

Fredrick P. Huffman, ASLA

Founder, Earth Design

ASLA Council of Fellows Nomination: SERVICE

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Landscape
Architecture, School of
Environmental Design,

University of Georgia, 1993

PROFESSIONAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES

1996 - *South Carolina Native
Plant Society (SCNPS)*,
Founder

1993-2006 - *SCNPS*,
President

1997-2024 - *SCNPS*, State
and Chapter Board

1998 - *National Native Plant
Coalition*, Co-founder

1999 - *Southeast Exotic Pest
Plant Council*, Co-founder

1999 - *Upstate Forever*,
Volunteer to create Green
School Building Guidelines

1999-2004 - *SC
Environmental Educators
Board*, Member

2000 - *Southeast Exotic Pest
Plant Council*, Formation
Team

2001 - *South Carolina SEER
Education Pilot Program*,
Volunteer

On behalf of the Executive Committee of the South Carolina Chapter of the ASLA, it is my privilege to nominate Fredrick (Rick) Huffman, ASLA, for your consideration.

Executive Summary

Rick Huffman, ASLA, is the founder of Earth Design, a leading firm specializing in Environmental Design and Landscape Architecture. Throughout his career 30 year career, Rick has been a passionate advocate for conservation and environmental protection.

As the founder of the South Carolina Native Plant Society, he has demonstrated unwavering leadership and commitment to preserving the natural world.

His deep understanding of native plants, plant communities, ecosystems, wildlife, and design has transformed South Carolina's landscape, bringing native plants into the spotlight, and making them a household name. Rick has championed the role of native plants in green infrastructure, riparian buffers, watershed protection, and soil conservation. His influence extends locally, regionally, and nationally, where he continues to lead and advocate for landscape architecture as a vital tool in conservation and resilient design.

Career Beginnings, Earth Design

Rick Huffman, a 1993 graduate with honors from the University of Georgia's School of Environmental Design, is a pioneer in sustainable landscape architecture practices. Inspired by mentors like Dr. Darrell Morrison and Ian McHarg, Rick sought to transform resource-consuming landscapes into environments designed with native plant communities that provide wildlife habitats and ecosystem services.

Shortly after graduation Rick moved back to Greenville, his hometown, to work for a local firm. He quickly realized that his ecological approach to design ecological design uncommon in practice. To promote sustainable design with native plants, he founded Earth Design, blending applied ecology with thoughtful design. His work reconnects people with nature, creating a network of backyards that provide essential ecosystem services.

Rick has remained a passionate advocate for green infrastructure and restoration work that utilize native plants for their remedial qualities. Under his leadership, Earth Design has remained at the forefront of environmental design and restoration, advancing the profession of landscape architecture with a commitment to making a meaningful difference.

Rick Huffman has had a major impact in an increasingly broad spectrum of work inspired by a passion for, and love of, the land in his native South Carolina and beyond. His work goes from landscape design inspired by nature and natural processes, to protection, preservation and restoration of ecological function, biotic diversity and beauty in the landscapes he has impacted over his career of thirty-plus years.

Darrell Morrison
**Landscape Architect
& Honorary Faculty
Associate**
University of Wisconsin

Fredrick P. Huffman, ASLA

SCNPS as a Platform for Education, Leadership, and Service

In order to shift the market, Rick understood he would need a platform to spark change. In 1996, Rick founded the South Carolina Native Plant Society (SCNPS) as a nonprofit dedicated to promoting, preserving, restoring, and educating the public about native plants. SCNPS provided Rick with the platform to educate the public and to create a native plant movement in our state.

With unwavering commitment, passion, and drive, Rick served as president of the South Carolina Native Plant Society for its first 13 years, laying the foundation and mission of the organization as a science-based conservation group. Over the past 28 years, Rick used this platform to spread the gospel of native plants, inspiring countless individuals to embrace his love of native plant communities. Under his leadership, the organization grew rapidly in size and influence, expanding to seven chapters and 1,500 members.

