



# Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner Program 2019 Annual Report

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Prepared for:

SER Board of Directors

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This report provides a brief summary of the progress made in 2019 and potential areas to focus on in 2020.

## Program Updates

### Certification Requirements

No changes were made to the CERP/CERPIT requirements in 2019; however policies for continuing education and certification reviewers were formalized to facilitate consistency among reviews.

### Certification Maintenance

Maintenance fees were collected in June and December. Most CERPs/CERPITs paid in a timely manner; however, in 2020 we will move the December payment deadline earlier so that all fees are collected in the proper calendar year.

In 2019, 264 events/activities were submitted by CERPs/CERPITs for continuing education approval through Submittable and reviewed by members of the Continuing Education Committee. Additional CECs were directly added to certificants' journal through pre-approved archived webinars.

### Continuing Education Partnerships

Continuing education offerings are a mixture of both live events and archived webinars and trainings (<http://www.ser.org/page/CERPApprovedCECs>). In 2019, 58 events submitted by organizers/sponsors. Turnaround time on reviews was 1-3 weeks.

We continue to maintain pre-approval partnerships with the United States Department of Agriculture (including Forest Service and Natural Resources Conservation Service) webinars<sup>1</sup>,

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.conservationwebinars.net/previous-webinars/webinarSearch?SearchableText=&branding=&Subject=&getListOfCEUsNotExpired3=Society+for+Ecologi>

the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service joint Restoration Webinar Series,<sup>2</sup> the IUCN CEM webinar series, and the Interagency Ecological Restoration Quality Control Working Group webinar series.

In 2020, we will continue to build our live and online continuing education offerings to provide our CERPs/CERPITs with diverse and accessible continuing education options and to demonstrate the CERP program's relevance and standing with important agencies and organizations in the field of ecological restoration.

## Program Administration and Governance

No changes were made to the committee structures. Elections were held in November 2019 and all seats were filled on committees for 2020.

## 2019 Applicant Summary

In 2019, the CERP program accepted 119 applications and certified 108 CERPs/CERPITs. The general characteristics of the applicants and certificants are provided in the following sections.

### Number of Applicants

During 2019, 119 applications were submitted (71 for CERP and 48 for CERPIT) as presented in Table I. These numbers represent a decrease from previous years.

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[cal+Restoration+%28SER%29&getWebHost=&portal\\_type=Webinar&sort\\_on=webinarDate&sort\\_order=reverse&formSubmitted=1&review\\_state=published](#)

<sup>2</sup> <https://nctc.fws.gov/topic/online-training/webinars/restoration.html>

Table I. Applications for CERP and CERPIT Since Program Launch

	2017 Applications	2018 Applications	2019 Applications	Total
CERP	155	93	71	<b>319</b>
CERPIT	25	30	48	<b>103</b>
Total	180	123	119	<b>422</b>

The number of applicants 2019 was about the same as the previous year, although that was bolstered by a large cohort of Niagara College CERPIT applicants (Figures 1 and 2). The 2019 total number of applicants was between the “Reasonable Case” and “Worse Case” scenarios from the 2016 Business Plan (Figure 3) and in line with the revised application scenario from 2019. However, the lower number of application in the second window indicate a need to focus on increased demand through funder and government agency endorsement/preferential status.

Figure I. Comparison of Actual and Projected Number of CERP Applications for 2019

