

January 6, 2023

American Society of Landscape Architects
LaGasse Medal Nomination – Landscape Architect
c/o Honors and Awards Committee
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

To the ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

I nominate Charles A. “Chuck” Flink, FASLA, for the *LaGasse Medal* (landscape architect). He is regarded across the United States and around the world for his expertise and accomplishments in land conservation and greenway planning, design, and implementation. His 40-year career as a landscape architect exemplifies what the *LaGasse Medal* celebrates. He has amassed an impactful legacy of achievement – with more than 200 completed projects, resulting in 19,000 miles of greenways and trails planned and/or constructed and 1.7 million acres of land and water designated for conservation. His collective body of work has resulted in significant contributions to the conservation and stewardship of America’s natural resources and public lands while enabling literally millions of people to access, enjoy, and derive untold multiple benefits from these important landscapes. He has emerged as one of the leading landscape architects of his generation; he is a pioneer and national/international thought leader in greenway design development; he is a landscape architect whose completed works are found across the American continent; he is recognized as a national and international ambassador for conservation and greenways; and as teacher, author and mentor he has become a widely respected and acknowledged landscape architectural educator.

Flink’s career began in May 1982 with a bachelor’s degree in environmental design and landscape architecture from North Carolina State University. Graduating in the midst of a global recession, Flink apprenticed for two years as a landscape designer until his employment in 1984 as Greenway Planner for the City of Raleigh. Raleigh’s greenway system, inspired by Lewis Clarke, FASLA and Bill Flournoy, FASLA, was initiated in 1972. He embraced the growing interest in greenways and land conservation and established *Greenways Incorporated*. (It was uncommon at the time for young landscape architects to establish an independent practice, particularly one that focused on conserving Earth’s resources. Most young landscape architects at that time worked under the apprenticeship of seasoned professionals whose firms were primarily focused on land development work. Flink believed that he wanted to practice a unique form of landscape architecture; when he started *Greenways Incorporated*, very few in our industry knew what a greenway was, nor did they see it as a viable professional enterprise.)

Professional Practice

Thirty-seven years ago Flink sought to establish a new landscape architectural practice focused on greenway planning and design. He was a pioneer who went “toe-to-toe” with the nation’s most established and respected landscape architectural firms to earn commissions, including LandDesign; Sasaki; EDAW; Wallace, Roberts and Todd; and a multitude of engineering firms. Notably, since its founding, *Greenways Incorporated*, completed work in more than 250 communities within 35 states, achieving numerous successful outcomes including being named the “2008 Firm of the Year” by the ASLA North Carolina Chapter, as one of the first private firms to be recognized by the chapter in this manner.

Flink’s resume documents very well-known completed works including *Grand Canyon Greenway, Arizona; Miami River Greenway, Florida; Stones River Greenway, Tennessee; American Tobacco Trail, North Carolina; University Parks Trail, Ohio; Cardinal Greenway, Indiana; Violet Crown Trail, Texas; Wolf River Greenway, Tennessee; and Northern Delaware Greenway*. His influence and impact on the design and development of these notable greenway projects significantly influenced the profession in measurable ways especially because millions of people

enjoy, use, and derive tangible health and wellness, recreation, and transportation benefits from these treasured outdoor public lands and greenways.

His accomplishments as a designer and creator of greenways is not the sum of his contributions to the profession for he also planned, designed, and implemented some of the nation's most significant large-scale environmental parks. The most notable of these is the 2,100-acre *Anne Springs Close Greenway* in Fort Mill, South Carolina. Flink worked with Anne Springs Close, one of America's most venerated conservationists, for nearly 30 years commencing 1991, assisting her to transform the centerpiece of a 10,000-acre family estate into a world-class environmental and cultural park. Today, the *Anne Springs Close Greenway* is a triumph of land, water, and cultural landscape conservation. (Ms. Close passed away in 2021.)

In the spring of 1997, Grand Forks, North Dakota suffered a 500-year magnitude flood event. The US Army Corps of Engineers retained Flink for three years to design a master plan for the 2,000-acre *Greater Grand Forks Riverfront Greenway*. This project addresses the annual flooding problems associated with the Red River, and more importantly, it has become the centerpiece of life in this upper Midwest community. The "Greenway Solution" designed by Flink has become an iconic model for many other communities to emulate. It is important to note that in 1998, when Flink proposed his vision for the greenway, there were few precedent landscapes of this type in America. The success of this greenway became a featured story in *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, February 2010. The Army Corps cited in that article that the "Greenway Solution in Grand Forks" is one of the best examples in the nation when it comes to flood protection serving as a public amenity.

