

Memorandum

To: ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees

From: Rodney Swink, FASLA

Date: March 17, 2004

Subject: **Nomination of James S. Bedwell, ASLA, for the 2004 LaGasse Medal**

I would like to submit the name of James S. (Jim) Bedwell, ASLA, for the 2004 LaGasse Medal for landscape architects. Jim is an award winning landscape architect with the U.S. Forest Service, currently serving as Forest Supervisor for the Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland, a 1.7 million-acre area in northeastern Colorado.

Jim recently completed a term as Chief Landscape Architect for the U.S. Forest Service, a position he held from 1996 to 2000. He was hailed for his leadership in the areas of outdoor recreation accessibility, scenic byway program expansion, scenery management, and delivery of tools and resources to hundreds of Forest Service landscape architects. **He was responsible for several major initiatives during his tenure, each having national impact:** significant contributions to the development and advancement of the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS), development of the Built Environment Image Guide (BEIG), and the implementation of the Scenery Management System (formerly the Visual Management System).

The ROS is an outdoor recreation planning and classification system utilized extensively throughout the Forest Service for determining to what level lands should be developed. Research has shown that people choose a specific setting in order to participate in a certain outdoor recreation activity and realize desired experiences. **Jim was part of the team that developed the framework for understanding the often complex relationships and interactions between visitors' expectations and desired recreation opportunity.**

The BEIG, the Forest Service guide to planning and designing facilities, exemplifies the agency's concern, responsibility, and tradition in conservation, stewardship and sustainability. In 1997, Bedwell and other agency landscape architects and administrators became leaders in a two-year, \$750,000 process that resulted in an agency-wide, 275-page design manual called *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands*. The guide instructs planners and designers on how to assure that facilities on National Forests fit the land, portray a national image and identity for the agency and utilize state of the art sustainability practices. Beyond being an agency tool, the BEIG is of value to contractors and permit holders, so its value extends beyond the realm of the Forest Service landscape architects.

In the late 1990's, the Visual Management System was revised, updated and renamed the Scenery Management System. It presents a vocabulary for managing scenery and a systematic approach for determining the relative value and importance of scenery in a national forest. In addition to helping to implement this new system, **Jim took the lead in training Forest Service personnel in how to better involve customers in using the system.** Today more people are involved in assessing and helping to set plans for Forest Service land than ever before.

These are only a few examples of the national impact of Jim's work. **While serving as Chief Landscape Architect, Jim responded to Congressional inquiries (of which there were many), responded to national level requests for information and support, acted as the voice of the 300-plus landscape architects in the development of national policy and guidance in all aspects of recreation and scenery management, and represented the Forest Service in interagency cooperative meetings and discussions.** In addition, he was the alternate representative of the Forest Service on the U.S. Access Board's Regulatory Negotiation committee that was responsible for developing accessibility guidelines for outdoor developed areas, including campgrounds, picnic areas, beach access routes, and trails. He made sure that the work of landscape architects was recognized in agencies besides just the Forest Service.

Jim is currently the Forest Supervisor for the 1.7 million acre Arapahoe and Roosevelt National Forests and Pawnee National Grassland (ARNF/PNG) in north central Colorado, one of few landscape architects ever promoted to a forest supervisor position. In addition to active grazing, timber, and wildlife programs, the Forest is home to eight Congressionally-designated Wilderness areas, four ski areas, a National Recreation Area, and is visited by over 14 million people per year. This forest suffered a major fire just a couple of years ago and is still in its recovery period. **As Supervisor, Jim is ultimately responsible for the decisions made that will impact what will occur in this forest, what its future uses may be, and what its scenic quality will be based on these decisions.** As forest leader, Jim has responsibility in the areas of critical fire planning and fuels management for the protection of forest resources, life and property. He is also practicing what he preaches in the planning for the new ARNF/PNG Headquarters in Fort Collins, Colorado. He is seeking maximum use of "green" architecture with the commitment of having the facilities achieve LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) certification.

In another phase of his career, **Jim was the Team Leader for the planning, design and construction of the \$18 million El Portal Tropical Forest Visitor's Center on the Caribbean National Forest in Puerto Rico,** a facility dedicated to the wise management and conservation of sensitive tropical rain forests in Latin America. And he was recognized for his leadership as Forest Landscape Architect on the Santa Fe National Forest, a 1.5 million-acre forest in Northern New Mexico. **He received two Regional**

Planning and Design Arts Awards for his work on the Holy Ghost Campground and the Lower Jemez Complex. While participating in the Southwestern Region's Partners in Leadership program he was the principle author of the Region's "Capital Investment Process for Recreation and FA&O Facilities" which is the Region's protocol for project management. **He received a third Regional Planning and Design Arts Award for that work.** He was also on the team that developed the Southwestern Region's process for selecting Recreation capital investment projects.

Throughout his twenty-plus year career, Jim Bedwell has been credited for his significant contributions in many areas, including his work and leadership in the planning and design of several campgrounds, picnic areas, trailheads, and trails. Some of these projects were developed through partnerships with interested recreationists, and all involved a great deal of input from the public and skill in balancing frequently conflicting demands for recreation use. And at every stop along his career path, Jim has done more than just serve the role of landscape architect; he has also made considerable efforts to involve others and broaden the impact of his influence.

As Regional Landscape Architect for the USFS Southwestern Region, William Larson, noted, "Jim has exceptional skills in all facets of natural resource planning, design, management and administration. Jim is an outstanding public practitioner. He is an innovator and a leader who has distinguished himself in every facet of the profession-facility design, project management, land management planning, scenery management, program management, and public administration." Carol Whipple, FASLA, Project Manager with the Denver Service Center of the National Park Service, says, "Jim brought a newfound professionalism and awareness of landscape architecture to an agency striving for a new ideal in the realm of land protection and visitor use on public lands...the breadth of Jim's influence on stewardship of our public forests is largely unsung although millions of visitors directly experience the outcome of his vision and work every time they visit a national forest."

Highly regarded both within and outside of the U.S. Forest Service, Jim Bedwell is a very deserving candidate for ASLA's LaGasse Medal.