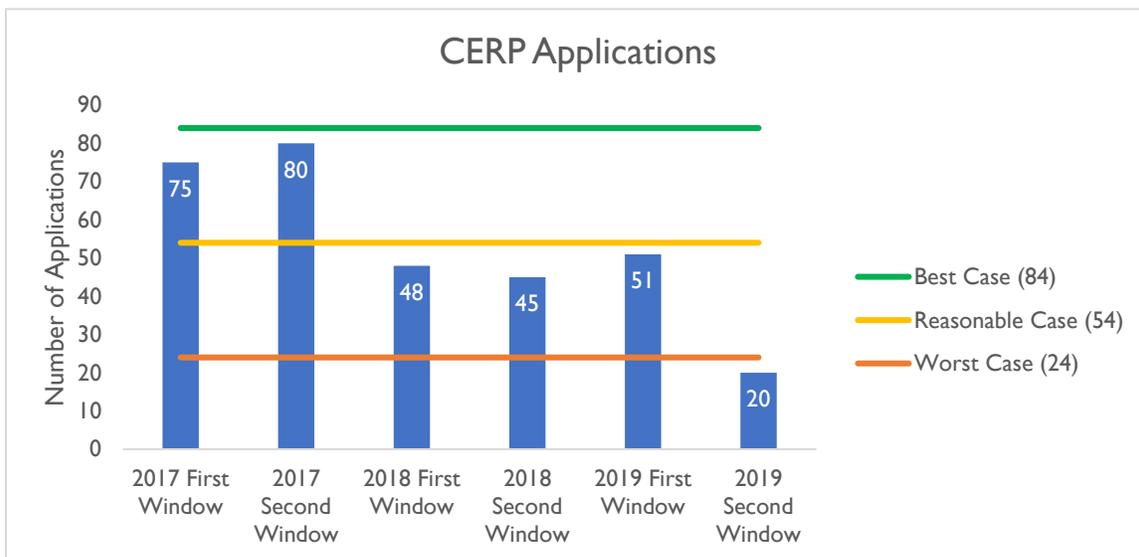


Figure 2. Comparison of Actual and Projected Number of CERPIT Applications for 2019

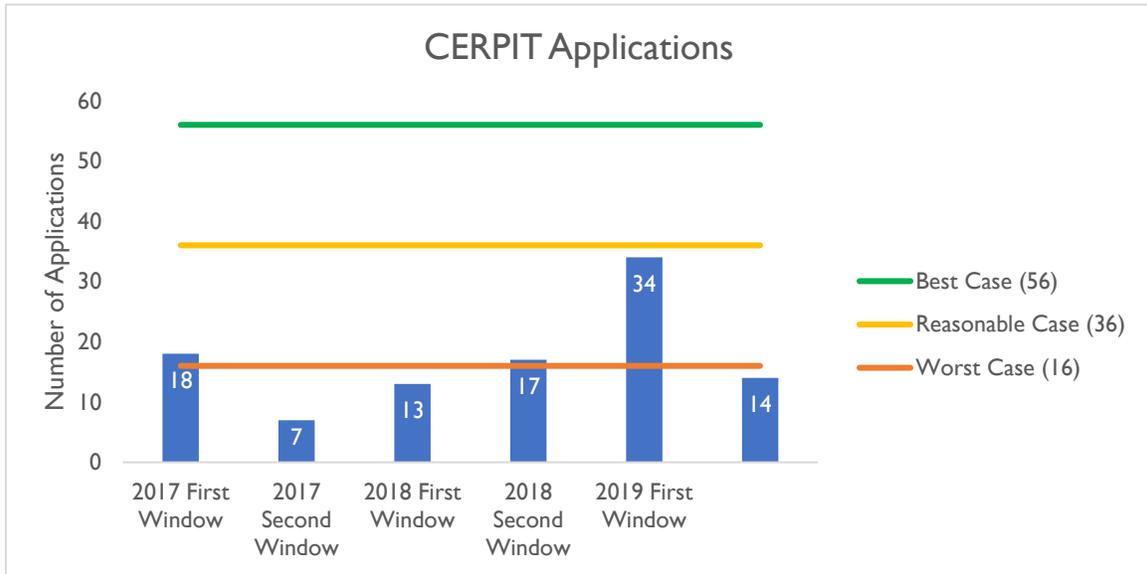
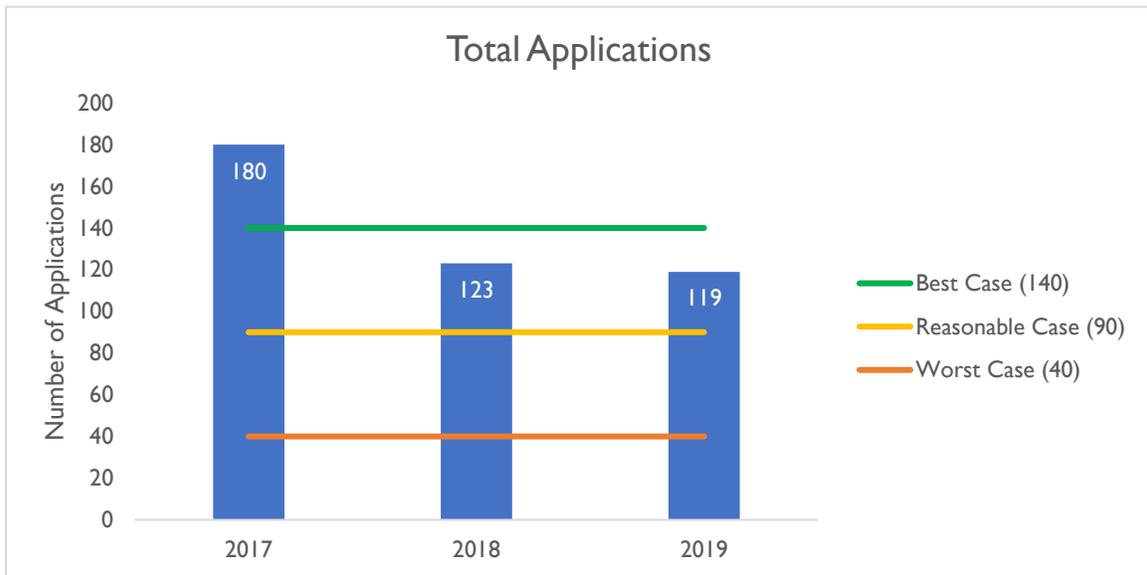