In the fall of 2003, Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell commissioned Flink to design the master plan for an 808-acre parcel of land on the Cumberland River. Originally slated as a landfill, Flink's master plan deployed a light touch on the land. He felt that the native ecosystems, historical context, and scenic beauty of the land should be presented to the public through a "Design with Nature" approach. *Bell's Bend Park* is today one of Nashville's most beloved nature parks. This project is featured in the Cultural Landscape Foundation's *What's Out There Nashville Guidebook* (2019).

For all his professional achievements in creating signature greenways, rail-trails and environmental parks, Flink is most proud of his contributions in saving the American landscape. The *Charleston County Greenbelt Plan* represents one of his most successful accomplishments. Charleston County is South Carolina's fastest growing community. The County needed a conservation strategy to save their natural heritage. They retained Flink to author a bold plan of action. Armed with nothing more than one sentence from a bond referendum, Flink crafted a "Plan of Action", adopted in 2006, that to date has saved more than 40,000 acres of land. This has been accomplished in less than 15 years. The County achieved what Flink describes as "the floor" of land and water conservation, that permanently protects 30% of the County land mass. Since then, Flink has been called upon by communities across the nation, like Charleston County, to work on bold land conservation plans, including open space plans for Southern Nevada; Las Vegas, Nevada; Arapahoe County, Colorado; Archuleta County, Colorado; Luzerne and Lackawanna Counties, Pennsylvania; and Wake and Durham counties, North Carolina.

Published Work

Flink's contributions to landscape architectural education and the advancement of knowledge in the profession are significant. He was inducted as an ASLA Fellow in 2003 under the Knowledge category. He authored/co-authored three of the most significant books on the history, planning, design, and operations of greenways. His first book, *Greenways: A Guide to Planning, Design and Development* (Island Press 1993), is one of the most important tomes ever written about Greenways. Hailed by the American Planning Association as "the best single reference on the subject of greenways," this book has stood the test of time. It can be found in university libraries around the world and has been used by students across the globe as an important source of greenway development information. *Trails for the Twenty First Century*, published in 2001, was a collaborative effort by Flink, his co-authors, and the Rails-to-Trails Conservancy. It is a comprehensive primer on trail planning and design and remains a relevant resource to this day. Flink is very proud that both *Greenways* and *Trails* have been translated into Chinese and are used as resource textbooks in Chinese universities. His third and most recent book, *The Greenway Imperative: Connecting Communities and Landscapes for a Sustainable Future*, published by the University Press of Florida in March 2020, shares the backstory of ten projects and how communities overcame a myriad of challenges to find success in land conservation and greenway development.

Leader of National Trail and Greenway Organizations

For more than three decades, Chuck Flink has been out front as a thought leader and practitioner in the planning, design and development of greenway systems. He was the inaugural chair of *American Trails*, which was formed from the merger of the *National Trails Council* (authorized by the 1968 National Trails System Act) and the *American Trails Network* (formed in 1987). In February 1990, he stood on the floor of the 102nd Congress in support of the *Symms Act* -- one element of the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Act (ISTEA)* that since passage has funneled \$2 billion in fuel tax dollars into the development of 26,000 recreation trails across the nation. In 1999, he became a Trustee with the *East Coast Greenway Alliance*, the nation's longest urban greenway, extending 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida; he was a transformative board chair from 2005 to 2010. Years after his board service, in 2021, he was part of a team that crafted bi-partisan legislation in North Carolina, in support of designating a portion of the *East Coast Greenway* as a state trail.

Beginning in 2018, Flink was asked to lead the formation of a "Collaboration of Regional Trails Initiative" (CRTI), a network of more than 50 regional trail systems found in the largest metro regions of America, from San Francisco to New York City. CRTI fulfills an important component of the 1968 *National Trails System Act* to recognize and promote metropolitan trails as important elements of our nation's coast-to-coast trails and greenway infrastructure. CRTI has convened five consecutive years (2018-present) and is supported in its efforts by some of America's largest philanthropic organizations including the *William Penn Foundation*, *Walton Family Foundation*, *Ralph Wilson Foundation*, and the *RK Mellon Foundation*. In 2020, Flink was asked to serve on the *911 National Memorial Trail Alliance Board of Directors* to help shepherd national designation legislation through Congress. As a member of the Board, Flink was invited by President Biden, to witness the historic signing of legislation designating this 1,350-mile trail system as a national memorial trail.

Features and Awards

Chuck Flink has been a featured landscape architect in three separate editions of *Landscape Architecture Magazine*, recognizing his unique professional contributions and acumen. The first feature occurred in the May 1991 issue when Flink and the staff of *Greenways Incorporated* were on the front cover and in an article titled "Trail Master." A second feature article appeared July 1999 in the "Shared Wisdom" section and was titled "Passion Plays." A third feature occurred in May 2008, again in the Shared Wisdom section and was titled "Think Like Flink."

