

# NINETEENTH ANNUAL LAND & WATER CONSERVATION SUMMIT

*Sustaining and Conserving in Unprecedented Times*

**Speaker Bios**  
**July 15, 2022**

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## Climate Change & Resiliency Panel Discussion

**Representative Lauren Carson, House District 75 - Newport:** Lauren Carson (D) was first elected to the House of Representatives in November 2014 to represent District 75 in Newport. She was named a Deputy Majority Leader in January 2021. Representative Carson is the second vice chair of the House Innovation, Internet and Technology Committee and she serves on the House Oversight Committee, while chairing that committee's Tourism, Arts and Recreation Subcommittee. She is also a member of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the House Small Business Committee. Representative Carson has been particularly active on issues related to the environment, small business, tourism and government transparency.

She obtained a Master's degree in History from the University of Rhode Island in 2008 and her Master's in Business degree from URI in 1992, and earned a BA in sociology in 1976 from Ramapo College in New Jersey. She is a graduate of Benedictine Academy in New Jersey. Born on February 26, 1954, she is the mother of a son, Andrew. <https://www.rilegislature.gov/representatives/carson/Pages/Biography.aspx>

In 2021, Representative Carson was the sponsor of the Act on Climate, which updates Rhode Island's climate-emission reduction goals, makes them enforceable and prepares Rhode Island for a global economy that will be shifting to adapt to clean technology. The act has been heralded as one of the most important steps toward addressing climate change the state has taken in decades. In her first year in the House, Representative Carson created and led a commission to study the impact of sea rise in Rhode Island. That commission laid the groundwork for a law she later sponsored requiring education on flooding and sea rise for local planning board members. Representative Carson has been named 2021 Environmental Champion by Clean Water Action, and has been honored as Legislator of the Year at various times by the R.I. Audubon Society, the R.I. Hospitality Association and the Rhode Island Conservation Districts.

**Sheila Dormody** is the Rhode Island Director of Climate and Cities Programs for The Nature Conservancy. Sheila leads programs to position the State of Rhode Island to address climate change and increase the use of nature-based strategies to improve resilience and promote social equity. Her current projects include chairing the RI Executive Climate Change Coordinating Council Advisory Board, the Providence Urban Forestry Plan, the Rhode Island Municipal Resilience Program, and the Providence Stormwater

Innovation Center. She previously served as the Director of Policy for two Providence mayors and was the first director of sustainability for the City of Providence. She won a New England Women in Energy and Environment Achievement Award in 2021, and brings 30 years of experience in policy advocacy.

**Chuck Horbert** graduated from URI with a BS Degree in Wildlife Biology and Management in 1989, and has been employed ever since with the RI Department of Environmental Management. Most of that 30-plus years has been spent managing the Freshwater Wetlands Permitting Program. In 1999, Chuck was appointed as a Deputy Administrator in DEM's Office of Water Resources where, in addition to freshwater wetlands, his management responsibilities now also include stormwater permitting and Water Quality Certification. He spends as much of his spare time as he can canoeing, hiking, and maintaining a landmark rhododendron garden at his home.

**Pam Rubinoff, Coastal Resilience Specialist, URI Coastal Resources Center/RI Sea Grant.** For over 30 years, Pam has linked engineering, natural hazards, and coastal management to provide technical assistance to vulnerable communities. Through her leadership she brings the best available science to incorporate science-based risk exposure and reduction practice into tangible guidance, outreach tools, and community capacity building approaches.

### Water is Life

**Silvermoon Mars LaRose**, a member of the Narragansett Tribe, is the Assistant Director of the Tomaquag Museum. She assists the Executive Director with managing the museum's collections and archives, cultural education, and the Indigenous Empowerment projects. Silvermoon has worked in tribal communities for over 20 years, serving in the areas of health and human services and education. Throughout her career, she has had the opportunity to travel extensively, learning from Indigenous communities throughout the United States. Silvermoon is also a member of the Rhode Island Foundation's inaugural cohort of the Equity Leadership Initiative. As a public servant, Silvermoon serves as the secretary for the Charlestown Conservation Commission. As an artist and educator, she hopes to foster Indigenous empowerment through education, community building, and the sharing of cultural knowledge and traditional arts. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology, a minor in Justice Law and Society from the University of Rhode Island, and a partially completed Masters in Rehabilitation Counseling from Western Washington University.

### Land Stewardship Roundtable

**Alex Chuman** is the Conservation Director at Aquidneck Land Trust ("ALT"), where he has worked for the last 8 years. ALT has conserved 2,730 acres across 92 properties in the towns of Newport, Middletown, and Portsmouth, and has 13 miles of trails in its portfolio. Alex works on conservation easement monitoring and enforcement, conservation planning, land acquisition, land management, farm access, community collaborations, and educational programming. Alex also serves on the Board of the RI Land Trust Council and Aquidneck Community Table.

