AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS
Louisiana Chapter

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January 20, 2017

LaGasse Medal Nominations (Landscape Architect Category)
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington DC 2001-3736

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

On behalf of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, it gives me great pleasure to submit the name of Kenneth Bahlinger in nomination for the 2017 LaGasse medal for landscape architects. Kenneth is an award winning landscape architect who has worked for the State of Louisiana restoring coastal wetlands for 26 years. Through his professional work, he has made significant contributions to the management and conservation of natural resources through the work that he has done and leadership he has provided on the Coast Vegetative Planting Program, the Christmas Tree Program, as the landscape of record on vegetation plantings on state restoration projects, and more recently as a Senior Project Manager of multiple large scale restoration projects.

Kenneth graduated with a BLA from Louisiana State University in 1984 and after a few years in private practice, went to work for the State of Louisiana in 1991 where he initially served as a Landscape Architect at the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources Coastal Restoration Division. Early in Kenneth's career with the State of Louisiana, he assumed leadership of two important programs, the Coast Vegetative Planting Program and the Christmas Tree Program. Kenneth's background, energy, and enthusiasm made him uniquely qualified to manage these efforts.

LOUISIANA COAST VEGETATIVE PLANTING PROGRAM

The Louisiana Coast Vegetative Planting Program was a unique partnership through which native marsh vegetation was planted and monitored throughout Louisiana's coastal zone. The purpose of the program was to protect and restore wetlands, demonstrate vegetative wetlands restoration, advance technology, and exchange information. Through the program, over one million plants have been planted and monitored for their effectiveness across coastal Louisiana.

The structure and scale of the Program encouraged experimentation of planting native, wetlands species incrementally beyond their known environmental limits of use in various environmental conditions (high and low salinity, various wave energies, soils, and herbivory, etc.) in the rapidly developing field of wetland restoration. The feedback of monitoring information into the planning and design of projects has led to continued refinement of the Program and improved survival rates of vegetation in the field. During the early years of the program, the Smooth Cordgrass (*Spartina alterniflora*) was the only plant used in vegetative planting efforts. Since that time, eleven species of wetlands plants have been used in Program projects, with significant plantings of California Bulrush, Giant Cutgrass, Marshhay Cordgrass, and Seashore Paspalum.

A cottage industry of wetland plant nurseries developed in Louisiana as a result of the program. The wetland plant producers expanded to service the needs of the Coast Vegetation Program and were positioned to service other larger coastal restoration and mitigation efforts. In 1989, approximately three Louisiana growers supplied plants for all of the restoration projects in Louisiana. In 2000, seven growers had contracts to provide wetland vegetation for coastal restoration projects in Louisiana and in 2016 sixteen growers in Louisiana are wetland plant producers.

Kenneth Bahlinger was the administrator of this program and in that capacity, contracted and coordinated field work which was led by staff from the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry Office of Soil and Water Conservation. In addition, the Program leveraged technical guidance from the United States Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service. The program was an extraordinary vehicle for vegetative restoration to be accomplished on the grass roots level. The network of federal, state, and local officials worked harmoniously to inform, assist, demonstrate and learn from local landowners, resource managers and land users. The teamwork that Kenneth encouraged was one of the primary reasons that the Program was successful.

CHRISTMAS TREE PROGRAM

Concurrent with Kenneth's management of the Louisiana Coast Vegetative Planting Program, he also managed the Christmas Tree Program. Researchers from Louisiana State University brought the idea to Louisiana from the Netherlands and it blossomed into a statewide program involving as many as 16 coastal parishes. The purpose of the Christmas Tree Fence projects in Louisiana was three-fold: first, as a coastal restoration technique to reduce water velocity and wave action, reduce fetch, slowdown shoreline erosion, increase sediment accretion and help restore marsh: second, as a means of reducing the amount of Christmas trees ending up in local

landfills; and third, as a tangible outreach program to engage the public in the fight to restore coastal wetlands.

Through this program, the state of Louisiana provided technical guidance, oversight, and funding to participating coastal parishes to implement Christmas Projects. Christmas Tree Fence projects were monitored to determine the most successful designs. Kenneth Bahlinger coordinated directly with coastal program officials from as many as 16 parishes each year to maximize participation in the Program, assist with the planning of projects, and coordinating monitoring efforts.