During his 40-year career, Flink has been the recipient or co-recipient of more than four dozen local, regional, state, and national awards, including three national ASLA awards, recognizing his extraordinary contributions to the advancement of landscape architecture. A list of awards follows:

- 2019 **Watauga Medal**, NC State University, highest non-academic award bestowed by the university
- 2018 **Award of Excellence** for Homeplace: Conservation Guides for Six Communities, Rebuilding After Hurricane Matthew from the North Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2018 **Honor Award** for Homeplace: Conservation Guides for Six Communities, Rebuilding After Hurricane Matthew from the American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2017 **Sigma Lambda Alpha Honor Society**, Alpha Sigma Chapter at North Carolina State University
- 2015 **National Planning Achievement Award for Transportation Planning** for WalkBikeNC – North Carolina Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, from the American Planning Association
- 2015 **Outstanding Faculty Award**, NC State University College of Design Landscape Architecture Department
- 2014 **Merit Award in Planning** for WalkBikeNC – North Carolina Statewide Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan from the Tri-State Chapters (NC, SC and GA) of the American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2012 **Marvin Collins Outstanding Planning Award** for Greenville Urban Area MPO Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, North Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association
- 2010, **Honor Award** for Chimney Rock State Park Master Plan, North Carolina Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects
- 2009 **Honor Award for Engineering Excellence** for Corridor Management Plan, Cape Fear Historic Byway American Council of Engineering Companies of North Carolina
- 2008 **Firm of the Year Award** to Greenways Incorporated, from the North Carolina Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects

- 2008 **Project Award in Recognition of Outstanding Professional Achievement** for the Archuleta County Regional Parks, Recreation, Open Space and Trails Master Plan, Colorado Chapter, American Planning Association
- 2008 **Honor Award** for the Cape Fear Historic Byway Corridor Management Plan, from the North Carolina Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects,
- 2008 **Marvin Collins Outstanding Planning Award, Brian Benson Award Category**, Comprehensive Planning, Small Community, for the Holly Springs Pedestrian Transportation Plan, from the North Carolina Chapter, American Planning Association
- 2007 **Marvin Collins Outstanding Planning Award, Brian Benson Award Category**, Comprehensive Planning, Small Community, for the Greensboro Urban Area Bicycle, Pedestrian and Greenway Master Plan from the North Carolina Chapter, American Planning Association
- 2006 **Distinguished Alumnus**, College of Design, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina
- 2006 **Outstanding Planning Award**, Large Jurisdiction, for the Charleston County Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan, from the South Carolina Chapter, American Planning Association
- 2006 **Honor Award** for the Susquehanna River Greenway Strategic Action Plan from the Pennsylvania and Delaware Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects,
- 2005 **Award of Excellence**, for the Northwest Open Space and Trails Master Plan, from the Nevada Chapter, American Society of Landscape Architects,
- 2003 **Award of Excellence** for MetroGreen Action Plan from the Prairie Gateway Chapter ASLA,
- 2002 **Honor Award** for Greater Grand Forks Greenway Master Plan from the Tri-State Chapters ASLA,
- 2002 **Honor Award** for MetroGreen Action Plan, from the North Carolina Chapter ASLA,
- 2002 **Outstanding Planning Award**, for MetroGreen Action Plan, from the Missouri Chapter American Planning Association
- 2001 Western Trail Builders Association, **First Annual Harvey Bell Memorial Award for Outstanding Innovation in Trail Design**, for the Grand Canyon Greenway
- 2001 **Tom Lee Gold Medal Award**, for the Pennsylvania Greenway Master Plan, from the Association of State Floodplain Managers,
- 2001 **ASLA Merit Award**, Planning and Analysis, for the Grand Canyon Greenway
- 2001 **Award of Excellence**, for the Miami River Greenway Action Plan, from the North Carolina Chapter ASLA,
- 2001 **Merit Award**, for Trails for the Twenty-First Century, from the North Carolina Chapter ASLA,
- 1999 **Certificate of Appreciation from First Lady Hillary Clinton and the National Park Service for participation in the National Millennium Trail Initiative**, Grand Canyon Greenway Project.
- 1999 **Honor Award**, Mecklenburg County Greenway Master Plan from the North Carolina Chapter ASLA,
- 1999 **Merit Award**, Cardinal Greenway, from the Indiana Chapter, ASLA,
- 1999 **Merit Award**, University Parks Trail, from the Ohio Chapter, ASLA,
- 1997 **Outstanding Planning Award**, Birmingham Area Bicycle, Pedestrian & Greenway Master Plan, from the Alabama Chapter American Planning Association
- 1996 **Merit Award**, for Hot Springs Creek Greenway Master Plan, from the Texas Chapter ASLA,
- 1996 **Merit Award**, for Hot Springs Creek Greenway Master Plan, from the Arkansas Chapter APA,
- 1995 **Environmental Excellence Award**, for Swift Creek Recycled Greenway, from the United States Federal Highway Administration,
- 1994 **ASLA Merit Award in Communications**, Greenways A Guide to Planning, Design and Development
- 1992 **Take Pride in America Award**, North Carolina, Swift Creek Recycled Greenway
- 1992 **Small Community Outstanding Planning Award** for the City of Greenville Comprehensive Greenway Plan, North Carolina Chapter American Planning Association