Figure 3. Comparison of Actual and Projected Number of Total Applications for 2019



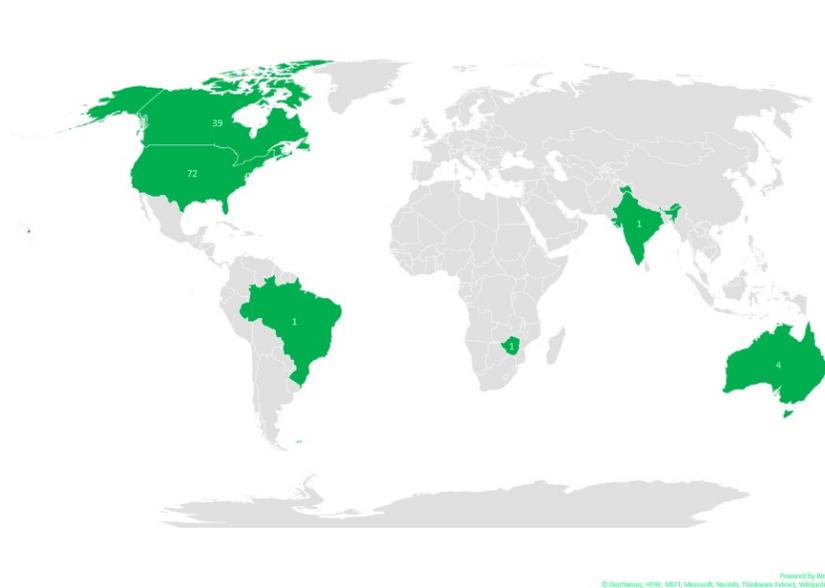
### Applicant Demographic Information

Demographic information was voluntarily provided by applicants during the application process.

Applicants from 2019 were from 7 countries (United States, Canada, Australia, Brazil, India,

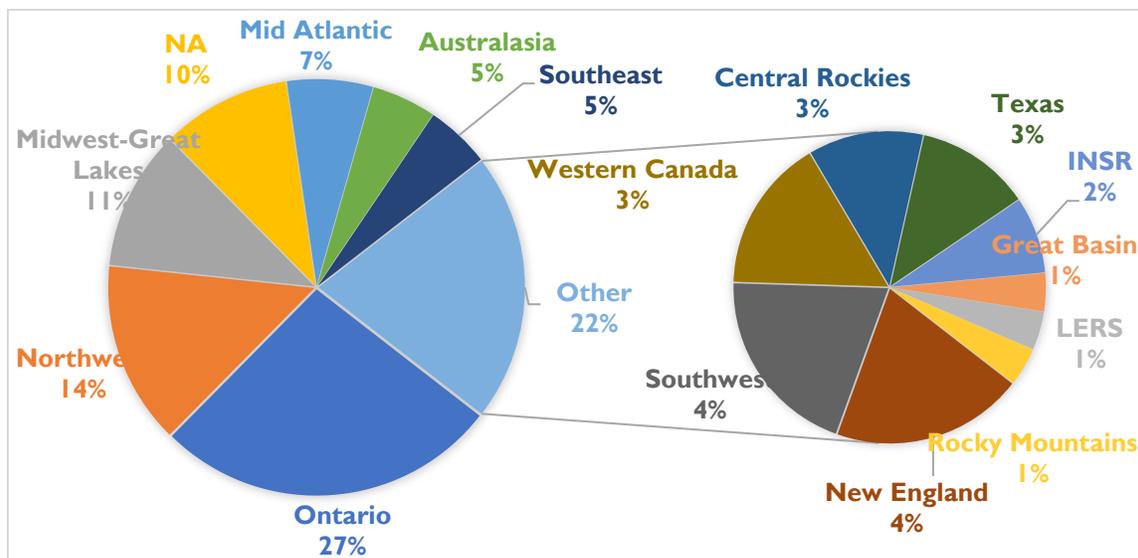
Falkland Islands (UK), Zimbabwe). The majority of candidates were from the United States (61%) and Canada (33%) (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Geographic Distribution of Applicants from 2019



