



January 30, 2019

LaGasse Medal Nominations  
c/o Honors and Awards  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: Julie Hensley, ASLA

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

I am pleased and honored to submit this nomination for Julie Hensley, ASLA for the LaGasse Medal for a Landscape Architect. Throughout her long and illustrious career, Julie Hensley, ASLA has been concerned with the proper management of the nation's public lands and the judicious use of the country's natural resources for the enjoyment and betterment of society. Her life and accomplishments truly embody the spirit of the Medal and its namesake, Alfred B. LeGasse.

Highly respected by her colleagues and peers, Julie Hensley, ASLA has spent a significant amount of time serving the citizens of the Charleston region where her career has had a lasting and far-reaching impact.

Julie is a 1986 graduate of the University of Kentucky with a BSLA. She is a professional landscape architect (PLA) and a LEED Green Associate. After graduating from Kentucky, Julie joined the Charleston based architecture firm of LS3P where she assisted in master planning and site planning for a variety of recreation, resort, commercial and institutional projects. It was during this time that she began to develop her passion for parks. In 1990, Julie left LS3P to take a position with the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission as a landscape architect. She remained at CCPRC for 28 years and when she retired from that agency, she was Director of Planning, responsible for all aspects of park master planning, long range planning, land acquisition, facility design and land resource management.

In that leadership role, Julie had the direct oversight responsibility for over 10,000 acres of parkland consisting of a very diverse offering of parks, programs, and services. Working alongside the Executive Director and other key staff members, she helped shepherd the agency through the largest capital project, budget, and attendance growth in the agency's history.

During Julie's tenure at CCPRC the agency grew from 5,000 acres of parkland to over 12,000 acres of protected parkland. CCPRC has been nationally recognized for operating an ever-expanding park system with little reliance on tax subsidies for growth. During that time, Julie worked closely with the other landscape architects on staff at CCPRC and the numerous landscape architects who served as consultants for the many park projects completed during her tenure. She retired from that position in March 2018,

although she has not retired from the profession and is currently the Owner at Julie Hensley, Landscape Architect LLC, where she works on specialized landscape design and planning services for residential and small scale commercial projects.

The Charleston area is rich in natural features with its distinctive “lowcountry” landscape, which is defined to a great extent by our marshes, rivers, and creeks. CCPRC provides public beach access on Folly Beach, Isle of Palms, and Kiawah Island as well as boat and kayak launches on the Folly River, the Wando River, the Stono River, the Edisto River, the Ashley River, the Cooper River and the Intercoastal Waterway, as well as a number of smaller creeks and tributaries.

There are large County Parks, which are primarily passive in nature, on James Island, North Charleston, and Mount Pleasant with other large tracts being preserved and held for future use. Julie has had her hand in the design and management of every one of these properties.

The Caw Caw Nature Preserve is situated among a 654-acre site rich in natural, cultural and historical resources. Once part of a 5,500-acre rice plantation that flourished in the late 1700’s and early 1800’s, the land was home to enslaved Africans who applied their technology and skills in agriculture to carve a highly successful series of rice fields out of this cypress swamp.

The McLeod Plantation, preserved and maintained by CCPRC, has borne witness to some of the most significant periods of Charleston’s - and our nation’s - history. Today McLeod Plantation is an important 37-acre Gullah/Geechee heritage site that has been carefully preserved in recognition of its cultural and historical significance. The grounds include a riverside outdoor pavilion, a sweeping oak allée, and the McLeod Oak, which is thought to be more than 600 years old.

Other CCPRC facilities include campgrounds, dog parks, skate parks, climbing walls, and challenge courses. Julie’s approach to each one of these projects has been both pragmatic and visionary. She always knew she had a program to fulfill and a budget to meet but she never wanted to compromise the integrity of the design or the character and natural features of the site.

Through her work with CCPRC, Julie was also very involved in the Berkeley Charleston Dorchester Council of Governments Walk-Bike initiative that planned pedestrian and bicycle linkages across the tri-county area. Julie attended stakeholder and public meetings, as well as Steering Committee meetings providing guidance on this effort. She also worked with the East Cooper Land Trust and Alta Planning and Design to further the idea of the East Cooper Trail that would connect the Santee River to the Cooper River with over 50 miles of trails and greenways.

Julie has also provided pro bono work including park design for Folly Beach, which is her home in the Charleston area. According to the Town of Folly Beach, Julie’s generosity “has managed to shoehorn little jewels of pleasure into a crowded, developed island”.