Educator, Mentor and Philanthropist

In 2014, Flink began teaching engagements in our Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at NC State University. More than 300 students have since benefited from Chuck's unique and practical approach to higher education. As one of the most valued professors in our department he received the Department's *2015 Outstanding Faculty Award*. In 2013, Chuck and his wife Marjorie established the **Charles and Marjorie Flink Fellowship Endowment in Landscape Architecture**. Their generous philanthropic support of landscape architecture education has resulted in numerous scholarship awards to students in need. In 2018, Flink joined forces with Mark Johnson, FASLA, Civitas, and Robby Layton, FASLA, Design Concepts, as a lead sponsor in

the creation of the **Gene Bressler Faculty Endowment Award**, which is used to support the work of faculty and the education of students at the College.

International Ambassador

Flink's profound professional impact is realized around the globe. For four decades he has been a sought-after speaker, consultant, and international ambassador for greenways and landscape architecture, meeting with students, faculty, and practitioners. His international work began in the late 1980's with consultations in Toronto, with the *Royal Commission on the Future of Toronto Waterfront*, and Tokyo, where he met with Japanese Transport Ministry officials. In 1992, Flink was invited to Venezuela by the International Union of Concerned Scientists to deliver an address on the *American Greenway Movement* to the Fourth World Congress on National Parks and Protected Areas. He worked three times with the State Department and US Embassy, through their cultural exchange program, in Argentina (2002), Belarus (2012) and the Czech Republic (2014). In 2009, he traveled to China at the invitation of Peking University Dean Kongjian Yu to share his vision for greenways and conservation with students, faculty and practitioners in Beijing and Shenzhen. In 2012, he spent ten days in Minsk, Belarus working on a national greenway implementation strategy, and later that year traveled to Campo Grande, Brazil to deliver a keynote address at a national landscape architecture conference. He has been a keynote speaker at three *Julius Fabos Symposiums* on Greenways and Landscape Planning in Budapest, Hungary, most recently in the summer 2022.

Summary

Chuck Flink's prolific and compelling professional career embodies the letter and spirit of the *LaGasse Medal*. His achievements, manifest in the body of his greenway and park projects, have (1) influenced, facilitated, and resulted in remarkable and measurable economic, social, and healthful benefits that have saved hundreds of thousands of acres of irreplaceable native lands and waters, (2) protected communities from flooding, and (3) provided inspiring pathways for future generations to experience, enjoy and derive multiple benefits. He has enthusiastically shared his wisdom and practical experiences through hands-on teaching, mentoring, and his award-winning published works. And, he has motivated and inspired students, professional colleagues, and ordinary citizens to value, respect, and invest in our precious landscape resources.

These are the reasons that I nominate Chuck Flink, FASLA for the *LaGasse Medal*. He is most deserving of this honor and recognition.

Sincerely,



Gene Bressler, FASLA
Interim Department Head
Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning
NC State University, College of Design

Attachments (photos)

1. Grand Canyon with First Lady Hillary Clinton
2. Oval Office with President Biden
3. Flink Portrait – on American Tobacco Trail
4. Kongjian Yu, Peking University, Beijing, China
5. Grand Canyon Greenway
6. Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell

ELLIOTT SPRINGS CLOSE
POST OFFICE BOX 4200
ROCK HILL, SC 29732

January 26, 2023

American Society of Landscape Architects
LaGasse Medal Nomination – Landscape Architect
C/O Honors and Awards Committee
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

To the ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

I am delighted to write this letter in support of Mr. Charles A. “Chuck” Flink’s (FASLA) nomination for the LaGasse Medal (landscape architect). I have known and worked with Chuck for some 30+ years now and cannot think of anyone more deserving of this award. My family is now fifth and sixth generation residents of York County, South Carolina, with our ancestors assembling some 8,000 acres in and around our hometown of Fort Mill, just over the state line from Charlotte, NC.

My mother, Anne Springs Close, was an avid environmentalist, naturalist, and conservationist and instilled in her eight children a love of nature and conservation of all things natural over her long and active 95 years. It was at a National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) Conference in October 1991 that she first met Chuck. That meeting changed her life – and ours – forever. For years, Mother had been lobbying her children to protect some, if not all, of the acreage that had been handed down to us. But she needed a plan.