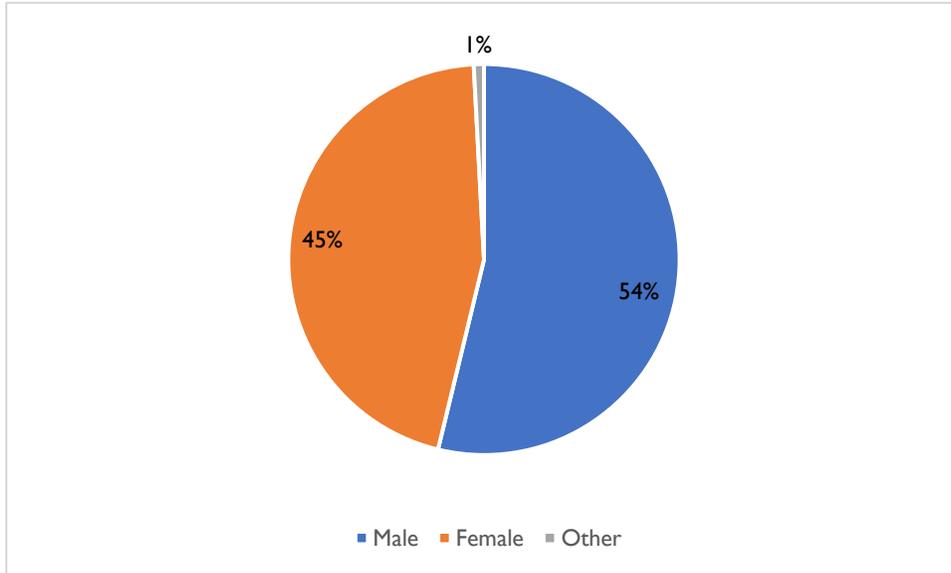
Applicants were associated with 17 SER chapters, thematic sections, and student associations (Figure 5). The chapters with the most applicants were the Northwest, Midwest-Great Lakes, and Ontario chapters.

Figure 5. Chapter Membership of Applicants from 2019



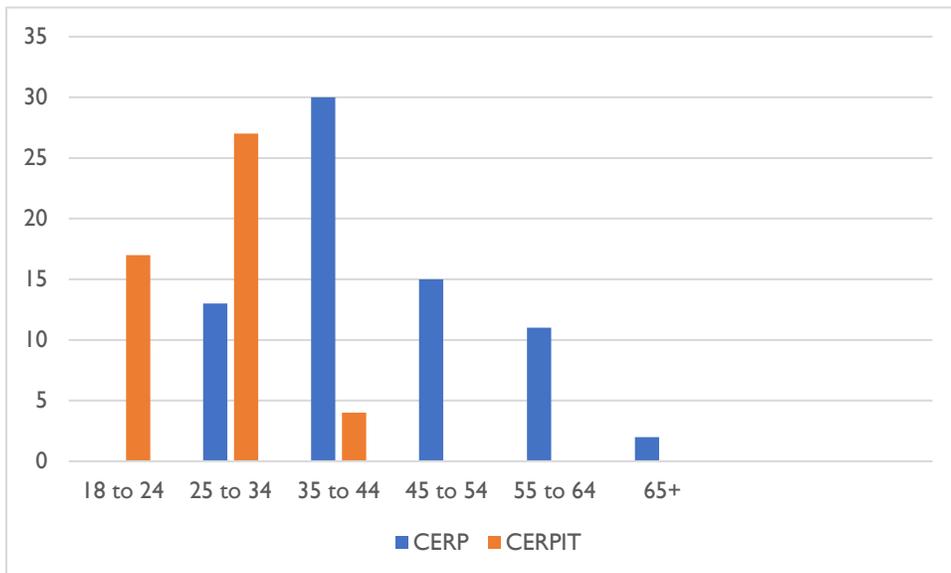
Applicants were 45% female and 54% male in 2019 (Figure 6).