**Tyler Maikath** is Land Management Director at South Kingstown Land Trust. He returned to RI in 2021 from Cape Cod, where he grew up. Previously he worked for Harwich Conservation Trust and Dennis Conservation Land Trust from 2018- 2021 as Outreach & Stewardship Coordinator. Prior to this, he worked at Greater Worcester Land Trust as Conservation Stewardship Coordinator. Tyler studied Environmental Studies at Antioch University New England for his M.S. and has a B.S. in Wildlife & Conservation Biology from URI. He is a new Rhode Island Land Trust Council Board member, elected this year. He is a resident of Warwick.

**Carol Lynn Trocki** is a conservation biologist and educator with over 20 years of experience helping others better understand, manage, and appreciate the natural world. Since 2004, she has been working with local land trusts and conservation groups, assisting them to map and prioritize their land acquisition efforts, document conservation values, and plan for the long-term stewardship of their protected properties. She has served on the boards of the Audubon Society of Rhode Island, Rhode Island Land Trust Council, Little Compton Conservation Commission, Jamestown Conservation Commission, and the Rose Island Lighthouse Foundation. Carol Lynn earned two B.S. degrees and a M.S. in Conservation Biology from the University of Rhode Island, where for ten years she then taught Wildlife Management and now periodically offers a graduate-level Land Conservation Practicum in an effort to train and develop the next generation of practitioners that will be needed to solve today's challenges. Carol Lynn specializes in coastal, avian and wetland ecology and is passionate about local agriculture as a vital part of any thriving landscape. She is currently most interested in the intersection of ecology and human values and believes that the health and integrity of any landscape relies on people's sense of connection to it.

**Randy Tuomisto** has lived on the east coast for the past 37 years. Retired from Boston Scientific, Randy spends his free time volunteering for the Cumberland Land Trust. He has served as a board member since 2008, and the Cumberland Land Trust President since 2013. Randy was raised in Minnesota and graduated from the University of Minnesota with a degree in Business Administration and Marketing.

### **Rhode Island Forest Health Work Project- Funding to Conserve Forests**

**Joseph Bachand** is the Conservation Easement Program Manager for USDA-NRCS. Joe has worked for the Natural Resources Conservation Service since 1988. He began his career as a Soil Conservationist working in the Greenville Field Office. He became the District Conservationist in Greenville in 1992. In 1996 he became the program manager for the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program and the Wetland Reserve Program. In 2015 Joe became the Program Manager for all of the NRCS easement programs. He primarily focuses on the acquisition of Agricultural Land easement, Wetland easement and Forestry easements.

**Brunilda Velez** is the NRCS Assistant State Conservationist for Programs in Warwick, Rhode Island. In her role, she leads the Financial Assistance and Easement programs in partnership with State and Local

Entities. She has more than eighteen years of experience with NRCS implementing conservation programs in multiple states. She has cultivated a broad view of the agency's role in the wider agricultural community by volunteering for several details in National Headquarters and as Acting State Conservationist in both Connecticut and Kentucky. Bruni received her B.A. in Agricultural Technology from the University of Puerto Rico Mayaguez campus. She is a member of the National Easement Advisory Team, Women in NRCS, and a lifetime member of the National Hispanic NRCS Employees Organization.

### **Successful Board Fundraising**

**Keith Tavares** has served as the capacity building officer for the Rhode Island Foundation since June 2017. The Rhode Island Foundation's capacity building program promotes best practices and supports the capacity needs of nonprofit organizations throughout Rhode Island. The Foundation's capacity building programs include topic focused workshops, regular convenings of nonprofit leaders, peer learning and instructional nonprofit cohorts, consultations with nonprofit leaders and boards around specific issues, and the management of nonprofit capacity building grants. Tavares' capacity building expertise is centered on nonprofit fundraising. Before taking his position with the Rhode Island Foundation, Tavares served as Vice President of Institutional Advancement for over a decade at one of Rhode Island's largest social service agencies, Child & Family. As head of development, he managed a \$7 million capital campaign, created a successful development program, and ended his tenure with Child & Family by leading a year-long 150th anniversary celebration and campaign for the Newport County based agency. Tavares received his undergraduate degree from Boston University, and served as Vice President of Student and Young Alumni Programs on the University's Alumni Board of Directors.

### **Rights to the Shore: Understanding Shoreline Access**

**Representative Terri Cortvriend- District 72- Middletown & Portsmouth, Legislative Commission on Shoreline Access.** Representative Terri Cortvriend (D) was first elected to represent District 72 in Portsmouth and Middletown in November 2018. She is the second vice chair of the House Small Business Committee and is a member of the House Environment and Natural Resources Committee, the House Innovation, Internet and Technology Committee and the House Oversight Committee.

She has sponsored and supported efforts to address climate change, to protect the environment and public shoreline access, to support education and to prevent substance abuse, particularly among youth. She has been leading a commission, created by legislation she sponsored in 2021, studying issues related to protecting Rhode Islanders' constitutionally guaranteed right to access the shore. For several years, she has sponsored legislation to prohibit polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in food packaging and cosponsored another bill to require the Department of Health to establish maximum contaminate levels of PFAs in drinking water.

Born January 15, 1962, she graduated from North Miami Senior High School in 1980 and is a graduate of Miami Dade Community College. She also studied business management at Florida International University and accounting at Community College of Rhode Island. Representative Cortvriend is the owner of Ocean Link, Inc., a marine plumbing firm that she founded in 1989. She previously worked as a yacht captain, and holds a USCG Captain's license and a private pilot's license. She is a member of the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association, the Newport County Chamber of Commerce and the International Yacht Restoration Program Advisory Committee.