Her meeting Chuck at that conference, we all believe, was divine providence, because that chance meeting set into motion a plan for what is today the Anne Springs Close Greenway, a 2,100-acre nature preserve, managed by a nonprofit recreation organization and protected in perpetuity by a conservation easement, for all people to use and enjoy. Without Chuck’s knowledgeable hand guiding us from start to finish, there would be no Anne Springs Close Greenway.

At Mother's invitation, Chuck came to Fort Mill in 1991 to meet us and understand the possibilities the land offered. Little did we realize that it would lead to a partnership that would last over 30 years. Chuck helped us write our first strategic plan, which provided an opening blueprint for the nonprofit 2100-acre Anne Springs Close Greenway on Earth Day 1995. That plan served us for over a decade as we took our first baby steps, providing a springboard for what was to come.

After a decade, the Greenway's first strategic plan needed revision. We had learned a great deal since opening, achieving much of the original plan and requiring new goals and direction, as our community experienced exponential growth and the needs of our visitor base changed. Working with our family and staff, Chuck led the effort which resulted in our 2010 strategic plan. The plan was a broad review of all aspects of the Greenway including programs, governance, infrastructure, events, and funding. It included interviews of community leaders from government, education, business, and nonprofits, as well as Greenway staff and user groups – hikers, equestrian, mountain bikers, history buffs, and birdwatchers.

The 2010 plan, revised again in 2018, set the stage for a myriad of changes that resulted in:

- A transition from family-led to community-led Board of Managers, setting the stage for sustainable governance
- A membership base that has grown exponentially from 2,000 to 18,000 households
- Financially, the Greenway was losing \$1M annually, suffering from deferred maintenance and capital needs. Today it is self-funded and catching up with deferred maintenance
- Growth to some 300,000 visitors annually
- Construction of additional trails, amphitheater, visitors center & restaurant, 12-acre dog park, and other amenities
- Development and execution of a wayfinding signage plan
- Establishing and building a \$30M endowment

It was during this process that Chuck's world-class vision and experience truly revealed itself. Every piece of land is unique; climate, topography, the community it resides in, government regulations and restrictions, all play a part in the priorities and success of greenspace. In 1993, Chuck coauthored Greenways: A Guide to Planning Design and Development, which became THE textbook/guidebook for those interested in greenspace preservation not just in the United States, but around the world, and leading him to consult internationally in greenspace development.

Chuck's experience requires each greenway to be treated as the unique space it is, and his planning supports programs and investments that facilitate the needs and wants of the community it serves.

The Greenway was originally envisioned as a community amenity. As the community grew, it was evident that it would become a regional attraction. Today the Anne Springs Close Greenway provides countless ways to connect people to nature, offering unique and dynamic ways to engage more budding conservationists. This is made possible because of the thoughtful vision and leadership of Chuck Flink. We know firsthand how Chuck has become an international force, advocating and teaching the art of creating greenspaces across the world. But when he comes to Fort Mill, he is simply "Chuck," with a wealth of experience and expertise to offer. He is as good at suggesting what you should not do as he is at offering up opportunities to advance our mission. He is a visionary, a gifted leader, a world class expert, and a friend.

It is hard to believe that 30 years have past, and that we continue to benefit from Chuck's leadership and guidance to our Greenway Board of Managers and the family on an ongoing, frequent basis. The Greenway has been awarded more honors than I can even list here, and it is all because of Chuck's incredible vision, passion, and knowledge. He is a true hero in our hearts and the hearts of all the hundreds of thousands of visitors who enjoy the Greenway all year long. No one deserves an honor such as this one more than Chuck Flink.

Sincerely,

Elliott S. Close

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

To the ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

I support the nomination of Charles “Chuck” Flink, FASLA, for the Lagasse Medal (landscape architect). I have been with the Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department for 23 years and the Director of the department since 2017. In 2004, the citizens of Charleston County voted for a one-half cent sales tax to fund roads, transit and greenbelts of which 221 million was set aside for greenbelts. Greenways Inc. was selected to draft the Comprehensive Greenbelt Plan and Chuck Flink was the lead author.

The Plan was finalized and approved unanimously by County Council in June 2006 and incorporated into the County’s Comprehensive Land Use Plan in January 2007. The Plan and Program can be viewed at this link: [Charleston County Greenbelt Program](#). The program has been one of the most successful and accomplished local government sponsored land conservation programs in the United States and was awarded the **2006 Large Jurisdiction Outstanding Planning Award** from the South Carolina Chapter of the American Planning Association.