As the SCNPS Advocacy Chair, Rick has been a cornerstone of the organization's mission, emerging as a passionate advocate for native plants and their vital role in our environments. He has led efforts to preserve entire habitats, such as the Carolina Bays, and has worked diligently to protect endangered species like the Bunched Arrowhead. Through his role with SCNPS, Rick has forged alliances with conservation partners, included but not limited to, the Natural Land Trust, the South Carolina Botanical Gardens, the South Carolina Audubon, Southern Environmental Law Center, and the Sierra Club of South Carolina, enabling him to shape federal, state, and local policies that have significantly advanced sustainable practices.

Leadership and Impact with SCNPS:

Rick has made a lasting impact on the South Carolina Native Plant Society (SCNPS) through his leadership and dedication. He served for 9 years on the Natural Areas subcommittee for South Carolina Department of Natural Resources (SCDNR) Heritage Trust Program, where he helped shape land acquisition and management strategies. As a key partner to SCDNR staff and stakeholders, Rick played a pivotal role in developing the management plan for the 43,000-acre Jocassee Gorges Wilderness in Pickens and Oconee South Carolina.

Under Rick's leadership, SCNPS advocated for the preservation of prescribed fire practices in vital areas like 'Orchid Alley' in the Francis Marion National Forest and Venus Flytraps in Lewis Ocean Bay in Horry County, South Carolina. During his presidency, SCNPS also acquired the 52-acre Carolina Bay, Lisa Matthews Memorial Bay in Bamberg SC, and worked hard to restore the critical fire regimes that maintain Bay plant communities and protect threatened species such as *Oxypolis canbyi*, Camby's Dropwort.

Rick's advocacy extended to climate change issues as well. He collaborated with expert botany teams to study salt marsh intrusion due to climate change in the ACE Basin, providing critical data for conservation. Throughout his involvement

Through his landscape design business, Rick has been an evangelist for private and public land management that respects ecology and promotes biodiversity and responsible environmental protection. Rick has been a tireless advocate who has created and led initiatives to benefit native plants and the ecosystems on which they depend, and Rick has been a persuasive educator of individuals, governments, and businesses. Rick is both a landscape designer and a landscape guardian.

Frank Holleman
Senior Attorney

Southern Environmental
Law Center

2003 - South Carolina
Department of Natural
Resources, Advisor
for Jocassee Gorges
Management Plan.

2004-2013 - South Carolina
Department of Natural
Resources Heritage Trust
Advisory Board, Advisor

2007-2016 - City of Pickens
Planning Commission,
Member

2008-current - Conservation
Voters of South Carolina,
Conservation Coalition State
Formation Member

2011-2020 - United States
Green Building Council. SC
Board Member

2015-2023 - Reedy River
Water Quality Group,
Member

2015-current - Friends of the
Reedy River, Board Member
(emeritus)

2017-current - City Center
Rotarian, Paul Harris Fellow

2022-current - South
Carolina Department of
Environmental Services
Saluda River Basin Council,
Advisor

HONORS AND AWARDS

Regional/Local Awards

2003, Environmental
Education Association
of South Carolina -

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Environmental Educator of the Year

2006, Governor's Award for Environmental Stewardship and Awareness

2010, Upstate Forever - Volunteer of the Year

2024, Conservation Voters of South Carolina - Lifetime Achievement for Conservation

PUBLICATIONS / RESEARCH

Publications

2004, *Life at Waters Edge*, Co-author, 2006 National Resources Publication of the Year

2009, 'Root of the Matter,' Greenville Magazine (May/June).

2009, 'Going Native,' Living in South Carolina. *Interviewed.*

2012, 'Deeply Rooted,' Town Magazine (April).

2012, 'Landscaping with Natives, Low Maintenance Gardens.' Garden Smart. *Interviewed.*

Speaking Engagements

2015, Keynote Speaker, USGBC & NCASLA Event

2019, Panelist & Speaker, ASLA Southeast Regional Conference

with SCNPS, Rick has remained a powerful voice for native plants and their importance in our ecosystems, influencing policy change across federal, state, and local agencies.