Julie was also very involved in the Charleston Greenbelt Program. This program started in 2004, when nearly 60% of voters approved a half-cent sales tax increase in a county-wide referendum. This tax increase, the “Transportation Sales Tax,” was created to fund roadway and transportation improvements and to preserve land through a greenbelt program. The Greenbelt Program has protected over 21,000 acres of land, to date. Over 9,300 acres were purchased for future public parks and greenspaces. The Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan allocated \$36,000,000 to Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission for regional parkland acquisition. Julie was instrumental in deciding which sites would be acquired using this funding source.

Julie also worked with the City of Charleston in the creation of a new zoning category, known as the Upper Peninsula District. This zoning ordinance is incentive based, meaning that developers can increase building heights and density by obtaining “points” through different green-building and community building actions. Julie was very involved in the Civic Places Committee of this effort and provided valuable insight into what makes public open space useable and exceptional. Much of her knowledge translated into requirements of the ordinance where points are achieved through the provision of public open space as a component of a project.

Julie has also been a faithful member of ASLA attending Chapter meetings and ASLA National Conferences on a regular basis and participating in education sessions dealing with parks, trails, and complete streets. She has been a full member of ASLA for over 27 years.

Julie’s life (so far) has been exemplified by enthusiasm, passion, and dedication for parks and open space. Julie is most passionate about trails and greenways and has been a big advocate for those networks in the Charleston area. The goal of all this has been to create healthy communities. Julie recognized early in her career that having a good park system also meant being good stewards of the land. Her work to conserve land and open space for human enjoyment has been at a cornerstone of her efforts.

Because of her dedication, over the bulk of her career, to conserving and responsibly using open space she is very deserving of the LaGasse Medal. I have known Julie for many years and have worked with her both as a fellow citizen and as her consultant on several park master plans. Scores of other landscape architects have worked with her as well. Julie always brings with her a quiet determination to make every park the best it can be – both in providing memorable places that create a stronger sense of community and in being responsible stewards of our lowcountry landscapes.

So, I heartily nominate her for this honor and urge you to cast your vote in support of this nomination.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William T. Eubanks." The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'W' and 'T'.

William T. Eubanks, FASLA  
Creative Director  
SeamonWhiteside  
(Immediate Past Trustee, South Carolina Chapter, ASLA)

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636 Eye Street, NW  
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RE: Julie Hensley, ASLA

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

We are writing this letter of support for Julie Hensley, ASLA on behalf of the South Carolina Chapter of ASLA. Julie is being nominated for the LaGasse Medal (Landscape Architect) by one of our chapter members, William T. Eubanks, FASLA. This nomination (as well as the nomination for Mr. Tom O'Rourke) has been endorsed by our Chapter's Executive Committee and Mr. Eubanks is making this submission at our request.

Julie Hensley, ASLA is a professional landscape architect and has been a member of our Chapter for many years. She has spent most of her career working at the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission, from which she has recently retired and now has a consulting practice. Julie has also been a faithful member of ASLA and regularly attends national conferences and chapter functions.

During her tenure at the Charleston County Parks and Recreation Commission she not only led the design and planning efforts but also served as the client for scores of landscape architects, engineers, and architects who were involved in the design of various aspects of the many parks in the CCPRC system. Through that client-consultant relationship, many members of our chapter have interacted with her over the years. Through those interactions, she was always professional, respectful, and inspirational. While those of us in the profession were responsible for meeting the programmatic and budgetary requirements of the projects, we always knew that Julie made sure all consultants remembered the philosophical requirements of our mission.

Julie's career has been devoted to the sustainable stewardship of thousands of acres of parkland which has resulted in not only preservation of some wonderful lowcountry places of pristine scenic and cultural value but has also provided access to water, useable parks, and recreational opportunities for over 400,000 Charleston County residents, not to mention thousands of visitors, tourists, and residents of surrounding counties. Her work, then, has not only conserved land in the lowcountry but improved the lives of its people.

For this important contribution, made over decades of dedicated service to her community, our chapter heartily endorses this nomination for the LaGasse Medal.

Respectfully submitted,



W. Clint Rigby, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP  
SCASLA Chapter President SCASLA



K. Holley Owings, PLA, ASLA  
SCASLA Chapter Trustee



**South Carolina**  
**Chapter of the American Society**  
**of Landscape Architects**

**181 Bluffton Road, Suite F203**  
**Bluffton, SC 29910**

[scasla.org](http://scasla.org)

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RE: Julie Hensley LaGasse Medal Nomination

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

I am writing to support the nomination of Julie Hensley for the LaGasse Medal for Landscape Architects.