Over the years, hundreds of acres of wetlands were restored using Christmas Tree Fences and over a million Christmas trees were diverted from landfills. Kenneth Bahlinger's name is synonymous with the Christmas Tree Program in Louisiana. Even though funding for the Christmas Tree Program was eliminated a few years back due to budget issues, many parishes have continued the program with their own funding. A google search today of "Kenneth Bahlinger Christmas Tree Fence Program" archives a few of the many interviews that he did during the holidays over the years answering questions from the media to publicize the popular program.

VEGETATIVE PLANTING PROJECTS

As a landscape architect and Chief Landscape Architect with the Louisiana Department of Natural Resources and subsequently the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, Kenneth was responsible for the development of plans and specifications for dozens of coastal restoration projects over the years. The various restoration planting project types which Kenneth designed included plantings to stabilize shorelines; plantings to establish vegetation on shallow bay bottom terraces; plantings on newly dredged marsh platforms; planting native grasses and trees on levees; and planting native grasses on dunes and marshes on remote barrier islands. Mr. Bahlinger was part of a group, which included biologists and wetland plant producers, to develop and refine specifications for native vegetation which is still the foundation for wetland restoration planting projects today. He also worked closely over the years with researchers from the USDA NRCS Plant Materials Center in Galliano, Louisiana; the USGS National Wetland Research Center in Lafayette, Louisiana; and wetland researchers from across Louisiana to incorporate the most recent findings from research into his planting projects and to export the knowledge gained to benefit others.

An incomplete list of Vegetative Planting Projects which Kenneth developed the bid documents for and the years the project was installed are listed below include:

Isle Dernieres Restoration – Whiskey Island Plantings included planting over 50,000 native grasses in marsh and dune habitat in 1999.

Little Vermilion Bay Sediment Trapping Project included planting over 20,000 plugs of Smooth Cordgrass in 1999.

Lake Chapeau Sediment Input and Hydrologic Restoration Project included the planting of 40,000 plugs of Smooth Cordgrass in 2000.

Vegetative Planting on Grand Terre Island included planting over 39,000 native grasses in marsh and dune habitat in 2001.

Chandeleur Islands Marsh Restoration included the planting of 81,000 plugs of Smooth Cordgrass in 2001.

East Timbalier Island Restoration Planting included the installation of 13,000 plugs of Bitter Panicum and 6,500 Plugs of Marshhay Cordgrass in 2001.

Four Mile Canal Terracing and Sediment Trapping included the planting of over 56,000 plugs of Smooth Cordgrass in 2004.

Sediment Trapping at the Jaws included the planting of over 38,000 plugs of Smooth Cordgrass in 2004.

Timbalier Island Restoration included planting over 80,000 native grasses on dune and marsh habitat in 2006.

Little Lake Shoreline Protection and Dedicated Dredging Near Round Lake Project included the planting of 17,000 Smooth Cordgrass plugs in 2007.

Kenneth Bahlinger worked diligently to communicate the importance of integrating vegetative planting within a variety of restoration project techniques. The restoration community in Louisiana currently incorporates establishment of planting within most restoration project types from the planning stage and much of that credit is due to Kenneth Bahlinger's work.

LARGE SCALE COASTAL RESTORATION PROJECTS

In 2007, Kenneth was assigned to the project management section at the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority of Louisiana where he currently works managing large scale restoration projects. In his capacity as a Senior Project Manager, Kenneth has successfully led multidisciplinary, multi-agency teams through the planning, design and implementation of large scale coastal restoration projects in Louisiana. Two of these large

scale restoration projects which Kenneth led include the Scofield Island and the Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Project.

Scofield Island is located west of the active Mississippi River bird's foot delta in Plaquemines Parish, Louisiana. The island has experienced substantial impacts from storms, relative sea level rise, and anthropogenic influences. The combined effects have caused landward transgression, island breaching, wetlands loss, and adverse impacts to fisheries. A first in our nation's history, the Scofield Island Restoration Project used sand dredged from the Mississippi River to restore critical Louisiana barrier island habitat. The location from where the sand was dredged is one of the busiest commercial stretches on the lower Mississippi River voyaged daily by supertankers and barge traffic. At the outset of the Project, stakeholders from navigation companies expressed concern about dredging activities negatively impacting navigation. However, during construction of the Project the stakeholders lauded the Project team's outreach effort that Kenneth led, as one that should be modeled by other restoration projects in Louisiana.