The 2006 adopted Greenbelt Plan recommended a minimum conservation goal of 30% of the total Charleston County land area, equivalent to 200,000 acres. By 2017, the total land conserved and protected in Charleston County was 198,000 acres, effectively achieving the minimum conservation goal established in the Plan. Types of protected lands include passive and active greenspace, natural infrastructure, corridors, and heritage landscapes. Due to the great success of the plan, in 2016 Charleston County citizens approved a second one-half penny sales tax. This 25-year tax will provide an additional \$210 million for the Greenbelt Programs.

I had the opportunity to observe Chuck interact with the public and elected officials during the adoption of the Plan. Without his leadership and knowledge, it would not have been a success. As you are aware, attaining approval to spend hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars for conservation of land can be quite controversial for a fast-growing county that has other infrastructure needs. Chuck’s competence and ability to convey the importance of greenspace made the difference. Chuck is a true ambassador and exemplifies the values and principles of the Landscape Architecture profession. The citizens of Charleston County will benefit from his efforts for generations. I cannot think of any other professional more worthy of this award.

Thank You,

Joel H Evans, PLA, AICP
Director, Charleston County Zoning and Planning Department
4045 Bridge View Drive
North Charleston, SC 29405
(843) 202-7202/202-7218
jevans@charlestoncounty.org

February 8, 2023

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Nomination of Charles A. Flink, FASLA, for the LaGasse Medal

Dear Members of the ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

I am honored to support the nomination of Chuck Flink, FASLA, for the 2023 LaGasse Medal for Landscape Architects. Chuck is truly a visionary leader. As a tireless advocate and pioneer in developing the greenway concept of linear parks, Chuck has created systems that function beyond a multiuse path by incorporating nature-based solutions for environmental resilience at all levels while building lasting civic assets through the shared efforts of landscape architects, planners, and communities.

I first met Chuck in 1986 as he was embarking on a bold endeavor, leaving the City of Raleigh Parks Department and starting his own firm, Greenways Inc., to implement the new and exciting concept of linear parks and trails called greenways. He was prescient in seeing that greenways would become more than paved trails along streams. Chuck understands the power of linkages and mobility, the importance of creating access to nature for communities while preserving sensitive ecosystems, and the urgency of providing ecoservice buffers to store and manage increasingly severe flooding that endangers all communities.

Chuck's firm and the scope of his work grew exponentially from the beginning. His reach as a landscape architect helping cities, counties, and regions throughout the United States and the world is extraordinary and continues with the numerous landscape architects and other design and park professionals he has nurtured over the years. Through his teaching, writing, and lectures, Chuck has spread the word of greenways and shared his knowledge of trail design and the value of linear park systems further than the reach of his projects. His practice and experience are now embedded into the curriculum of design and planning schools nationwide and beyond. In his most recent book, [The Greenway Imperative: Connecting Communities and Landscapes for a Sustainable Future](#), Chuck eloquently makes the case that greenways can and should dramatically reshape the landscape of America in the coming years by conserving irreplaceable environments, serving as essential green infrastructure, shaping the way people travel within their communities, reducing the impact from flooding and other natural disasters, and boosting the economies of cities and towns.

Building on his extensive body of work, Chuck continues to find ways to give back to the landscape architecture profession and the communities he serves through his joyful, energetic, and dedicated philanthropy focused on supporting the next generation of landscape architects. As a part of the North Carolina State University administration and College of Design faculty, he has developed a new academic research program with a broad scale of community-based application - the Initiative for Community Growth and Development. With Chuck's leadership and guidance, this exciting new initiative will establish a collaborative curriculum with landscape architecture and interdisciplinary partners, developers, and political and business leaders to research and test various community growth and development strategies that create equitable, resilient and prosperous communities.

Chuck Flink is a role model for how to live a life committed to purpose and create a legacy of meaningful public work that makes the world a better place for all of us.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Wendy Miller", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Wendy Miller, FASLA



pennsylvania environmental council

January 31, 2023

The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Executive Committee and Trustees:

It is an honor to provide support for Chuck Flink's consideration for the American Society of Landscape Architects' LaGasse Medal.

I write this as one of Chuck's clients, admirers, and, perhaps, even co-conspirator.

We at the Pennsylvania Environmental Council ("PEC") work and have worked with a number of landscape architects and firms over the years on a wide variety of projects related to community planning, trail design, natural resource management, riverfront master planning, GIS mapping, and more. We would not have accomplished what we have without their professional partnerships.

PEC's work in the world of trails and recreation has grown and evolved over almost thirty years to be one of our major program areas. As that growth happened, we knew that we didn't know it all when it came to issues of regional trail and greenway networks. As a result, we hoped to reach out to other groups across the country to find out what they were experiencing – where they had challenges and successes that we could learn from.

