

825 Babcock Court
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

March 7, 2014

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

To the ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

I am pleased to nominate Ramiro Villalvazo, ASLA, RLA, for the LaGasse Medal (landscape architect). Ramiro has distinguished himself and our profession during his 30 plus year career with the USDA Forest Service (USFS). Born in Mexico, and a graduate of Cal Poly Pomona, Ramiro's leadership and dedication in land management issues and international tourism development have resulted in successful solutions benefitting many communities. Ramiro's training and career path have allowed him to promote and facilitate the development of tools and resources for other landscape architects. In addition, his knowledge and skills have created and developed a wide range of outdoor recreation planning projects for campgrounds, picnic areas, and trailheads, fully accessible visitor facilities, and being a catalyst and effective proponent in the protection and management of scenic corridors.

Ramiro began his Forest Service career as a Co-Op student on the Sequoia National Forest and then spent nine years on the Cleveland National Forest. This was followed by Forest Landscape Architect positions in Florida, California, and Puerto Rico's Caribbean National Forest. In Puerto Rico he was tasked with planning and managing a very sensitive ecological system, their rain forest. Besides Puerto Rico, Ramiro has international experience in Honduras, Jamaica, Panama, Nicaragua and Mexico.

As a result of his broad exposure to USFS settings and issues, in 2001 Ramiro was selected to serve as the Chief Landscape Architect for the Forest Service in the Recreation, Heritage, & Wilderness Resources Management unit in Washington, DC. He went from being a planner/designer on a single national forest to being nationally responsible for a multitude of programs, including program management and leadership in the areas of Scenery Resource Management, Built Environment Image & Design, Environmental Planning & Design, Recreation Planning, Nature Based Landscape Architecture, and Universal Design. He actively advanced the significance and effective inclusion of scenery, recreation and other social/economic values/issues in ecosystem management.

During this time, he reviewed national policy and worked with legislative affairs staff considering possible future laws in support of forest values and social benefits. And he promoted and supported the recruitment, hiring and development of Forest Service landscape architects to effectively accomplish agency goals and objectives, including achieving responsible land stewardship and sustainable development.

After five years at the helm, and wanting to return to field work, Ramiro left DC to become Forest Supervisor of the Eldorado National Forest in California. As forest supervisor, he managed 700,000 acres and a staff of more than 300 people. He worked within various programs, policy, and administrative authorities to protect, manage, and sustainably utilize natural resources. Protection of water and vast watersheds was a vital part of this responsibility.

One project that exemplifies Ramiro's impact was his work with the community of Kirkwood. His leadership made a major difference on the outcome - visually, socially, and environmentally - for a

LaGasse Medal, Ramiro Villalvazo Nomination

pristine and high quality recreation area adjacent to the Wilderness. The community of Kirkwood was planning to convert from generators to electricity for the first time, much of which would be along miles of pristine and unlogged mountain country. The area of concern was along Highway 88 encompassing the Kirkwood Ski Resort and a wilderness area. As Forest Supervisor, and a landscape architect, Ramiro framed the scope of analysis for this project so that in addition to energy savings, long-range visual impacts were considered a key issue. The end result was that the proposed overhead electric lines that would have ruined the scenic quality of this beautiful landscape went underground instead.

From Eldorado he moved to his current position, director of the USFS Southwest Region Public Services staff. He is responsible for providing leadership, guidance, advice, tools and resources for the management of the Region's Recreation, Lands, Heritage and Special Uses programs on 18 National Forests. He supervises a staff of twelve with specific program management responsibilities for outdoor recreation planning, facilities, setting, scenery management, landscape architecture, trails (including the Pacific Crest Trail from Mexico to Canada), Wilderness areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, heritage and cultural resources, land acquisition/exchanges, recreation and special uses including renewable energy (e.g., dealing with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission relicensing and wind energy proposals on public lands), conservation education, visitor information, interpretive services, and volunteer services. Drawing on his extensive experience within the Forest Service, Ramiro continues to utilize his landscape architecture skills and abilities to influence policy and practice.

Ramiro has earned recognition from many sources. He was a graduate of the first Forest Service Senior Leader Program. He was selected as a member of the Federal Highway Administration National Scenic Byway Selection Panel where he evaluated entries for recommendation as National Scenic Byways or Great American Roads. Ramiro held a three year appointment as an external member of the National Park Service Development Advisory Board (DAB), which is charged with reviewing and making recommendations about capital expenditure projects for the Park Service. He was selected by USAID for three separate details (work assignments) in Panama as well as a two week detail to Nicaragua, this in addition to his project-specific work in Mexico and Jamaica.

A member since 1986, throughout his career Ramiro has contributed to ASLA through several critical leadership roles. He attended the 1989 ASLA Bridge Conference, convened to develop a vision and strategy for the profession into the 21st century. In the early 1990's he helped establish and served on the Society's Public Practice Task Force (now Committee), helping build awareness on the role and value of landscape architects working in public agencies. He brought a reasoned yet passionate voice for those who were often underrepresented in ASLA affairs. Ramiro is fluent in Spanish and has frequently represented the Society in radio interviews focusing on careers in landscape architecture in a successful outreach to the Latino community. In 2003 Ramiro was selected to serve on the ASLA Awards Jury. He holds a landscape architecture license in California.