In the arduous journey from the borrow area to the beach, the dredge pipeline crossed over the Mississippi River Flood Protection Levee, under two state highways through which permanent pipeline casings were constructed, over the Hurricane Protection Levee, through a 10 mile portion of the Empire Waterway navigation channel exiting into the Gulf of Mexico, and eastward until finally Scofield Island was reached. Construction required establishment of six navigational crossings and four booster pumps! Approximately 150 acres of supratidal habitat and 360 acres of future intertidal habitat were constructed with 1.5 million cubic yards of marsh sediment and 1.9 million cubic yards of sand. Sand fencing was installed on the dune and native grasses were planted in the dune and marsh areas (see before and after photos below).

A second example of a large-scale project which Mr. Bahlinger led is the Mississippi River Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Project. This innovative project not only restored 415 acres of intertidal marsh but, also provided infrastructure for future planned marsh creation project which connects renewable borrow areas in the Mississippi River with future planned areas for marsh creation and restoration. Another innovative component of this project is that it was bid in conjunction with another marsh creation project (Bayou Dupont Marsh and Ridge Creation) which utilized the long distance project infrastructure. The Bayou Dupont Marsh and Ridge Creation Project restored 390 acres of marsh. This innovate project delivery leveraged a lower construction price for both projects as the construction mobilization was shared and lower unit costs. It should also be noted that the Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Project was constructed with funding from the State of Louisiana, and three Louisiana parishes, Plaquemines, Jefferson and Lafourche, requiring significant coordination throughout the design and contracting processes. Kenneth's experience and expertise were instrumental in managing these efforts and coordinating with multiple local, state, and federal agencies in successfully implementing this project (see before and after photos below).

In recognition of his significant and consistent contributions to the conservation of natural resources in coastal Louisiana for the past twenty-six years, Kenneth Bahlinger is deserving of the honor of receiving the ASLA's LaGasse Medal. I wholeheartedly put forth this nomination on behalf of the Louisiana Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Lemoine
Louisiana Chapter President
American Society of Landscape Architect

COASTAL ENGINEERING CONSULTANTS INC.

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January 19, 2017

Jury for the LaGasse Medal of the ASLA
The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Regarding: Kenneth Bahlinger Nomination for the LaGasse Medal (Landscape Architect)

Dear Jurors for the LaGasse Medal of the ASLA:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this letter in support of a nomination of Kenneth Bahlinger for the LaGasse Medal. Kenneth's work as a landscape architect in the area of coastal restoration for the last 26 years is absolutely congruent with the passion and work of Alfred B. LaGasse who was concerned with the judicious use of the country's natural resources and the proper management of the nation's public lands.

I have known and collaborated with Kenneth since 1999 and have personally bore witness to his work restoring coastal wetlands in Louisiana. As a landscape architect working in this field, he has represented the profession with honor and distinction among a field of diverse disciplines dominated by engineers, geologists, and biologists. It takes a unique personality to successfully manage multi-disciplinary, multi-agency teams through the design and construction phases and Kenneth has done so with distinction most recently on the Scofield Island Restoration Project and the Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Marsh and Ridge Restoration Projects.

In addition to his significant work on restoration projects, Kenneth's work leading the Coast Vegetation Planting (CVP) Program has had a long standing impact on the use of vegetative planting as a component of coastal restoration. The CVP Program gave wetland practitioners the opportunity to apply sound research efforts on small restoration projects planting multiple species in various environmental conditions (various salinity levels, energy levels, soil types, and water depths) to evaluate their effectiveness. Information gained through years of using various techniques and wetlands species on relatively small projects has successfully been applied on large scale wetland restoration projects throughout the coastal zone of Louisiana. The network of federal, state, and local officials working through the CVP to inform, assist, demonstrate and

learn from local landowners, resource managers and land users were on the cutting edge of the development of techniques for the effective planting of native wetland species in Louisiana.