National Leadership and Landscape Architecture Advocacy

Rick's influence extends well beyond South Carolina. In 1998, at the invitation of Peggy Olwell of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), he testified before a Senate committee on the values of native plants, and the role of conservation non-profits and native plant organizations to our natural environment. This helped launch a national initiative that created guidelines and criteria for the use of native plants in land management. Rick's passion for native plants and land conservation can be seen through his history of advocacy work.

In 1999, Rick continued to work with Olwell to launch the National Native Plant Conservation Alliance. This brought together over 60 governmental agencies and 30 non-profits at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center where they created the criteria and guidelines for the BLM to use in their land management strategies and media campaigns to educate the public on native plants. He was the only landscape design professional at the conference and his expertise provided a holistic perspective that guided efforts to make native plants a household name.

In 2002, Rick took action to change the US Forest Service's approach to revegetating disturbed landscapes. Prior to Rick's intervention, the Forest Service used invasive grasses to revegetate disturbed areas after forestry services or logging practices. He advocated for the use of native grasses and plants to reduce the spread of invasive plant material into forest ecosystems. This led to the SCNPS USFS Native Grass and Seed Production Initiative, a 12-year program that reshaped the agency's approach to planting disturbed areas and engaged hundreds of volunteers to help preserve native ecosystems. He spent over two years advocating for a resilient management strategy that mimicked the natural processes of a forest community ecosystem before the concept of biomimicry was widely adapted by the profession. These federal policy changes are still in effect today.

Shaping Education and Sustainable Practices

In the early 2000's, Rick and his firm, Earth Design, worked with Upstate Forever, a land trust and conservation advocacy organization, to create the Green School Building Guideline for Greenville County Schools. This framework emphasized sustainable practices like site orientation that takes advantage of natural light, geothermal energy, stormwater wetlands, heat island reductions, and green roofs.

For the next decade, Earth Design helped Spartanburg District 5 design eight new schools, advocating for the importance of the landscape as an outdoor

I admire Rick's tremendous vision and talent in bringing landscapes to life in a natural, environmentally sustainable way, I also appreciate his advocacy for sensible and sustainable environmental public policy. I greatly benefitted from his wise counsel as a policy maker. Most importantly, the citizens of our county and state will enjoy the life and work of Rick Huffman for many years to come through his dedication to the natural environment.

Senator Larry Martin
Former South Carolina
State Senator

Fredrick P. Huffman, ASLA

Media

2003, 'NWF Songbird Orchard at Duke Energy,' Making it Grow TV. *Television Episode.*

2008, 'Native Plants,' Making it Grow TV. *Television Episode.*

2015, 'LEED Project Highlight: Upstate Forever,' Making it Grow TV. *Television Episode.*

2018, 'Understanding the Human Connection to our Planet, Biodiversity, Native Plants, and Ecological Services,' Eco-Landscaping. *Podcast Episode*

2024, 'Conversing with Nature: Using the Tools Nature Gives us with Rick Huffman,' Nature Based Exchange. *Podcast Episode*

EXPERIENCE

1993-1994, Designer, Will Goodman & Associates

1994, Designer, Sotir & Associates

1994-1995, Instructor, North Metro Tech

1995-1996, Designer, Arbor Engineering

1996-2023, Founder/
Principal, Earth Design
Landscape Architecture &
Environmental Design

classroom. Inspired by David Orr's with *Earth in Mind* and Leopold's *Sand County Almanac*, Rick guided the district to integrate these texts into their curricula, fostering land ethic values and nature-based education that will continue to inspire future generations. Rick's work with the Environmental Education Association of South Carolina (EEASC), conducting environmental education retreats and workshops, lead to his "2003 Environmental Educator of the Year" award.

Rick has also worked closely with Clemson University, leading a Native Plant Certification program within the horticultural department. He also gives regular guest lectures in the landscape architecture department, developed adult education programs for Clemson Extension and has served on review committees for landscape architecture student honors and awards. All of which further solidifies his commitment to the education of future generations about nature-based design, sustainability, and the role of the profession of landscape architecture.