That effort has grown into the Collaboration of Regional Trail Initiatives ("CRTI"), a nation-wide loose association of over 40 trail and greenways groups that has been meeting since first gathering during a Nor'easter in Philadelphia in 2018. We have met in Philly, Bentonville, virtually during the pandemic, then in Buffalo in 2022 and we will be in Pittsburgh in June of 2023. The results of these gatherings have included cross-pollination of ideas and practices, a national network of professionals who now have personal connections, and an understanding that groups are not alone in the challenges that they face.

At the core of this effort, bringing passion for the cause, a Rolodex spanning the continent, and decades of experience is the man who literally wrote the book on Greenways – Chuck Flink. Chuck was in the first conversations about CRTI in 2017 and continues to guide its way forward.

Chuck's leadership is not, in this case, about treadways, set-backs, and surface materials – it is about the future of the trails and greenways movement. It is about diversity, access, equity. It is about overcoming long-standing roadblocks to trail development. It is about empowering the next generation of trail leaders as the founders of the movement age out. It is about making sure that trails and greenways are recognized for their critical roles in the nation's infrastructure.

We at PEC are also lucky enough to be clients of Chuck's firm, Greenways, Inc. As such, we draw from his great experience and forward thinking on projects including: the activation of recreational assets to further the economic and social benefits of trails in communities, a critical look at the operational and long-term capital improvements needed for existing trails, and deep dives into pressing policy issues impacting trails.

I can think of few others who so perfectly fit the values and impact of the LaGasse Award – Chuck's impacts on the public landscape are not only in place but continue to develop and evolve for the betterment of millions who may never give a second thought to how their use and enjoyment of public trail and greenway infrastructure came to be.

I wish you the best in your work on the award and encourage you to strongly consider Chuck's nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Davitt B. Woodwell', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Davitt B. Woodwell, Esq.
President



First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, Grand Canyon, Arizona

May, 19, 1999, Chuck Flink (4th from left) stands with members of the Grand Canyon Greenway Team, First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton (center) and Grand Canyon National Park Superintendent Rob Arnberger (far right) at the celebration of the National Millennium Trails Program. (Photo credit: The White House). The Millennium Trails program was a part of the White House Millennium Council's efforts to stimulate national and local activities to "Honor the Past and Imagine the Future." The purpose of Millennium Trails was to spark the creation and enhancement of more than 2,000 trails as part of America's legacy for the future. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton stated, *"Through the Millennium Trails project, we are building and maintaining trails that tell the story of our nation's past and will help to create a positive vision for our future."* Chuck Flink was director of design for six phases of the Grand Canyon Greenway.



Oval Office with President Biden

October 13, 2021, Chuck Flink (red mask) stands behind President Joe Biden, and alongside nine fellow 911 Trail Alliance board members and ten members of Congress in witness to the signing of legislation designating the 911 National Memorial Trail. The 911 Trail links the National 911 Memorial and Museum in New York City, the National 911 Pentagon Memorial in Arlington, VA and the Flight 93 National Memorial in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. The 911 Trail is a 1,350-mile trail of remembrance and memorial to the 3,000 lives lost on that fateful day.

Chuck was a member of the team that drafted the legislation for approval by Congress, and as a board member was invited by President Biden to witness the signing. Chuck's knowledge of the National Trails System Act of 1968, his participation in the original pledge (codified in September 2001) to build the 911 Trail, and his leadership of American Trails and the East Coast Greenway Alliance, were some of his contributions to the designation. The legislation was approved unanimously, without one dissenting vote, by Congress. (Photo credit: The White House)



Portrait of Flink on the American Tobacco Trail

Chuck Flink is photographed holding a set of plans while on the American Tobacco Trail in Durham, NC. Chuck's firm, Greenways Incorporated, completed the trail master plan in 1992. Today, the American Tobacco Trail is one of the North Carolina's most heavily used urban greenways, hosting more than 750,000 users each year. The American Tobacco Trail was the first designated North Carolina segment of the East Coast Greenway, a fifteen-state, 3,000-mile-long biking and walking route. This project is featured in the Cultural Landscape Foundation's What's Out There Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill Guidebook. (Photo credit: Triangle Business Journal)