Figure 6. Gender Distribution of Applicants from 2019



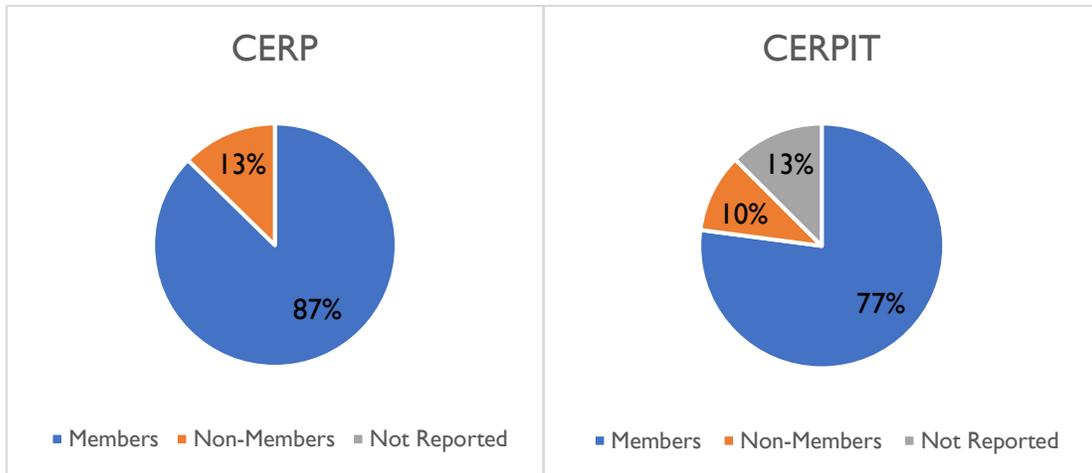
In 2019, all of the CERPIT applicants were under the age of 44 and the CERP applicants were between the ages of 25 and 64 (Figure 7)

Figure 7. Age Distribution of Applicants from 2019



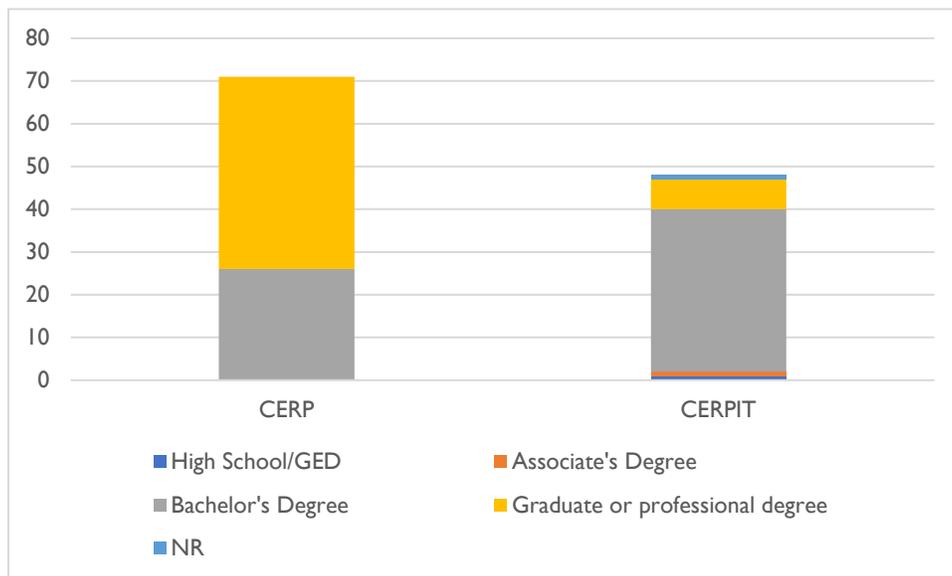
Most applicants for both CERP and CERPIT were SER members (Figure 8).