Concurrent with his work leading the CVP, Kenneth led the Christmas Tree Fence program which redirected over a million trees from landfills into fences in the marsh to protect wetlands. The trees are collected from the curbside in early January, stockpiled in holding areas, and placed in fenced areas to protect the marsh. His leadership of this program involved significant coordination with local government leaders in coastal parishes across Louisiana to ensure appropriate permits were submitted, coordinating contract documents, and providing information to the media across the state to publicize the program to the public. Generations of Louisiana have participated in the Christmas tree recycling program providing the public a tangible opportunity to contribute to the effort to restore coastal wetlands.

Through his work, Kenneth has been a great example for landscape architects and others involved in the fight to restore coastal wetlands in Louisiana to follow. He hasn't simply studied, theorized, or advocated for the restoration of important natural resource, he has effectively done something about it through the successfully construction of significant wetland restoration projects. Kenneth has demonstrated through his work that he is a deserving candidate for the LaGasse Medal.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory M. Grandy, ASLA
Past-President, Louisiana Chapter ASLA

JOHN BEL EDWARDS
GOVERNOR

THOMAS F. HARRIS
SECRETARY

State of Louisiana

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF COASTAL MANAGEMENT

January 11, 2017

LaGasse Medal Nominations (Landscape Architect Category)
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

I desire to formally endorse Mr. Kenneth Bahlinger for the LaGasse Medal Award of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA). I have known Mr. Bahlinger personally and professionally for more than 17 years. Mr. Bahlinger has made remarkable contribution with regard to management and conservation of the State of Louisiana's invaluable coastal resources.

Mr. Bahlinger is a licensed landscape architect with more than 20 years of experience working for the State of Louisiana as a senior landscape architect and has a lead project manager overseeing numerous coastal restoration, protection and conservation projects. Mr. Bahlinger is a worthy candidate for the LaGasse Medal. He has demonstrated over his career in state service, a dedication to the restoration of the Louisiana barrier islands, coastal marshes, and fragile coastal wetland landscape. Throughout his career, Mr. Bahlinger has been involved with the Coastal Vegetative Planting Program, the state's "Christmas Tree Program", and has been involved with and supervised the planting of over a million native coastal wetland plants on numerous state and federal coastal restoration projects.

Besides his specific project management contributions, Mr. Bahlinger has led by example of being a loyal worker, taking on new challenges, and serving as mentor to those in the landscape architect field. In general, his good nature is infectious, always answering, the question, "How are things?' with an enthusiastic, "Oh, we're getting it done!" in a way that is always genuine, and encouraging for all.

Please accept this letter of endorsement and give Mr. Bahlinger strong consideration for the LaGasse Medal.

Sincerely,

Keith Lovell, Assistant Secretary
Office of Coastal Management

Post Office Box 44487 • Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-4487
617 North Third Street • 10th Floor • Suite 1078 • Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70802
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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE
Southeast Regional Office
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St. Petersburg, Florida 33701-5505
http://sero.nmfs.noaa.gov

January 20, 2017

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is in support of the nomination of Mr. Kenneth Bahlinger for the LaGasse Medal. Mr. Bahlinger has contributed to the conservation, management, and indeed even the shape of the Louisiana landscape throughout the decades of his career and dedication to public service. Kenneth's work has included in coastal restoration as well as education and outreach regarding conservation and management of Louisiana's natural and cultural history. I have had the privilege of working with Kenneth for over two decades in various programs to manage, conserve and restore Louisiana's vast and diverse coastal landscape.

Mr. Bahlinger was an original leader and visionary behind Louisiana's early coastal restoration programs dated back to the late 1980s and early 1990s. Kenneth was very active in developing and implementing programs to use vegetative plantings and recycled Christmas trees as means to address localized and acute coastal land loss and erosion concerns. These programs required extensive coordination among federal, state and local partners, and Kenneth effectively led these programs to fruition. His coordination with research efforts on coastal vegetation fostered increased technical and scientific understanding, as well as supported development of new varieties of plants with improved characteristics needed to survive in the stressful conditions of coastal Louisiana. His contributions in this area fostered active vegetative plantings programs that continue today, and are evidenced in federal efforts to restore natural landscapes through vegetative plantings.

More recently, I had the opportunity to work with Kenneth when he served as a state project manager for a number of large scale coastal restoration projects, including several major barrier islands. Coastal restoration inherently involves "doing things that haven't been done before" and Kenneth always approached the myriad of challenges with optimism and determination. Of special note are his efforts to coordinate with the Mississippi River navigation and shipping interests to develop and implement projects that involve dredging from the Mississippi River for coastal restoration purposes. Over the course of several years, Kenneth facilitated numerous discussions and negotiations that eventually led to successful project implementation, and perhaps most importantly, development of new partnerships that will have a positive effect on south Louisiana for generations to come.

