice in the field of ecological restoration, as well as actual implementation on the ground
CERP Program Development

• Several iterations thanks to the hard work of many volunteers
• SER member and external consultant reviews
• Tried to balance ideal and realistic requirements
• Applicable internationally
Certification Program Goals

**Goal 1:** Establish and validate the credentials for ecological restoration practitioners

**Goal 2:** Encourage practitioners to practice ecological restoration according to consistent, comprehensive “standards of practice”

**Goal 3:** Increase confidence in ecological restoration practice and practitioners

**Goal 4:** Fill an increasing demand for a skilled workforce to design, implement and monitor effective ecological restoration projects

**Goal 5:** Improve the quality of ecological restoration projects on the ground

**Goal 6:** Facilitate the exchange of information and promote the advancement of proven techniques used in ecological restoration

**Goal 7:** Define a clear pathway into the field of ecological restoration for recent graduates and emerging professionals
Types of Certification

- **Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP)**
  - Senior level practitioners
  - Strong knowledge base in ecosystem and ecological function
  - At least 5 years of full-time experience with restoration

- **Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner-in-training (CERPIT)**
  - Practitioners who have either met the knowledge requirements – OR – met the 5 years of full-time experience requirement
Certification Requirements

1. Knowledge base
2. Professional-level experience
3. Foundations of the profession
4. Ethics and disciplinary policies
5. References
Certification Requirements: Foundations of the Profession

• E-learning course provides an overview of the key SER foundation documents
  - SER Primer
  - IUCN guidance documents
  - International standards

• Not intended to teach ecological restoration

• Rather, intended to develop common language and understanding of standard practices
Foundations of the Profession

- **E-learning Course**
  - Video version without the assessments also available
  - Applicants for CERP/CERPIT must take assessment version (www.ser.org/certification)

- 10 modules
- Approximately 2 hours with assessment
- Can save as you go
Certification Requirements: Knowledge

• Academic credentials
  ▪ Coursework specific to ecological restoration and restoration-related fields
  ▪ Requirements developed, in part, through extensive survey of academic degree programs in ecological restoration in North America
Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

• 2017-2022

• PLAR (Formerly referred to as grandfathering provision)

• Applicable for CERP applicants

• Alternate means of knowledge acquisition for those who do not have the specified coursework at this time (e.g., graduated prior to the development of ecological restoration-related course and degrees)
  - Field Work
  - Teaching
  - Self-Directed learning
  - Workshops/Short Courses
  - Writing books/manuscripts
Certification Requirements: Experience

• **Professional-level Experience**
  - Experience performing restoration project and/or program work
  - CERP requires at least 5 years of full-time experience
  - CERPIT is for those individuals with less than 5 years of full-time experience

• **Project Experience (3 projects)**
  - Project Name
  - Location
  - Objectives
  - Project Description
  - Description of applicant’s role

• **Experience can include project design, implementation, monitoring, and/or oversight**
Certification Requirements: References

• Demonstrate that the practitioner is:
  ▪ Held in high esteem by other restoration practitioners (e.g., peers, supervisors)
  ▪ Has exhibited proficiency in various aspects of ecological restoration

• Starting in 2023, at least one reference will be required to come from an SER certified practitioner
Certification Requirements: Ethics and Disciplinary Policies

• SER Code of Ethics
  ▪ Advance the Field
  ▪ Develop and Use Knowledge
  ▪ Serve as an Ambassador
  ▪ Promote Fairness and Equity
  ▪ Adhere to Standards of Conduct

• SER Certification Program Disciplinary Policy
  ▪ Required to sign and abide by disciplinary policy

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SER Code of Ethics

Preamble

"The Society for Ecological Restoration promotes ecological restoration as a means of sustaining the diversity of life on Earth and reestablishing an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture."

SER mission statement

We serve all those who engage in restoration, researchers, practitioners, experts and volunteers. We aspire to constant learning, openness to many forms of knowledge, humility and perseverance in the face of ecological challenges, and honesty and responsibility in our practice.

As a relatively young science and practice, the ecological restoration community is coming to terms with rapid environments, ecological and cultural changes. Our understanding of ecosystems and how to assist their recovery is constantly evolving.

This work takes courage and a willingness to live with complexity and uncertainty. There are difficult choices involved in addressing the needs of ecosystems, people, animals, plants and other organisms.