Figure 8. Membership Status of 2019 Applicants for CERP and CERPIT



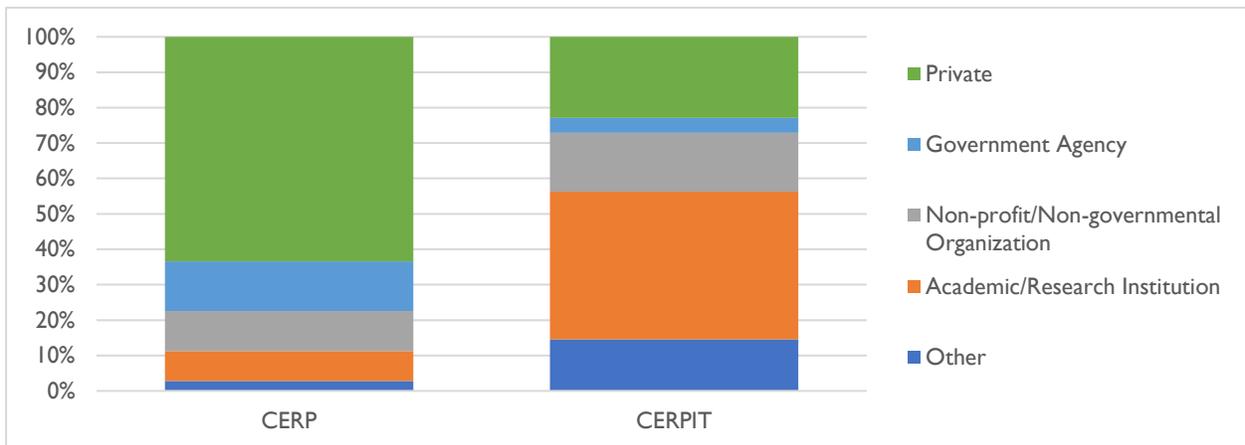
The number of applicants with bachelor’s degrees was similar for CERP and CERPIT (Figure 9). However, more CERP applicants had a graduate/professional degree than a bachelor’s degree.

Figure 9. Highest Degree Earned of Applicants from 2019



Applications for CERP were often from the private sector or government agencies (Figure 10). The majority of CERPITs were from Academic/Research Institutions, presumably because they are recent graduates.

Figure 10. Sector Affiliation of Applicants from 2019



### Review Process and Approval Rates

The overall approval rate for the CERP program was 91% (Table 2). Approval rates were higher for CERPs than CERPITs. For CERP applicants, 87% were approved outright and 7% were downgraded to CERPIT. For CERPIT applicants, 85% were approved, while 15% were rejected or still unresolved<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Applications may be unresolved for a variety of reasons. In this case, all three need to provide supplemental information for the review to proceed.

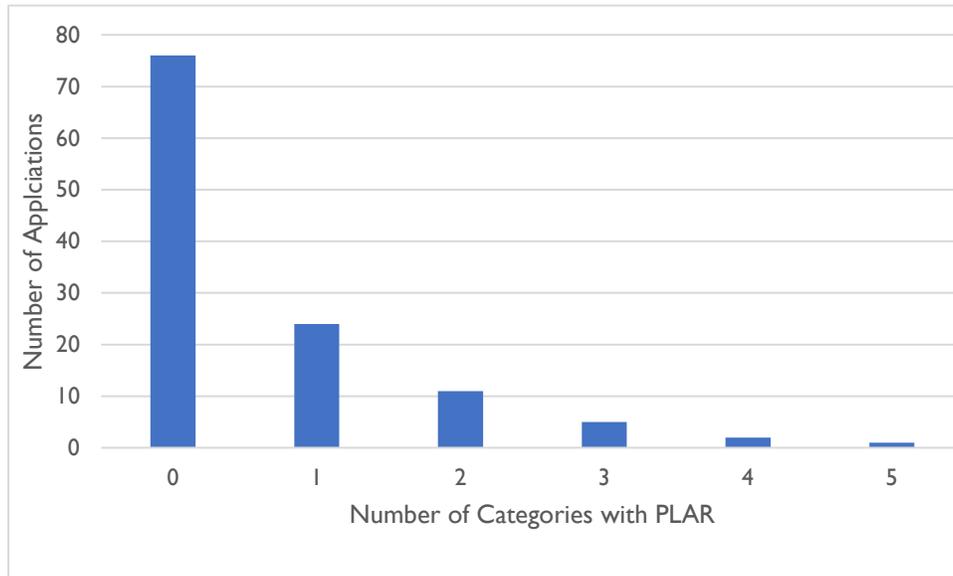
Table 2. 2019 Approval Rates for CERP and CERPIT

	CERP Applicants	Percentage CERP Applicants	CERPIT Applicants	Percentage CERPIT Applicants
Approved	62	87%	41	85%
Downgraded to CERPIT	5	7%	0	0%
Unresolved*	2	3%	1	2%
Rejected/Withdrawn	2	3%	6	13%
Total	71		48	

### Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition

The Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) provision (formerly referred to as grandfathering) was used in 36% of the applications (43 out of 119 applications) which was less frequent than Years 1 and 2 (60% and 40% of applications, respectively). Of those who used the PLAR provision in 2019, 56% used the provision in only one course requirement category – typically the Ecological Restoration category or one of the subcategories (e.g., soils/hydrology/climate, inventory/monitoring/assessment, ecology; Figure 11).

