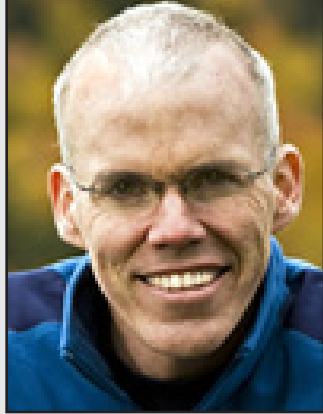


# 2012 MEDALS & AWARDS

## GSA PRESIDENT'S MEDAL

Presented to  
**Bill McKibben**



**Bill McKibben**  
*Environmentalist, author, and journalist*

### *Citation by John W. Geissman*

Mr. President, Ms. President Elect,  
colleagues, friends....

Everyone has the opportunity to contemplate crowning achievements in life, and this is as good as it gets for me. I stand next to a truly remarkable human being, who is greatly deserving of the President's Medal from the Geological Society of America. Let me introduce Mr. Bill McKibben, Schumann Distinguished Scholar at Middlebury College. He is the author of over a dozen books on the environment, beginning in 1989 with *The End of Nature*. His most recent book, *Eaarth*, describes the new planet that we and our children and maybe their children will inhabit in the not too distant future. He is the founder of [350.org](http://350.org), an ever-growing grassroots climate campaign that has coordinated literally thousands of peaceful rallies in over 190 countries since 2009 to draw attention to the rapidly changing environment in which we live and we have affected. President of the Harvard Crimson newspaper in his undergraduate years, he holds honorary degrees from over a dozen colleges and universities. In 2011, he was elected a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has been awarded Guggenheim and Lyndhurst Fellowships and won the Lannan Prize for nonfiction writing in 2000. Despite the many differences that may exist in our convictions, I think that it is safe to say that we all share one thing in

great common. If you stood on a spot on the surface of our home (the only one we will ever have) where no other human has set foot, you would gather all of it in, cherish it and relish the experience forever. Tenzin Gyatso wrote, "We are visitors on this planet. We are here for one hundred years at the very most. During that period we must try to do something good, something useful, with our lives. If you contribute to other people's happiness, you will find the true meaning of life." I think that you will agree with me that the recipient of the 2012 President's Medal of the Geological Society of America has indeed done something exceptionally useful with his life. It is a true pleasure and true honor to present the President's Medal to Bill McKibben. Bill, thank you!

### *Response by Bill McKibben*

This is an extraordinary honor, for which I am deeply grateful. And I am even more grateful for the work that the members of this society, and their fellow geologists around the world, have carried out in helping us understand this remarkable moment in the history of our sojourn on this planet. In my work as a writer I've tried to understand and interpret the work of earth scientists as they grapple with the unprecedented task of observing planetary transitions in real time. And with millions of people around the world I've been privileged to try and take that work and build from it the kind of defense that I think our planet needs--a swift, confident swing away from the energy sources of the last few hundred years, and towards the next stage in our progress as a civilization. It's for all those people that we work with at [350.org](http://350.org) that I accept this great honor, and give my deepest thanks to all of you