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CTASLA Presents 2006 Connecticut Olmsted Award to David Leff

New Haven, Connecticut, April 27, 2006 — The Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (CTASLA) has presented the **2006 Connecticut Olmsted Award** to **Collinsville resident David K. Leff**.

The Connecticut Olmsted Award is given annually by CTASLA to an organization or person who has demonstrated outstanding commitment to stewardship of the land. The award is named after Connecticut native Frederick Law Olmsted, who founded the landscape architecture profession in the 19th century. Best known for his creation of New York's Central Park, Olmsted's prominent Connecticut landscapes include Hartford's Pope Park and the Institute of Living, Bridgeport's Beardsley and Seaside parks, and New Britain's Walnut Hill Park.

David Leff retired this month as Deputy Commissioner of the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection, where he had been responsible for DEP's conservation programs – including parks, forests, fisheries and wildlife – for the past decade. More than 50,000 acres of open space and sensitive and unusual natural lands were protected during his tenure with DEP.

Prior to joining DEP, Mr. Leff spent more than 16 years with the Connecticut General Assembly, serving as a researcher, legal and policy advisor to the legislature's Environment Committee.

“David is an excellent choice to receive our Olmsted Award,” said CTASLA President Aris Stalis, a landscape architect with BSC Group. “In his writings and professional life, he has demonstrated an acute passion for the landscapes and unique spaces that contribute to Connecticut’s natural heritage.”

Mr. Leff is currently Chairman of the Connecticut Invasive Plant Council and Chairman of the Collinsville Historic District Commission. His book, *The Last Undiscovered Place* (University of Virginia Press, 2004), is a first-person narrative about the way that people relate to their landscape and communities. He is also a contributing writer to the *Hartford Courant*’s "Place" page.

Past recipients of the Connecticut Olmsted Award include Senator Joseph I. Lieberman (1997); Jack Shannahan, Connecticut Historical Commission (1999); (then) Lieutenant Governor M. Jodi Rell and (then) Senate President Pro Tempore Kevin B. Sullivan (2002); the Town of Simsbury (2003); the Green Valley Institute (2004); and State Senator Bill Finch (2005).

The Connecticut Olmsted Award was presented to Mr. Leff on April 26 during the Inaugural Olmsted Day Conference, sponsored by CTASLA and the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance. The all-day event, taking place at the Mark Twain House & Museum, was the first observance of Frederick Law Olmsted Day in Connecticut, created last year by the state legislature, and designated as April 26 (Olmsted’s birthday) annually.

The conference and award are also part of CTASLA’s observance of National Landscape Architecture Month, being celebrated across the country in April by the 48 chapters of the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members. Landscape architecture is a comprehensive discipline of land analysis, planning, design, management, preservation and rehabilitation. ASLA promotes the landscape architecture profession and advances the practice through advocacy, education, communication and fellowship. Learn more about landscape architecture online at www.asla.org. For more information on activities of the Connecticut Chapter, please see our website at www.ctasla.org.

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