Green and Nature-Based Infrastructure Solutions for Economic Recovery in New England

Wednesday, October 27, 2021 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM ET

Speaker Biographies

Session 1: Why green infrastructure? Highlighting the scientific evidence and co-benefits of green infrastructure.

**Brendan Shane** is Climate Director for The Trust for Public Land, leading efforts to leverage the power of nature through park creation and land protection to advance climate protection and resilient communities. He previously served as Regional Director for North America for C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group, Chief of Policy and Sustainability for the District of Columbia Government, and Environmental Director for the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation. Brendan is a watershed hydrologist and attorney, with a BA in government from Franklin & Marshall College, MS in geology from the University of Maryland, and JD from the Georgetown University Law Center.

**Elise Simons** has worked for EPA New England for five years, providing training and assistance in a variety of environmental programs, including the Soak up the Rain green infrastructure outreach program. Prior to working at EPA, she taught organic gardening and agroforestry as a volunteer with the US Peace Corps in Zambia. She has a Master’s Degree in Urban Planning from Tufts University and a Bachelor’s in English from Smith College.

Session 2: Identifying opportunities and resources for the equitable planning and implementation of green and nature-based infrastructure solutions to address long term economic and climate resilience

**Arielle King** is the Environmental Justice Staff Attorney at the Environmental Law Institute. Arielle brings to ELI a background in environmental racism analysis, political ecology, critical race theory, sustainability, civil rights law, and integrating equity and environmental justice considerations into climate action plans. She is passionate about making environmental education inclusive and accessible to all. Arielle holds a JD and a Master’s in Environmental Law and Policy (MELP) from Vermont Law School and a BA from Bard College at Simon’s Rock.
Jeffrey King serves as Program Manager and Deputy National Lead for the US Army Corps of Engineers’ (USACE) Engineering With Nature® (EWN®) Program. In addition to leading and managing a broad array of EWN activities and collaborative efforts, Jeff is also advancing R&D projects within the EWN portfolio. Current projects and research interest include: incorporation of EWN techniques/designs into traditional infrastructure; design and application of natural and nature-based features (NNBF); promoting landscape architecture concepts/practices in pursuit of nature-based solutions; and fostering collaborative partnerships to achieve innovative outcomes that are aligned with elements of the EWN Initiative.

Session 3: Workshopping a Nature-based Infrastructure Project: Mystic River Coastal Resilience Planning

David Burdick is Director of the Jackson Estuarine Laboratory in the School of Marine Science and Ocean Engineering and Research Associate Professor in the Department of Natural Resources at the University of New Hampshire. Burdick studies and teaches the ecology and restoration of several coastal habitat types, primarily salt marshes. In 2012, he was awarded the Susan Snow-Cotter Leadership Award from the Gulf of Maine Council for the Marine Environment for his work on coastal habitat restoration.

Danielle Chesebrough was first elected in November 2019 as the Town of Stonington’s First Selectman and is now entering her second term as First Selectman. Prior to this role, she served as an elected official on Stonington’s Board of Finance and was also a member of the Town’s Economic Development Commission. Before being elected as First Selectman, she worked for nearly a decade for the United Nations Global Compact. In her role she facilitated collaboration between companies around the world and institutional investors who were signatories to the Principles for Responsible Investment, as well as co-organized the Sustainable Stock Exchanges initiative.

Elizabeth Habic is an Environmental Protection Specialist at the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). She conducts research, technical assistance and outreach to improve the sustainability of transportation networks and enhance the resilience and durability of transportation to impacts of extreme weather and changing climate conditions. She has 10 years of experience on these issues at the Maryland Department of Transportation and State Highway Administration as the Climate Risk and Resilience Program Manager. Elizabeth has worked on many transportation planning initiatives to include Asset Management and has an environmental background working on state projects for over 20 years.
Adrianne Harrison serves as a senior coastal management specialist with Lynker on contract with NOAA’s Office for Coastal Management. She has 16 years of experience working with state, local and federal partners to develop regional strategies for advancing coastal resilience priorities including facilitating a community of practice focused on living shorelines policy and practice for the last 8 years. Adrianne is based in New Hampshire and works across the New England region.

Mike Johnson has worked for NOAA Fisheries for 22 years evaluating coastal development projects in south Florida and throughout New England. His expertise and interest includes fish biology and ecology, fish habitat, climate change and the effects to aquatic species and habitats, blue carbon, and nature-based solutions to coastal development. Michael has published reports, guidance documents, and journal articles on various topics, including coastal development impacts on fish habitat and climate science.