We know that the health of human communities depends on the health of ecosystems, and that our human communities thrive when our ecosystems thrive.

This Code of Ethics guides the conduct and work of SER members, boards and staff. We uphold this code and hold each other accountable to advance the science and practice of ecological restoration, develop and use knowledge pertaining to restoration, serve as an ambassador of SER, promote fairness and equity, and maintain high standards of conduct in our activities.

Advance Ecological Restoration

• We advance the field of ecological restoration by promoting competence, high standards, professional development and the sharing of knowledge.

• We encourage education, research and the exchange of ideas as part of a community of practice in the continuing development of the art, practice and science of ecological restoration for members, the public and the ecosystems we serve.
How Do I Apply?

- Certification Program Overview
- Directory of Approved CERPs and CERPits
- Potential CERP/CERPIT Applicants
- Existing CERP/CERPIT Maintenance
- Partnering Opportunities
- Materials and Outreach
Mark Your Calendar

Part 2: Application Tutorial with Questions and Answers

**Jen Lyndall** will walk you through the application process. Certification Committee Member, **Anne Halford**, CERP, will provide a reviewer's opinion on what works well on an application. Continuing Education Committee Member, **John Wigginton**, will briefly discuss continuing education requirements. **Register now!**
Application Process

• Two application windows/year
  - February-May
  - July - October

• Automated online application process through www.ser.org/certification

• Review process
  - 3 independent reviewers for each application
  - If no consensus, goes to expanded review (6 reviewers) or request supplemental information
  - Decision announced
    - 8 weeks following application deadline for regular applications
    - 12 weeks following application deadline for applications using PLAR provision
  - Additional review time may be necessary for applications that required supplemental information or an expanded review
## Fee Structure

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fee</th>
<th>Membership Status</th>
<th>Practitioner</th>
<th>Practitioner-in-training</th>
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<tr>
<td>Initial Application Fee</td>
<td>SER Members</td>
<td>$250</td>
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<td>Non-members</td>
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<td>Upgrade from Practitioner-in-training to</td>
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<tr>
<td>Practitioner</td>
<td>Non-members</td>
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<td>$150</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Certification Maintenance and Renewal

• 5-year certification period

• Continuing education credits required in order to renew
  ▪ Pre-approvals for courses/workshops will be offered
  ▪ CE credits can be managed online by practitioners and authenticated by SER in advance of renewal
Continuing Education Credit Examples

- College-level continuing education coursework
- Specialized training (short courses and workshops)
- Attending approved conference sessions and/or symposia at SER and partner conferences
- Publications, including technical and educational materials
- Instruction of short courses/workshops
- Pre-approved volunteer activities
CERP Program Outreach/Partnerships

• CERP Program Ambassadors

• Agreements with Academic Institutions
  – Program alignment review
  – Program alignment and early career transition package

• Continuing Education Partners
How Do I Get My Course Pre-approved?
Continuing Education Pre-Approval Applications

• Sponsor Contact Info
• Course/event Name
• Type
• Instructor Name(s) and CV
• Course Objectives
• Description
• Dates
• How to Register
Current CERPs/CERPITs

228 CERPs/CERPITs

www.ser.org/cerpdirectory
CERP Program
By the Numbers
July 2018

Applications for CERP and CERPIT: 240
Approved CERPs: 182
Approved CERPITs: 45

Percentage of applicants who are members of the Society for Ecological Restoration: 88%

Countries represented by CERP and CERPIT applicants: 10

Hours spent by reviewers: 500+

Application window is open: www.ser.org/certification
“Having a structure for professional development is really important, especially in such a complex field”
– Regina Wandler, CERPIT, 2017

“Perception matters. Having a certification helps me stand out.”
– Bill Shadel, CERP, 2017

“I like the tangible evidence third party certification provides that indicate my qualifications in this particular profession.”
– Ondrea Hummel, CERP, 2017

“This program elevates the importance of ecological restoration work globally. By being part of SER I can support the growing exposure of the importance of ecological restoration.”
– Graham Gidden, CERPIT, 2017

“The lack of standardization/accreditation in the restoration field is something I was hoping would be addressed and CERP is a good start.”
– Heather Davis, CERP, 2017

“This certification will allow a standard of ecological restoration to exist and moving forward will be the industry standard for practitioners in a global community.”
– Robert Monico, CERPIT, 2017
Acknowledgements

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www.ser.org/certification