Kenneth has a deep appreciation for the history, culture, and natural history of Louisiana which I believe forms an important foundation of his work. His understanding of the history behind the present day, the cultural factors underlying the diverse people of Louisiana, and the natural driving forces that have shaped the landscape of our coast, is ever present in guiding his work. Kenneth has a great gift in bringing people and groups together to find their common ground

despite often substantial differences, and to work together to conserve and restore Louisiana's landscape. In addition to his vast work in the areas of coastal restoration, Kenneth has contributed directly to education and outreach, especially with children and youth groups, regarding the natural history of Louisiana. In leaving his mark on the physical landscape, he has also cultivated appreciation and understanding of natural history, conservation and resource management among tomorrow's leaders.

Mr. Bahlinger's decades of work will have significant and lasting benefits to the people and places of Louisiana.

Sincerely,

Rachel W. Sweeney

Carolyn Mitchell, Honors and Awards Coordinator
LaGasse Medal Nominations
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

It is an honor to endorse Mr. Kenneth Bahlinger for the 2016 LaGasse Medal for outstanding contributions to the management and conservancy of natural resources. For more than twenty years, Mr. Bahlinger has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to the preservation, conservation, and improvement of Louisiana coastal wetlands.

I first met Mr. Bahlinger in the mid-1990's as he begin to organize a collaborative state and parish program to implement wetland planting demonstrations throughout all of coastal Louisiana. Mr. Bahlinger saw Louisiana's eroding shorelines, subsiding marshes, and waning barrier islands as harbingers of Louisiana coastal future. Under Mr. Bahlinger's leadership, the Louisiana Coastal Vegetative Program came into existence, successfully completing hundreds of restoration demonstration projects and experimental plantings across Louisiana's entire coastal zone and barrier islands. The Louisiana Coastal Vegetative Program was such a success that within three years of its introduction, the first commercial wetland plant nurseries were organized and begin producing wetland plant materials specifically to meet the demands of Louisiana's rapidly expanding wetland restoration industry. Mr. Bahlinger both advised and shepherded Louisiana's first wetland nurserymen, writing a set of wetland plant standards and specifications and developing the licensing standards for Louisiana's wetland nurseries. These standards were quickly adopted, not only by Louisiana restoration agencies, but also by the private energy sector mitigation program.

In the last twenty years, Louisiana's wetland restoration programs have grown exponentially in both size and complexity. Wetland restoration projects are commonly multi-million dollar projects and routinely require thousands of wetland plants. Coastal engineers are designing and constructing some of the most unique and innovative wetland restoration techniques in the world. As a Senior Coastal Restoration Project Manager with the Office of Coastal Protection and Restoration, Mr. Bahlinger continues to be a leading advocate for wetland plant research and introduction. In collaboration with the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service's Plant Materials Program, Mr. Bahlinger was instrumental in the development and release of several wetland plant cultivars. These cultivars make up a core group of wetland plants used almost exclusively on Louisiana's barrier island restoration, to stabilize thousands of acres of dredge-sediment marsh creation, and to protect hundreds of miles of earthen terraces in high-energy open water environments.

In addition to his commitment of developing and advancing Louisiana's coastal vegetative restoration program, Mr. Bahlinger has served as an advocate and mentor to numerous young wetland scientists. As Mr. Bahlinger has devoted two decades to advancing Louisiana's coastal wetlands, the LaGasse Medal would be fitting recognition to Mr. Bahlinger's lifetime contributions to conservancy of Louisiana's natural resources.