Regional and Local Advocacy

In 2006, Rick received the "South Carolina Governor's Award for Environmental Awareness" for his outstanding contributions to education, professional practice, conservation, and the promotion of native plants, which gave him SC State House recognition for his contributions. His work with policy-guiding institutions, local municipalities, universities, botanical gardens, and the public has elevated the profile of landscape architecture as a profession that actively stewards our natural world.

Locally, Rick served on the City of Pickens Planning Commission for nine years. Where the Commission approved a downtown revitalization plan to improve connectivity and attract businesses. From 2011 to 2020, he contributed to Greenville's Green Ribbon BMP subcommittee. His work with this committee explored green infrastructure policies and criteria for use in the City of Greenville, some of which was adopted in a recent design guidelines update. His leadership on these committees helped guide municipalities toward sustainable practices. In 2010, Upstate Forever named him Volunteer of the Year for his green infrastructure advocacy. As a member of the SC USGBC, he promoted sustainable development. During the launch of the SITES initiative Rick led education efforts on the initiative with the SC and NC chapters of the ASLA.

Social and Scientific Service

Rick is passionate about water resources and has advocated for almost every river in the state of South Carolina. His advocacy for water policy and legislation spans over 15 years, working with groups like Conservation Voters of South Carolina and SC Rivers Forever, as well as serving as board emeritus for Friends of the Reedy River. He is currently serving on the Saluda River Basin Council with SCDNR (now South Carolina Department of Environmental Services (SCDES)) and 25 stakeholders working on water resource planning that will give scientific backing to water policy. Rick's efforts are to provide a scientific approach and

From starting his own landscaping firm to starting the South Carolina Native Plant Society, Rick's innovation, dedication, and persistence have showcased the beauty and significance of the southeastern regional flora while advocating for its protection. His groundbreaking work will continue to inspire people to embrace and protect their native plants, ensuring that future generations can enjoy them.

Peggy Olwell
**Plant Conservation &
Restoration Program
Lead**
Bureau of Land
Management

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model for water usage allowances so that this region can balance water availability, water usage, and aquatic ecosystem health over the next 50 years. His advocacy work in this arena is critical for the long-term health of our landscapes and provides an environmentally focused perspective for policy makers.

Rick's commitment to environmental and social justice is evident through his work with Indigenous tribes, helping reconnect them with traditional plant knowledge and forming a state tribal coalition. Earth Design and Rick are currently working with the WEGOJA Foundation, a state nonprofit committed to identifying and promoting the history and culture of the African American experience in South Carolina on a Rosenwald Schools trail study. The trail's goal is to tell the story of African American struggle for education through landscape architecture. Rick is a strong believer in the unique skillset that the profession of landscape architecture can bring to those traditionally underserved communities.

A Legacy of Service and Leadership

In 2024, Rick received the Lifetime Achievement for Conservation Award from the Conservation Voters of South Carolina, capping a career dedicated to environmental and social service. His work continues to touch lives and inspire the next generation of environmental stewards.

Rick Huffman's career has been a shining example of service to the profession of landscape architecture. Through education, advocacy, and conservation, Rick has raised the bar for what landscape architecture professionals can accomplish. His work has reshaped policies, enhanced ecosystems, and fostered sustainable practices across South Carolina and beyond. Rick's leadership and accomplishments clearly reflect the values of the American Society of Landscape Architects, making him a deserving candidate for the Fellow of Landscape Architecture honor.

Summary by Chapter President:

Fredrick (Rick) Huffman, ASLA, has dedicated over thirty years to advancing landscape architecture and environmental conservation both locally and nationally. As founder of Earth Design, Rick has positioned his firm at the forefront of Environmental Design and Landscape Architecture, specializing in sustainable practices that integrate native plants, bioengineering, and ecological principles. His efforts have transformed South Carolina's landscapes, promoting native plants in green infrastructure, riparian buffers, watershed protection, and soil conservation.

Rick Huffman embodies the values of the American Society of Landscape Architects through his unwavering dedication to sustainability, education, and community service. His extensive leadership, innovative contributions, and passionate advocacy make him a deserving candidate for elevation to the ASLA Council of Fellows.

Sincerely,



Chris Owings, PLA, ASLA

ASLA South Carolina Chapter President