Figure 11. Number of Categories for which the PLAR Provision Was Used Per Application



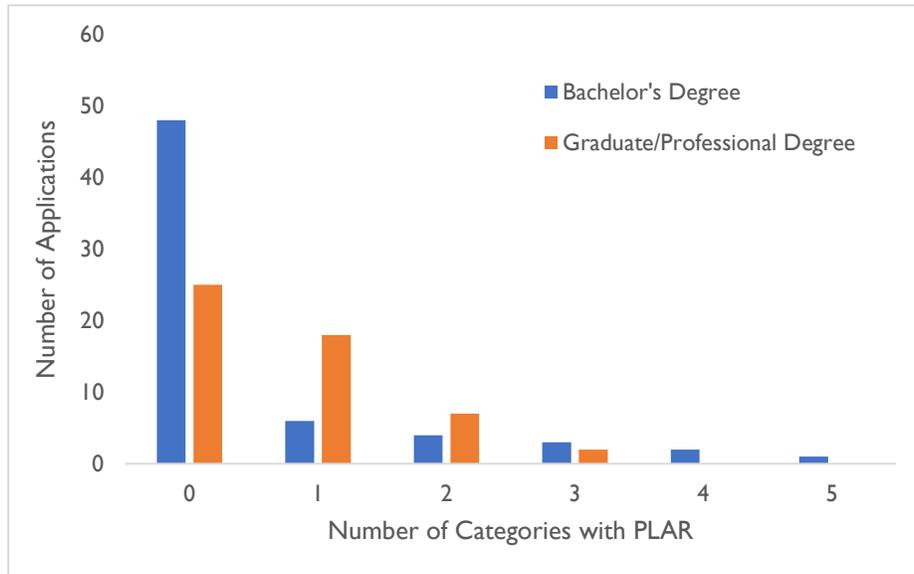
The PLAR provision was used for the Ecological Restoration category much more frequently than other categories, which were generally evenly distributed (Table 3).

Table 3. Incidence and Percentage of Overall PLAR Use for Each Category

Category	# Applications	% of Applications That Used the PLAR Provision
Biological Science	11	15
Physical Science	11	15
Resource Conservation and Management	10	13
Quantitative Science	10	13
Ecological Restoration	33	44