The LaGasse Medal recognizes "notable contributions to the management and conservancy of natural resources and/or public landscapes". Ramiro Villalvazo, in his many positions with the USDA Forest Service, has sought to advance the public's understanding of the value of public lands, and he has utilized his professional training as a landscape architect to improve our nation's public resources. He is a leader, and he has made a significant difference. I ask that you recognize his achievements and contributions by awarding him the 2014 LaGasse Medal. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely;



Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, PLA

LaGasse Medal, Ramiro Villalvazo Nomination



RAMIRO VILLALVAZO, ASLA, RLA

15 February 2014

Rodney Swink, FASLA, PLA
Landscape Architect

Rodney.swink@att.net



RE: Nomination of Ramiro Villalvazo for ASLA La Gasse Medal

Dear Rodney,

I am honored to offer a testimonial for the nomination of Ramiro Villalvazo for the American Society of Landscape Architects La Gasse Medal. I have worked with Ramiro while he served in two capacities on the west coast. Once as the Eldorado National Forest Supervisor in the Eldorado National Forest and again when he moved to the National Forest Regional Office (Region 5) as the Director of Public Services.

For those unfamiliar with the US Forest Service and the responsibilities of leadership, a brief description of the roles underscores why Ramiro is suitable for recognition in our field. The Forest Supervisors position is the senior leadership position on the forest, and the face of the Forest for the public. The Eldorado National Forest is one of the most widely recognized scenic forests in the nation. The project I worked on with Ramiro involved siting an electric transmission line near a scenic and historic highway, around lakes, rivers, wilderness areas, trails, and avalanche zones, to a ski resort in order to improve air quality and reduce the use of on-site diesel generation.

The Director of Public Services at the Regional Office is the senior staff position most commonly working with multiple uses and realty functions. Aside from the fire programs, it is my experience that this area of responsibility is the most likely to be in the press and interfacing with industry and the public. All major permitting activities are handled through his group. He carries the respect of admiration from his subordinates and leaders. His experience as the National Landscape Architect for the Forest Service in National Headquarters has uniquely equipped him to understand policy and programs both broadly and specifically. These former experience served him well as he moved into leadership at the local forest and within the Region.

Ramiro carries with him the characteristics that make it easy to recommend a fellow landscape architect for this important honor. He has demonstrated with a career, his interest in the public good, and has been advocate for public policy, and stewardship of public resources. He has demonstrated balance and

leadership in marshalling multi-disciplinary and public teams. He demonstrates the capacity to do difficult things and to use good judgment. I like to think that within his landscape architecture experience are some of the roots for his wisdom, and perspective. For the nation, he may be one of the more important landscape architects in practice.

Thank you for your interest in my opinion and recommendation. Please contact me directly if I can help further.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Warner', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael Warner, MLA, ASLA
President
Transcon Environmental, Inc.

Contact Information:

Email: mwarner@transcon.com

Phone: 602-418-0142



March 3, 2014

ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: LaGasse Medal Nominations – Landscape Architect

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

As a professional colleague in the United States Forest Service for over thirty years, I heartily endorse the nomination of Mr. Ramiro Villalvazo as the 2014 recipient of the LaGasse Medal for Landscape Architects. I have known Mr. Villalvazo as colleague, boss, mentor, and peer throughout his career, which has spanned the country from coast to coast and at every level of the Forest Service. His most recent assignments as the agency's Chief Landscape Architect, the Forest Supervisor for the Eldorado National Forest, and the Director of Public Services for the Pacific Southwest Region are most noteworthy. Very few of the thousands of landscape architects who have served in our agency over the years have attained such influential positions, which directly affect the conservation of the 191,000,000 acres of National Forests and Grasslands in our country. In addition, Mr. Villalvazo has expanded his conservation influence across Latin America, through the agency's International Programs branch.

Throughout his career, Mr. Villalvazo has been a strong leader for the sustainable integration of people and public landscapes, for the expansion of diverse career opportunities for landscape architects in the agency, and for the role of recreation management in achieving ecosystem restoration. He is universally recognized in the Forest Service as a person of strong integrity and clear vision regarding the role of landscape architecture in the conservation of our public lands.

It would be a double honor for me to share the LaGasse Medal with my esteemed colleague, Mr. Ramiro Villalvazo.

Sincerely,

James S. Bedwell
Director of Recreation, Lands and Minerals
USDA Forest Service
LaGasse Medal Recipient, Landscape Architect - 2004



**Pacific Southwest Region, R-5
US Forest Service
Public Affairs and Communications**



February 18, 2014

Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20001

Re: LaGasse Medal Nomination

Dear Trustees:

I strongly support Ramiro Villalvazo, ASLA, PLA as a nominee for the La Gasse Medal for his 34 year career managing public lands and protecting cultural and natural resources. His international work accomplishments have required ecological and cultural sensitivity and his continuing drive to open doors and create awareness for all landscape architects in the public realm has been noteworthy.