Michael D. Materne
Louisiana State University
Wetland Plant and Coastal Ecology Specialist (Retired)

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & FORESTRY
MIKE STRAIN DVM
COMMISSIONER

January 19, 2017

LeGasse Medal Nominations
American Society of Landscape Architects

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Animal Health & Food Safety
P.O. Box 1951
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Fax: 925-4103

Forestry
P.O. Box 1628
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LA 70821
(225) 925-4500
Fax: 922-1356

Management & Finance
P.O. Box 3481
Baton Rouge,
LA 70821
(225) 922-1255
Fax: 925-6012

Soil & Water Conservation
P.O. Box 3554
Baton Rouge,
LA 70821
(225) 922-1269
Fax: 922-2577

Dear Sirs,

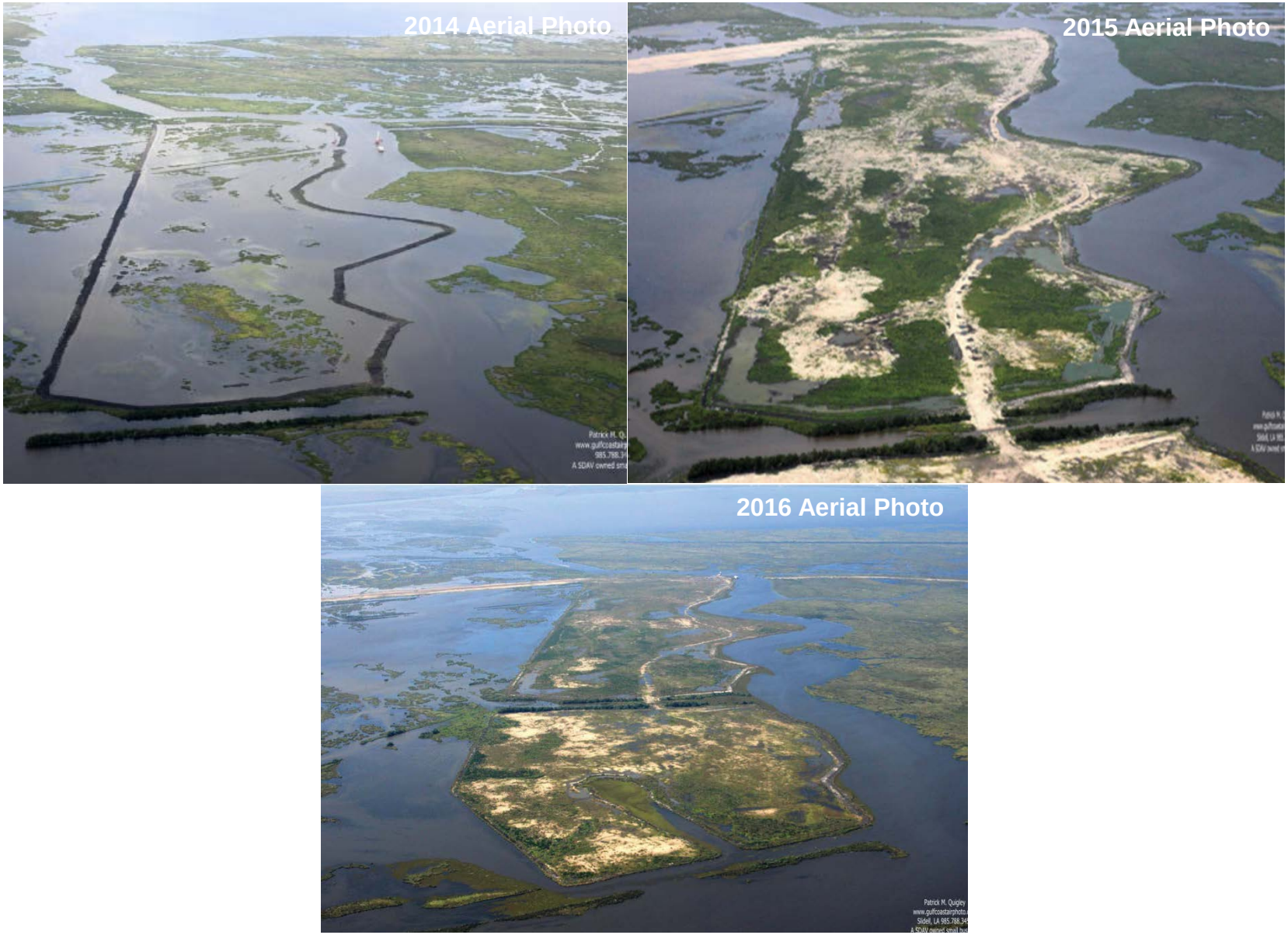
This letter is in support of Mr. Kenneth Bahlinger's nomination for the American Society of Landscape Architect's LaGasse Medal.