Julie was dedicated to the field of park and recreation planning and design during her distinguished 28-year career at Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission (CCPRC). In the early part of her career, Julie managed the design and development of county park facilities and infrastructure. Starting in 2007 in her new role as Planning Director, Julie led a larger-scale planning effort, as the agency strategically and opportunistically grew from about 5,000 acres to over 11,000 acres in landholdings. Julie's involvement was instrumental to the land acquisition effort and the application of protective measures to the new parkland. Her work is consistent with the purpose of the LaGasse award.

Julie once worked on the original team of designers on the master plan for James Island County Park – one of CCPRC's signature regional parks which incorporated trails, shelters, event areas, a waterpark, dog park, campground, and other amenities. However, Julie would later join-on with CCPRC as a project manager, leading projects from the master planning phase through development. Eventually though, a series of events led to Julie focusing solely on planning for the agency:

1. A new local half-cent sales tax referendum provided \$36 million in dedicated funding for CCPRC's acquisition of new parkland. This referendum also made millions more dollars in grant funding available for open space acquisition and conservation elsewhere in Charleston County, which CCPRC was also able to utilize through an application process.
2. Under Tom O'Rourke's leadership as Executive Director, there was a desire to split the Planning and Development arms of the agency, to enable the management and protection of natural and cultural resources on new and existing properties.
3. As a prerequisite of the agency's inevitable expansion, it was necessary to study CCPRC's level of service and accessibility by surrounding communities. Comprehensive plans including CCPRC's "Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Trails (PROST) Plan" and "People 2 Parks Bike-Walk Plan" would help the agency to prioritize funding and staff resources going forward.

As Director of the Planning [and Resource Management] Division of CCPRC, Julie's responsibilities involved coordinating with internal and external stakeholders toward a unified vision for the agency. In addition, Julie's strong skills in relationship development helped CCPRC to leverage staff and funding resources for land acquisition, cultural and natural resource inventories, land management and permitting, and connectivity-related infrastructure.

After reviewing the organizational structure of other model park agency planning divisions, Julie appealed for a new "Land Resource Manager" position. This person would be responsible for managing

the implementation of land management activities, conducting and/or managing cultural and natural resource inventories, coordinating internal “preliminary access” trail development projects, and establishing a GIS database of park-related spatial information. Essentially, the Land Resource Manager is the “conscience” of the agency, keeping staff aware of the resources that should be guiding future park development. This position – created under Julie’s leadership – would complement the land acquisition efforts happening at the time.

Julie also coordinated and negotiated with local municipalities and entities for CCPRC’s use of their land for “Rural Recreation Sites”. Most recently, this included an agreement to use municipality-owned land for CCPRC’s West County Aquatic Center, a facility where staff will provide swim lessons and programs for residents to reduce the risk of drowning-related deaths.

In light of the spatial data gathered and created through the years, and in anticipation of future park master planning efforts, Julie recognized the importance of having a protocol for Land Use Planning on CCPRC properties. Although Land Use Planning is not a novel process among Landscape Architects, Julie saw it is necessary to build this process into CCPRC’s standard master planning scopes of work. Both staff-led and consultant-led master planning efforts now require Land Use Plans. Comprised of “Stewardship Zones”, Land Use Plans are essentially a suitability map delineating varying levels of potential development intensity (recreation, conservation, preservation, and “special-use overlay areas”).

The Land Use Plan became CCPRC’s most basic means of communicating development potential to agency staff and to the public. The agency’s recent expansion resulted in over 75% of the CCPRC’s landholdings having some level of protection (via deed restrictions, conservation easement, or local ordinance), and Land Use Plans encourage designers to consider conservation requirements early-on in the master planning process.

I was privileged to work under Julie for seven years as CCPRC’s Land Resource Planner, and currently as its Senior Planner. Julie’s leadership in local planning efforts have protected thousands of acres for the benefit of the public, and ensured the longevity of valuable cultural and natural resources. In addition, Julie worked to design and implement park facilities that provide enjoyment for thousands of visitors to the Charleston County park system. She demonstrated an ability to master plan for a wide range of landscape scales, and to find solutions for diverse and complex problems. It is my belief that – if the residents of Charleston County were made aware of Julie’s contributions to enhancing and protecting Charleston County’s landscape – they would be forever grateful.