Ramiro has served as Chief Landscape Architect for the U.S. Forest Service in Washington, D.C. , Forest Supervisor (the leader of a National Forest who interfaces with communities and elected officials), and Director of Public Services for the Pacific Southwest Regional Office (a senior executive position which oversees and develops program policies for recreation, heritage, wilderness and special uses for 18 national forests). In addition to these positions, he has served on many committees and panels with the sole purpose of shaping public policy in the public realm while also creating a platform for landscape architects to excel.

Ramiro is an inspirational leader for public practice landscape architects. In his leadership roles, he has facilitated meaningful ways for Forest Service landscape architects to gain significant tools for wise decision-making that has resulted in successfully protecting and enhancing natural and cultural resources on public lands. His vision for public lands has been realized through his leadership in implementing the Scenery Resource Management System, the Built Environment Image Design Guide, and the 2004 Inter-Agency Environmental Design Symposium which brought together over 300 public practice landscape architects for the first time in ten years and created cross-training and networking opportunities and relevancy and recognition as a group making a difference for public lands.

His current position as Director of Public Services is an integral part of the upper management level of one of the nine regions that make up the Forest Service. His job is full of complexities as he oversees California, Hawai'i, and the U.S Affiliated Pacific Islands. He supervises several staff members, each responsible for a program area in scenery management, recreation planning, Wilderness Areas, Wild & Scenic Rivers, heritage and cultural resource protection, land acquisition and exchanges, in addition to renewable energy, conservation education, interpretive services, and volunteer services. He is in a strong position to influence how landscape architecture interfaces with public policy and influences scenic quality in pristine as well as urban settings. Many community leaders recognize the unique perspective that Ramiro has as a landscape architect and applaud the way he applies these skills to truly protect and preserve scenic quality in their communities and on public lands.

I respectfully request that you bestow this highest of honors, the LaGasse Medal, upon Ramiro Villalvazo, in recognition of his dedicated stewardship, unselfish trailblazing, and contributions to the visitors' understanding and physical improvements of public lands.

All the best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Robin Gyorgyfalvy". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Robin Gyorgyfalvy, FASLA, PLA
Acting Deputy Director, Public Affairs & Communications
Pacific Southwest Region, R-5, U.S. Forest Service
rgyorgyfalvy@fs.fed.us
(707) 562-9122 (p)



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Pacific
Southwest
Region

Regional Office, R5
1323 Club Drive
Vallejo, CA 94592
(707) 562-8737 Voice
(707) 562-9240 Text (TDD)

File Code: 1020

Date: MAR 06 2014

Carolyn Mitchell
LaGasse Medal Nominations-Landscape Architect
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Ms. Mitchell:

With great pride I endorse Ramiro Villalvazo for the American Society of Landscape Architects LaGasse Medal. I have known Ramiro for over a decade as a colleague in the U.S. Forest Service, and Ramiro currently works for me as the Director of Public Services in the Pacific Southwest Region, covering California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Islands.

Ramiro's prestigious career with the Forest Service covers four decades. He started as a Landscape Architect on a National Forest in Southern California, where he made a significant difference designing and implementing projects on public lands to ensure conservation and preservation of important environmental and aesthetic values. He rose through the Forest Service and became the National Landscape Architect for the agency in our Washington DC office. While there he influenced national policy around how the organization would design and implement projects on all National Forests covering 192 million acres. His influence went beyond that, as these policies serve as models for other land management agencies and organizations.

After serving in this role, Ramiro returned to California to put these policies into practice as the Forest Supervisor on the Eldorado National Forest. Located in the heart of the Sierras, the Eldorado attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors across the nation as well as internationally. Ramiro oversaw a wide suite of active programs such as recreation, wilderness, heritage, ecological restoration, fire management, and suppression and public safety.

Ramiro then brought his talents to the Regional Office to serve as the Director of Public Services. His responsibilities include overseeing the largest recreation, lands, wilderness, heritage, and special use administration program in the Forest Service. His passion for excellence in the field of landscape architecture and connecting people to nature comes through in everything he does. Since being in this role, he has helped advance the Children's Outdoor Bill of Rights and has served tirelessly to connect with underserved communities. He has mentored youth and young professionals and has served as a role model for not just budding landscape architects but all who have a desire to serve and connect people to the outdoors.



Carolyn Mitchell

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I wholeheartedly endorse Ramiro Villalvazo for this honor. While Ramiro is deserving of the recognition, I know that he is driven not by the desire to be recognized but by the desire to recognize the good work and potential in others.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ronald G. Ketter". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ronald" being the most prominent.

RONALD G. KETTER
Deputy Regional Forester