Stephen Kirk is the coastal program manager for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts. His responsibilities include developing, implementing, and monitoring statewide and regional coastal conservation strategies. His current work is focused on advancing the policy and practice of living shorelines, nearshore habitat restoration, and shellfish aquaculture through collaborative research efforts. Before joining TNC, Steve spent his professional life working on the water as a fisheries researcher, oyster farmer, and captain of tugboats and tall ships. He holds a Masters in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island and a B.A. in Geography from the University of Vermont. His spare time is spent at the water’s edge with his young family.

Anne Leiby is a Senior Advisor in the Region 1 Office of the Water Division of the US Environmental Protection Agency in Boston where she works on issues associated with improving water quality in New England through permitting, the use of green infrastructure, and promoting localized financing mechanisms to fund stormwater best management practices and other climate resilience and adaptation strategies. Before that, Anne managed the former Innovations and Sustainability unit where she focused on strategic outreach to municipalities and businesses designed to help them adopt sustainable practices. Anne started her career in EPA as an attorney in the Superfund Division. Prior to that, she practiced environmental law in the private sector.
Rowan Schmidt is a strategic leader and managing projects and partner relationships. Working across a range of sectors and thematic areas, he leads Earth Economics’ efforts to advance policy and expand funding mechanisms for investments in green infrastructure. Rowan’s core focus areas include developing policy and case studies that leverage federal funding for implementing nature-based solutions that mitigate hazards such as flood, fire, drought, and heat, and identifying ways that national accounting standards can better incorporate the value of natural assets. Whether working with local, state, federal, or tribal governments, community-based organizations, NGOs, or businesses, Rowan is passionate about identifying funding mechanisms and policy levers that drive investment toward cost-effective and equitable projects that benefit communities.

Cassandra Thomas currently serves as an Acting Federal Disaster Recovery Officer for the FEMA Region 1 Covid-19 Long-Term Recovery Task Force. Deployed since March of 2020, she under the supervision of Federal Coordinating Officer (FCO) Jim McPherson oversees a team of 20+Task Force members to address issues of systemic vulnerability in the economy, housing market and healthcare system through a collaborative process that provides support to the 6 states and 10 tribes of the New England Region. Cassandra brings 20 years of economic development, data and analytics experience to the Task Force as she engages with representatives from Federal agency partners to identify funding, program resources and technical assistance that can assist the states and tribes in a resilient recovery.

Sheila Warren joined the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in May 2019 as the New England District Silver Jackets Coordinator in the Planning Division. The Silver Jackets Program is a State-led implementation of USACE Flood Risk Management Program (FRMP) - bringing together multiple state, federal and sometimes tribal and local agencies to learn from one another in reducing flood risk and other natural disasters. Sheila also serves as Project Manager for the Flood Plain Management Services (FPMS) Interagency Nonstructural Projects awarded to the New England Silver Jackets teams on an annual basis.
Organizers – American Association for the Advancement of Science’s Center for Scientific Evidence in Public Issues (AAAS EPI Center)

Rebecca Aicher is a project director at the AAAS EPI Center. She most recently worked with the AAAS Community Engagement Fellows Program to support scientific collaborations and community building in science. Prior to AAAS, she worked on policy-relevant scientific research including topics related to invasive species, restoration of ecosystems, climate change, and water resources at the Northeast Midwest Institute, US Global Change Research Program and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Research and Development, among others.

Erin Saybolt is a program assistant in the AAAS EPI Center. Erin has a passion for science policy and worked as an intern at the EPI Center during the summer of 2019. She was also a Virtual Student Federal Service Intern with the Citizen Science Working Group at the National Institutes of Health and held multiple positions in the Ursinus College Office of Admissions during her time in undergrad. Erin graduated from Ursinus College with a B.S. in Biology and recently completed a Master of Science in Biomedical Science Policy and Advocacy at Georgetown University.

Sarah Solomon is a program associate in the AAAS EPI Center. Previously, Sarah served as a contractor in the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Office of Research and Development. She was a member of the author team for the 2016 report Hydraulic Fracturing for Oil and Gas: Impacts from the Hydraulic Fracturing Water Cycle on Drinking Water Resources in the United States, which was awarded EPA’s Gold Medal for Exceptional Service. Her prior work includes policy-related research on climate change, water quality and monitoring, and environmental education and justice.