Of all his noteworthy accomplishments toward restoration and management of our State's natural resources, Mr. Bahlinger was instrumental in cultivating the development and forward progress of Louisiana's Coastal Vegetative Planting Program, one of the most respected, land-owner friendly and efficient conservation programs in the State. Fledged in the late 1980's, the program has prospered due to Kenneth's sharp planning, desire for coastal wetland dynamics restoration, and his passion for efficient project designing and implementation. In his efforts to engage individual wetland landowners as directly as possible, Kenneth guided development of the program to include local Soil & Water Conservation Districts having established cooperative working agreements with their constituent landowners, enabling these conservation and restoration projects to be implemented as quickly as possible, and through partnership with multiple technical agencies to ensure appropriate, in-kind administration; a rare feat in government anywhere.. The methods of environmental baseline and project monitoring data collection and storage designed by Kenneth have not only persisted, but created a veritable well of information essential in planning and design of other larger scale coastal initiatives, with or without vegetative components. Kenneth's drive, experience and talent as a long-time coastal landscape architect have created one of the most enduring, land-owner trusted and cost-effective conservation programs in all of State government. The merits of this wonderful restoration program are merely a reflection of Kenneth's personal character, leadership, work ethic and can-do attitude.

I am entirely certain that you will find Mr. Kenneth Bahlinger very deserving of the LaGasse Medal and all that it represents of the best of ASLA; working with him and through his programs has certainly has been my great honor and privilege.

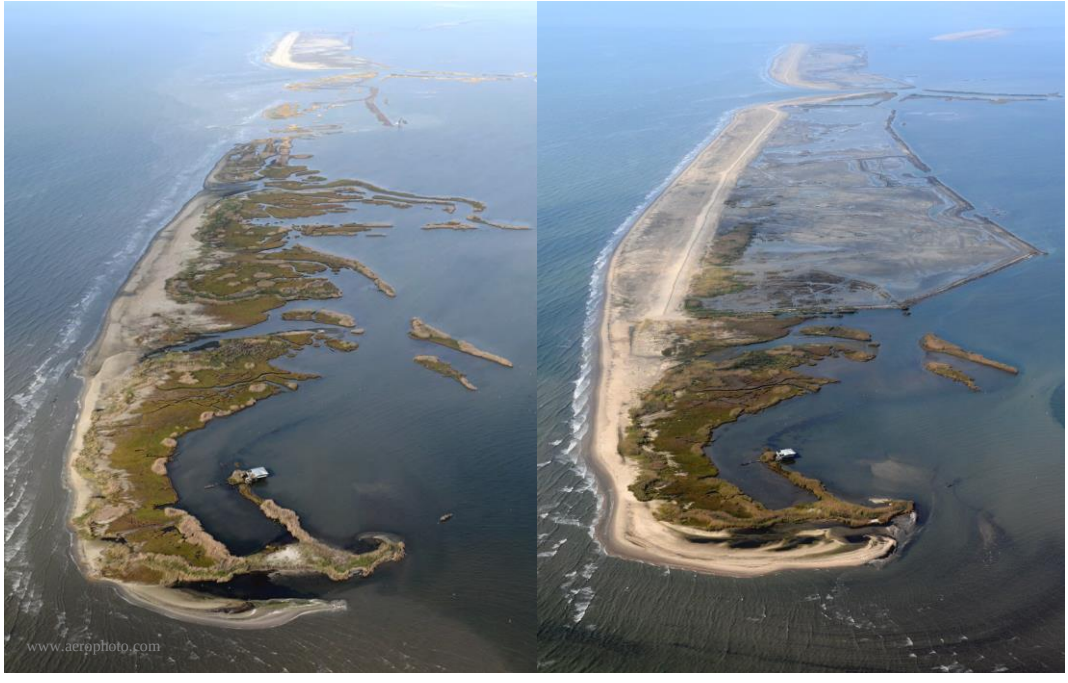
Sincerely,

Joey Breaux
Agriculture Environmental Specialist Admin. Coordinator
LDAF Administrator, LA Coastal Vegetative Planting Program



Mississippi River Long Distance Sediment Pipeline Restoration Project

Before Restoration **After Restoration**



Scofield Island Restoration Project (Beach, Dune, and Intertidal Marsh Habitat)