# Goldman Environmental Prize honours seven grassroots activists protecting the planet in 2025



The Goldman Environmental Prize has announced its 2025 winners, recognising seven grassroots environmental activists from diverse regions around the world for their significant contributions to protecting the planet. The prestigious award, often called the “Green Nobel Prize,” honours individuals from each of the six inhabited continental regions who have made remarkable efforts in environmental conservation and advocacy.

The prize ceremony is scheduled for April 21 in San Francisco, California, at 5:30 p.m. local time. The event will be hosted by Rue Mapp, founder of the environmental education nonprofit Outdoor Afro, with musical performances by Rueda con Ritmo featuring Son Chévere. Those unable to attend in person can watch the ceremony livestreamed on the Goldman Prize YouTube channel.

Established in 1989 by Richard and Rhoda Goldman, the Goldman Environmental Prize is awarded annually based on confidential nominations from environmental organisations and individuals worldwide. An international jury selects the winners, who each represent a different continent or inhabited region.

The 2025 recipients are:

Semia Gharbi, Tunisia
Semia Gharbi, a 57-year-old scientist and educator, co-founded the Green Tunisia Network (RTV). Tunisia faces challenges enforcing regulations against illegal importation of waste, leading to health threats for local communities. In 2019, Gharbi led a campaign after Italian recyclables sent to Tunisia were found to be household waste disguised for sorting. Her advocacy resulted in the return of 6,000 metric tons of waste to Italy, arrests of more than 40 officials involved in the trafficking, and prompted the European Union to tighten controls on waste shipments.

Batmunkh Luvsandash, Mongolia
At 81 years old, electrical engineer Batmunkh Luvsandash hails from the Mongolian Gobi Desert, a biodiverse area threatened by mining activities. Concerned about environmental, cultural and economic impacts, he spearheaded the creation of a 26,700-hectare protected area in Dornogovi province in April 2022, adjacent to an additional 56,500 hectares already protected, securing a total of 83,200 hectares from extractive activities.

Besjana Guri and Olsi Nika, Albania
Social worker Besjana Guri (37) and biologist/aquatic ecologist Olsi Nika (39) collaborated to protect the Vjosa River from plans to construct 45 hydropower dams. Their initiative, Friends of the Vjosa, led to the designation of the 12,700-hectare Vjosa Wild River National Park in March 2023 — the first national park in Albania and Europe to protect a wild river. The river ecosystem supports endangered species such as European eels, Egyptian vultures and otters. The pair continue efforts against activities like water diversion and gravel extraction within the park boundaries.

Carlos Mallo Molina, Canary Islands
Carlos Mallo Molina, a 36-year-old marine conservationist and former civil engineer, opposed a port construction project in Tenerife, Canary Islands, that threatened the Teno-Rasca marine protected area, home to endangered sea turtles, whales and sharks. Having previously specialised in port infrastructure, he left his job in 2018 to establish the nonprofit Innoceana. His campaign culminated in the Canary Islands government cancelling the project in October 2021. Plans are now underway to build the region’s first marine conservation and education centre at the site.

Laurene Allen, United States
Laurene Allen, a 62-year-old clinical social worker from New Hampshire, became an expert on PFAS — persistent "forever chemicals" linked to health issues. Upon learning of water contamination caused by emissions from the Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics plant, she formed Merrimack Citizens for Clean Water in 2016. Her grassroots campaign led to the plant’s closure in 2024, although the company did not admit legal responsibility. Allen continues to advocate for remediation and monitoring of PFAS impacts.

Mari Luz Canaquiri Murayari, Peru
Mari Luz Canaquiri Murayari is an Indigenous Kukama Kukamiria activist from Shapajila, located on the Marañón River. In 2001, she founded the Hard-working Women’s Association (HKK) to address environmental damage caused by oil spills and to empower women in her community. In 2021, HKK sought legal personhood status for the Marañón River. In a landmark 2024 ruling, a Peruvian court recognised the river’s legal rights to be free from pollution and to maintain its flow, finding the government and state oil company Petroperú responsible for violations. This decision has inspired similar cases across Peru.

Jennifer Goldman Wallis, vice president of the Goldman Environmental Foundation, remarked in a press release, “It’s been a tough year for both people and the planet... However, for me, these environmental leaders and teachers — and the global environmental community that supports them — are the antidote.”

The 2025 Goldman Environmental Prize winners represent a wide array of strategies and successes in environmental protection—from grassroots organising and legal battles to scientific advocacy and ecological conservation—across multiple continents and diverse ecosystems. The forthcoming ceremony will highlight their exceptional achievements and ongoing efforts to safeguard natural resources and communities worldwide.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.goldmanprize.org/current-winners/> - This page lists the 2025 Goldman Environmental Prize winners, confirming the identities and regions of the seven grassroots environmental activists mentioned in the article.
* <https://www.goldmanprize.org/blog/introducing-the-2025-goldman-environmental-prize-winners/> - This blog post introduces the 2025 winners and provides details about Semia Gharbi's campaign in Tunisia against illegal waste importation, including the return of waste to Italy and regulatory impacts.
* <https://www.goldmanprize.org/meet-the-winners/> - This page offers comprehensive biographies of the winners including Batmunkh Luvsandash's work in Mongolia creating a large protected area in the Gobi Desert, and the collaboration of Besjana Guri and Olsi Nika to establish the Vjosa Wild River National Park in Albania.
* <https://www.goldmanprize.org/current-winners/#carlos-mallo-molina> - This section details Carlos Mallo Molina's marine conservation efforts in the Canary Islands that led to the cancellation of a port project threatening marine protected areas and his founding of the nonprofit Innoceana.
* <https://www.goldmanprize.org/current-winners/#laurene-allen> - This part of the 2025 winners' profiles covers Laurene Allen's grassroots campaign against PFAS contamination caused by the Saint-Gobain plant in New Hampshire and its resulting closure in 2024.