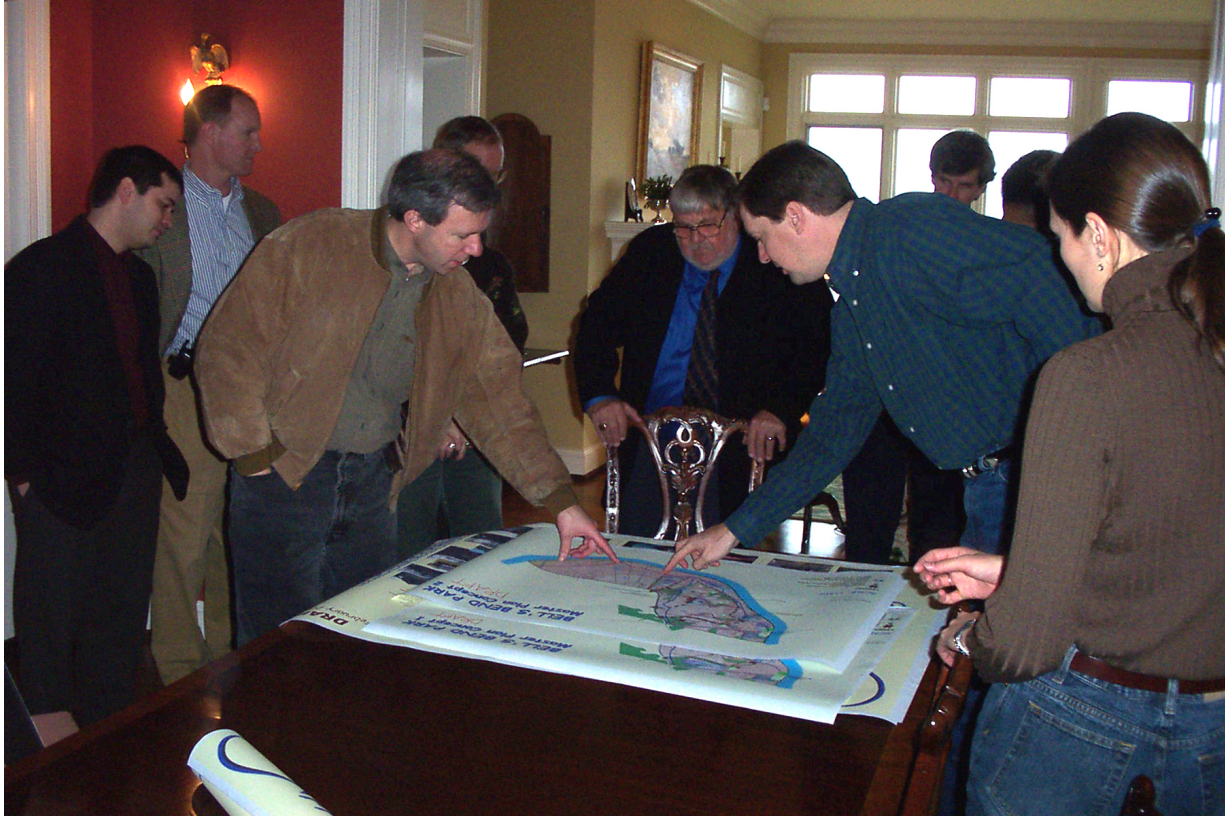
Dean Kongjian Yu, Peking University, Beijing, China

March 2009, Chuck Flink stands alongside Kongjian Yu and students at Peking University. Chuck and colleague Bob Searns were invited by School of Architecture Dean Kongjian Yu, FASLA, to deliver lectures at Peking University in Beijing and Shenzhen. Over the course of ten days, Chuck and Bob conducted numerous lectures and worked with Chinese landscape architects and students to better understand the possibilities for greenways in China. Immediately after this visit, the Guangdong Province declared 2009 the Year of the Greenway and began planning and building a massive network of interconnected greenways in the Pearl River basin. (Photo credit: Greenways Incorporated)



Opening Day at Grand Canyon Greenway

June 1, 2002, Chuck Flink (dark green shirt) walks with Peter Axelson of Beneficial Designs and Jeff Olson (shoulder bag) at the June 2002 Grand Opening of the Grand Canyon Greenway, Phase 1. Flink, as lead designer, worked at the Grand Canyon for ten years (1997-2007) to plan, design and oversee construction of six phases of trail development, five phases on the South Rim and one phase on the North Rim. (Photo credit: National Park Service)



Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell

February 24, 2003, Chuck Flink (right) and Nashville Mayor Bill Purcell (left) examine drawings of Bell's Bend Park, an 808-acre tract of land located on the Cumberland River, west of downtown Nashville. Originally slated to become a solid waste landfill, using Flink's vision and guidance, Nashville instead transformed the property into one of the city's most beloved environmental parks, which opened for public use in 2007. This project is featured in the Cultural Landscape Foundation's What's Out There Nashville Guidebook. (Photo credit: Greenways Incorporated)

LaGasse Medal Nomination: Charles A. Flink

Additional Photographic Images



Charles Flink and members of the Grand Canyon Greenway photographed at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Greenway.



Charles Flink teams with colleague Bob Searns to conduct assessment of a “social trail” on the north rim of the Grand Canyon Greenway.



Charles Flink speaking at the NC State University Urban Growth and Development Conference, September 2022, for which he served as conference director.



LaGasse Medal Nomination
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