Thank you for considering Julie Hensley for this honor. (\*See a summary of Julie’s land acquisition accomplishments in Enc. 1.)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "M. C. Moldenhauer", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew C. Moldenhauer, PLA, ASLA, PMP

Senior Planner, Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission

ENCLOSURE:

Enc. 1. Land acquired between 2007 and 2018, led/coordinated-by Julie Hensley, ASLA, on behalf of Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission.

**ENCLOSURE 1. Land acquired between 2007 and 2018, led/coordinated-by Julie Hensley, ASLA, on behalf of Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission.**

Julie pursued and leveraged local, state, and federal grants for the acquisition of:

- Awendaw park site (60.7 acres, protected by local ordinance);
- Bulow County Park site (1,951.4 acres, protected by a combination of conservation easement, deed restrictions, and local ordinance);
- Dorchester Road park site expansion parcel – near Andre Michaux’s Charleston nursery site (12.1 acres, protected by local ordinance);
- East Arctic Avenue park site (0.9 acres, protected by local ordinance);
- Edisto Island Riverside expansion parcel (10 acres, protected by conservation easement and local ordinance);
- Laurel Hill County Park (746.7 acres, “protected” by long-term lease with use limitations);
- McClellanville County Park site (812.6 acres, protected by conservation easement and local ordinance);
- McLeod Plantation Historic Site (36.9 acres, protected by conservation easement);
- Meggett County Park (475.1 acres, protected by combination of local ordinance and deed restrictions);
- Old Towne Creek County Park – parcel 1 (13.2 acres, not protected);
- Old Towne Creek County Park – parcel 2 (54.1 acres, protected by conservation easement);
- Rifle Range Road County Park site (245.6 acres, protected by local ordinance);
- Sk8 Charleston County Park (3.3 acres, protected by deed restrictions);
- Sol Legare Boat Landing (0.86-acre, not protected); and,
- Tea Farm Creek – Caw Caw Interpretive Center expansion parcel – (394.5 acres, protected by local ordinance).
- SUBTOTAL – LAND PURCHASED OR LEASED SINCE 2007 = 5,363.4 ACRES
  - **PROTECTED PURCHASED OR LEASED LAND = 5,350.2 ACRES (99.8%)**

In addition, more than one thousand acres were gifted by private entities:

- Stono River County Park – trailhead for a local greenway, and major marsh/river overlook (85.6 acres, protected by deed restrictions);
- “Baker” Park Site – brownfield and former hospital site on the banks of the Ashley River (102.9 acres);
- Rantowles Creek Marsh Islands (210 acres, protected by conservation easement);
- Spring Grove County Park (638 acres, protected by conservation easement and deed restrictions); and,
- Laurel Hill County Park expansion parcel – gifted by the adjacent development (17.2 acres)
- SUBTOTAL – LAND GIFTED SINCE 2007 = 1,053.7 ACRES
  - **PROTECTED GIFTED LAND = 933.6 ACRES (88.6%)**

<b>TOTAL – PROTECTED LAND PURCHASED, LEASED, OR GIFTED SINCE 2007 = 6,283.8 ACRES</b>
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**EAST COOPER  
LAND TRUST**

*Our Present for the Future*

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RE: Julie Hensley, ASLA

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

I am pleased and honored to submit this letter of support for Julie Hensley, ASLA for the LaGasse Medal for a Landscape Architect. Julie has spent much of her career conserving land so people will always have access to the natural beauty of the lowcountry. She is highly respected by her colleagues and peers, and her work in the Charleston area will have a lasting impact that will be enjoyed forever by residents and visitors to the area.

The popularity of Charleston has grown over the years, making conservation efforts even more critical and timely. Julie worked diligently to select key parcels for protection before it was too late using public funding sources like the Charleston County Greenbelt Program. This program which began in 2004, allocated \$36,000,000 to Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission for regional parkland acquisition. Over 9,300 acres were purchased for future public parks and greenspaces under Julie's management. Julie also recognized that we can not always save larger tracts of land in the urban environment, making trail and greenway networks critical to having healthy communities. Julie and I worked together on several trail initiatives that planned pedestrian and bicycle linkages across the tri-county area. She also provided valuable guidance on the East Cooper Land Trusts efforts to create the East Cooper Trail that will one day connect the Santee River to the Cooper River with over 50 miles of trails and greenways. Julie is beautiful, wise and always willing to help out a colleague with a conservation project. Please support Julie Hensley's nomination for the LaGasse Medal for Landscape Architect.

