

## **Rolling Stones Keyboardist Chuck Leavell Rocks the Environment at The Mother Nature Network**

You might not expect to find a rock star tending a sustainable tree farm or serving as a respected authority on forestry when he's not on tour with one of the greatest rock n' roll bands of all time, but Chuck Leavell isn't exactly an ordinary rock star. The Rolling Stones keyboardist is just as well-known for his environmental stewardship as he is for his skills and extensive resume as a musician, penning books on conservation and consulting with government officials to help shape forest policy in America. Leavell co-founded the web's top destination for environmental news and stories, The Mother Nature Network, in 2009.

Whether you know it or not, it's almost guaranteed that you've heard Leavell's work. Over the past four decades, the pianist has worked with some of the biggest names in music, including the Allman Brothers Band, Eric Clapton, The Black Crowes and George Harrison. Leavell first dreamed of becoming a musician at the tender age of thirteen after a transcendent Ray Charles concert, and became a member of The Rolling Stones in 1982. In the '90s, a People Magazine article calling Leavell "the sixth Rolling Stone" memorably featured a picture of him hugging a tree. Says guitarist Keith Richards, "Without the continuity that Chuck brings to us, the Stones would not be the Stones."

When he's not playing sold-out stadium shows or in the recording studio, Leavell can be found on Charlane Plantation, the 3,000-acre Macon, Georgia tree farm he runs with his wife. His commitment to sustainability blossomed when Rose Lane inherited her family's historic estate in 1981. Looking around at all of that land, Leavell says, he wondered how they could honor a heritage of good stewardship of the land, and he realized how many of his most treasured belongings - like pianos - are made of wood. Today, the land is an award-winning example of long-term sustainable forestry, and a haven for native wildlife.

Leavell's book *Forever Green: The History and Hope of the American Forest* is in its second printing, and in 2011, he released his latest, *Growing a Better America: Smart, Strong and Sustainable*. The Mother Nature Network was a natural step, sharing Leavell's passion for the natural world with over 75 million site visitors each year.

MNN is a hub for all things relating to the environment, from the most compulsively watchable cat videos on YouTube to the hottest new green technologies. Leavell and co-founder Joel Babbit envisioned the site as a place where anyone, regardless of their politics, can find valuable life tips and stay up to date on all the latest environmental news. Every day, it offers up dozens of original posts and articles with support from sponsors like NAPA Auto Parts.

Devoted to a wide range of corporate responsibility activities, NAPA is a natural fit for the Mother Nature Network. This mutually beneficial fusion of the auto parts industry and environmentally friendly programs and practices gets information about topics like recyclable car parts and building emergency car kits to the site's readership, and helps get NAPA employees excited about sustainability.

In fact, one lucky employee of NAPA/Genuine Parts will get to have dinner with Chuck Leavell as grand prize winner of the Rock the Environment contest. MNN and NAPA have teamed up to fly the winner and one guest to Washington, D.C. for the White House Correspondent's Jam on April 29th, 2016, a unique event preceding the official White House Correspondents' Dinner. Leavell will be playing live with a full slate of bands whose members include prominent journalists. Runner-up winners will get Rolling Stones merchandise signed by all members of the band. Check out the ad on the next page for details, including how to enter.

The White House Correspondents' Jam is a chance for politicians and journalists to let loose, putting aside their differences to have some fun and even jam out together, says Leavell. It's not every day that political events get this laid-back with a dose of cool cred from The Rolling Stones, and few people get to witness such a spectacle in person.