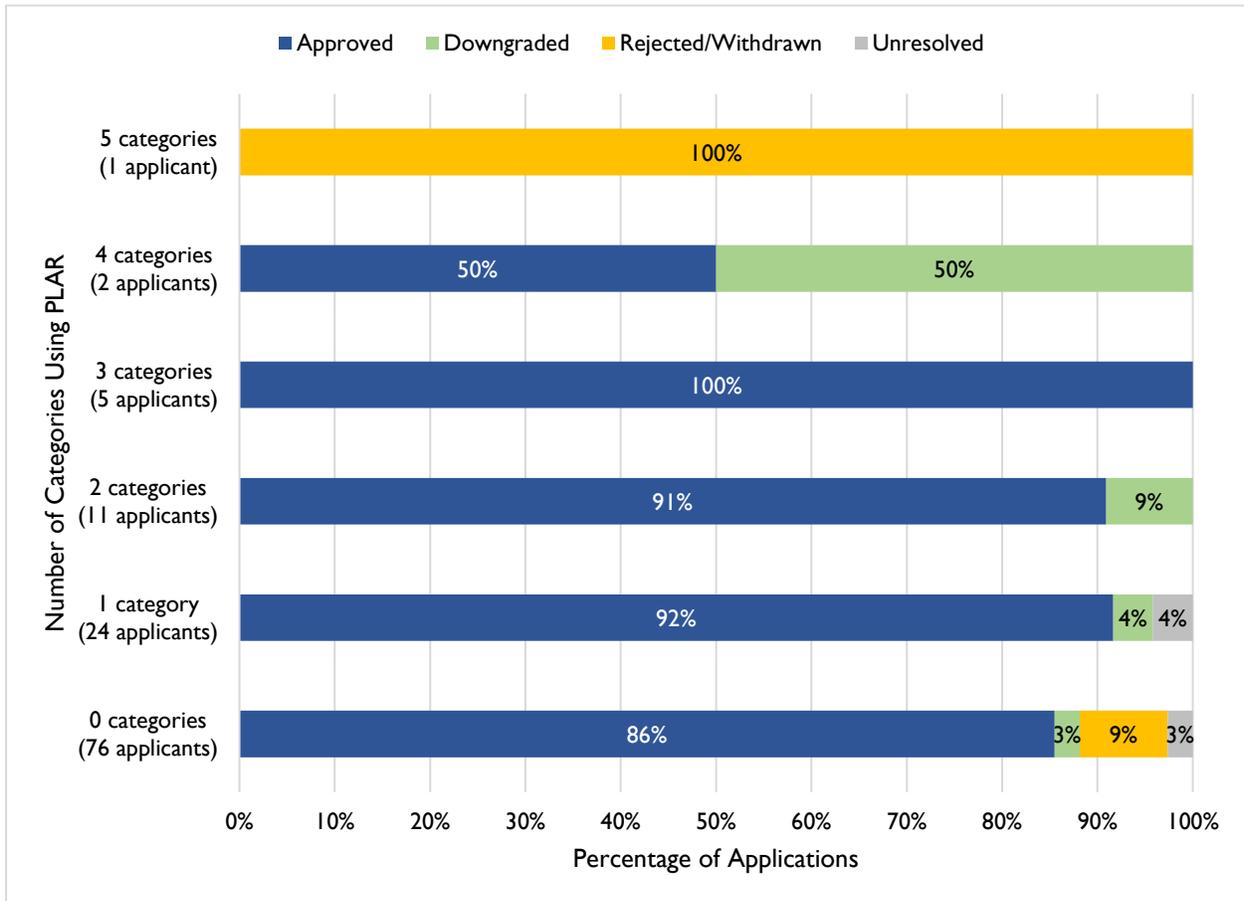
Applicants with a graduate or professional degree tended to use the PLAR provision more frequently than applicants with a bachelor's degree (Figure 12).

Figure 12. Number of Categories with PLAR Provision by Degree



Applications with no or limited PLAR use (0 to 2 categories) had a much higher percentage of approval (86-100% approval) compared to applications with PLAR use in 4 or 5 categories, which were typically downgraded to CERPIT or withdrawn/rejected (Figure 13).

Figure 13. Approval Status for Applications in Each Grandfathering Category



## Financial Summary

The CERP program was almost self-sustaining in 2019, bringing in \$43,447.50 in total income (Table 4). The CERP program projected expenses were approximately \$54,000, but actual expenses were only approximately \$45,000<sup>4</sup>.

<sup>4</sup> This does not include income and costs associated with the Hudson River National Estuarine Research Reserve training or the National Park Service Training.

Table 4. 2019 CERP Program Income (USD)

2019 Income	
Academic Institution Partnerships	\$3,000
CERPIT Upgrades	\$415
CERP/CERPIT Maintenance Fees	\$19,532.50
CERP/CERPIT Application Fees	\$20,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$43,447.50<sup>5</sup></b>

## Academic Institution Partnerships

In 2019, we increased our academic institution partnerships:

- **Program Alignment Review:** University of Victoria, Virginia Tech, Ohio State University
- Program Alignment and Emergent Professional Partnership: Niagara College

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<sup>5</sup> This includes \$1,537.50 of discounts from promo codes for sponsors and flex business members. These will be reconciled at the end of the fiscal year.

## Acknowledgements

This program would not be possible without our committee volunteers, who have graciously donated their time to ensure that the CERP program runs effectively:

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Bill Young	John Wigginton	Randy Walsh
Blaine Rothauser	Joshua Tallis	Richard Beck
Cara Nelson	Juli Crane	Rob Magill
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Chris Lenhart	Katherine Fitch	Rubens Chagas
Chris Polatin	Katie McMahan	Ryan Williams
Chris Taliga	Lynde Dodd	Sarah Koser
Connie Bersok	Maha Nusrat	Seth Wilkinson
Dan Savercool	Mary Barnwell	Tein McDonald
Dave Polster	Matt Fisk	Terry Doss
David Forestieri	Mel Asher	

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### Thanks to our CERP Program Sponsors!



For more information, you can go to our website at [www.ser.org/certification](http://www.ser.org/certification) or email us at [certification@ser.org](mailto:certification@ser.org).