Sincerely,

Catherine Main

Executive Director, East Cooper Land Trust

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Washington, DC 20001-3736

**RE: Tom O'Rourke (or Julie Hensley, ASLA)**

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

I am pleased to support the nomination of Tom O'Rourke and Julie Hensley for the ASLA LaGasse Medal. I have known both of them for many years, and worked with them as we sought to preserve and protect the valued and rapidly disappearing LowCountry landscapes of Charleston County.

One of the reasons I believe that Tom and Julie are so deserving of this award is because of the risks that they took to champion the cause for landscape stewardship, conservation and preservation. It was never easy to be out front, leading these efforts. South Carolina is a strong private property rights region and landowners don't appreciate being told what they can and cannot do with their land. Particularly when it is someone from the "government" who is making the request.

Tom and Julie always kept their cool and professional demeanor. That fought emotion with measured response and facts. They communicated effectively the need for conserved parks, open space and greenways. They celebrated the lifestyle of LowCountry residents and persuaded them that conservation was in their best interests. They have been effective leaders in that regard.

Finally, the joint efforts for land conservation in Charleston County, that were led in part by Tom and Julie, have yielded one of the nation's most successful land and water conservation programs. Tom and Julie have been instrumental in this success. Without their leadership and dedication to the cause, this program would not have been as successful.

I am thrilled to support their nomination for the LaGasse Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charles A. Flink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charles A. Flink, FASLA  
Greenways Incorporated  
31 Woodgate Court  
Durham, NC 27713



January 30, 2019

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Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Board of Trustees, American Society of Landscape Architects:

RE: Julie Hensley and Tom O'Rourke LaGasse Medal Nomination

I am writing to you today in support of Julie Hensley and Tom O'Rourke's nomination for the LaGasse Medals.

While I am not a landscape architect, I did witness first-hand the value of teamwork in planning for the long-range improvement and expansion of what I consider to be the best park and recreation agency in the country. Throughout Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission's (CCPRC) history, one of the strongest "teams" our agency has seen was that of Julie Hensley, ASLA, (former Planning Director) and Tom O'Rourke, (former Executive Director and my predecessor).

Understanding that both Julie and Tom have been nominated for the LaGasse Medals, it may be more prudent for me to write separate letters for each. However, with this award being about notable contributions to the management and conservation of natural resources and public landscapes, it is hard for me to imagine one of these dedicated public servants receiving the award, without the other joining them in recognition.

During his tenure at CCPRC as Executive Director, Tom led the agency toward many goals, special projects, and initiatives in support of the agency's overarching mission. It was under Tom's leadership that the Planning arm of the agency was temporarily separated from its Development arm. This restructuring afforded Julie the opportunity to pursue land acquisition opportunities during a time when (a) CCPRC had a substantial amount of dedicated acquisition funding, and (b) the economy was in a recession, allowing CCPRC to leverage all available local, state, federal, and private funding resources to further land acquisition efforts. As a result, CCPRC now owns and/or operates more than 11,000-acres of parkland, including approximately 2,686 acres (24.4%) protected by conservation easements; 2,645 acres (24.0%) protected by deed restrictions; and 3,127 acres (28.4%) protected through local governmental agreements. In summary, more than 75% of CCPRC parklands enjoy protection by at least one enforceable mechanism. The remaining 2,560 acres (23.2%) have no known enforceable protections, yet remain under the ongoing stewardship of CCPRC.

It was under Tom's leadership that Julie and her staff worked to mirror CCPRC's land use planning efforts after some of the nation's most credible park agencies and non-profit organizations. The standard land use planning protocol attempts to consider human and environmental factors of a site during the master planning process. However, our current protocol insists on these types of considerations during the acquisition process. In a land use plan, the natural and cultural aspects of a site inform the designation of "stewardship zones", with varying degrees of development potential based on site conditions.

Tom and Julie were willing to take a stand for CCPRC by furthering our commitment to thoughtful planning, conservation, and stewardship. While Tom is a skillful public speaker, when asked a question (by the public, for example) one of his most admirable qualities is his ability to defer to CCPRC staff for what he calls "the right answers". Many of those answers were often held by Julie due to her extensive knowledge of land resources, funding opportunities, and relationships with community and agency partners.

Together Julie and Tom made a great team, and successfully worked to bring more than 11,000 acres under the purview and care of CCPRC. We are forever indebted to them for their service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "David Bennett", with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Bennett

Executive Director,

Charleston County Park & Recreation Commission





















Nature  
Island





**Contact Information:**

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