<https://www.rilegislature.gov/representatives/cortvriend/Pages/Biography.aspx>

**David Prescott** serves as the South County Coastkeeper for Save The Bay's South Coast Center in Westerly, RI. As the Coastkeeper, he provides a visible on-the-water presence and works in the local communities on environmental issues along the southern coast of Rhode Island. In this role, he focuses on water quality testing and analysis, stormwater mitigation projects, coastal development review, pollution response, climate change impacts, and habitat restoration and adaptation. Dave has over 20 years of coastal environmental protection, conservation, and outreach experience.

**Janet Freedman** retired from the Coastal Resources Management Council at the University of Rhode Island. Janet's main interest is in coastal processes and how they are impacted by climate change. Over the years, she has monitored areas for shoreline changes, including beach accretion and erosion, dune formation and loss, bluff failure. She has also been documenting increased coastal flooding of low lying coastal areas and the subsequent changes to those areas. As a coastal manager, she worked with communities and individuals to incorporate natural infrastructure and processes into restoration opportunities. Currently she is working on coastal public access issues with researchers at the URI Coastal Institute.

**Michael Woods** has served as the Chair of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers' New England Chapter Board since 2019, during which time his focus has been on protecting and enhancing access to public lands, waters and wildlife and advancing science-based management policy at both the state and national level. A resident of Saunderstown, Mike enjoys hunting, fishing, clamming, crabbing, and many other shoreline pursuits in Rhode Island year-round. Earlier this year Mike received the Jim Posewitz Award for advancing ethical, responsible behavior in hunting and/or fishing at BHA's 2022 North American Rendezvous in Missoula, Montana.

### **Environmental Justice Panel Discussion**

**The Providence Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC)** is dedicated to bringing racial equity and environmental justice to Providence Frontline Communities. It's Mission: "We, the frontline communities of color of Providence, invite the City of Providence to join us in building new systems that are good for all people, and not just a few. A racially equitable & just Providence must actively work against and transform current and historic social inequities based on race, class, gender, immigrant status, and other forms of oppression. A racially equitable and just Providence puts capital and resources where these inequities are greatest." <https://www.rejc401.com/>

**Cassius Spears Jr.** is a District Conservationist with USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) and is a member of the Narragansett Indian Tribe. Cassius pursued a career in conservation work to promote sustainable socio-ecological relationships that protect and conserve Mother Earth. He was taught at a young age to acknowledge the waters, soils, and non-human kin with humility, compassion, and respect. Cassius attended the University of Rhode Island and received an Environmental Science and Management degree. He began working at NRCS in 2010 as an intern in the Student Career Experience Program. After graduating, he was converted to a Soil Conservationist in Rhode Island's Warwick Field Office. He became the District Conservationist for the Northern Conservation District in 2016 and continues to serve in that role today. Cassius is an active trainer with the Employee Development Section (EDS) course "Working Effectively with American Indians" where he helps organize and facilitate training between tribal nations and NRCS employees across Indian Country. He is the Urban Agriculture Coordinator for Rhode Island NRCS and performs several other collateral duties that help the agency fulfill its responsibilities to underserved populations. Cassius Spears lives with his wife endawnis Spears and their four children in the homeland of the Narragansett people, in present-day Hope Valley, Rhode Island, where he serves as a tribal leader and is an active cultural bearer in his tribal community.

**David Veliz** has been a social and environmental justice activist for almost 25 years and has worked on several local and national campaigns that addressed climate justice and social inequalities in marginalized communities. Currently he is the Environmental Justice Chair and Vice chair of the Rhode Island Sierra Club which supports environmental justice initiatives in Rhode Island. He is also the director of the RI Interfaith Coalition to Reduce Poverty which fights poverty and inequality in the state

**Sharad Wertheimer** (often called José by Spanish speakers) joined the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as a River Ranger in the summer of 2021, and in March of 2022 became the Nuevas Voces/New Voices Program Coordinator.

He graduated from Brown University in 2019 with a degree in American Studies. Following graduation, he worked for two years as a union organizer at health care workers' union SEIU 1199NE in Providence, where he supported legislative and electoral campaigns to improve working and living conditions for nursing home workers and residents. Through this position, he learned the fundamentals of community organizing, and about how working-class communities can change the world for the better when they are united, and supported with the right tools.

Sharad followed his life-long love for the natural world to his current position at WRWC. As coordinator of the Nuevas Voces program, Sharad works with a cohort of Latinx residents in Olneyville to develop their capacity to be leaders for environmental and social justice in their neighborhood.

**Marching Orders for All Lake/River Volunteers:**  
**Memorize Invasive Water Chestnut**

**Katie DeGoosh-DiMarzio** is an Environmental Analyst with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission on permanent assignment in Providence to support the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, Office of Water Resources. She received her Master's Degree in Ecology and Environmental Science in 2007 from the University of Maine, and Bachelor's Degree in Biology from Russell Sage College in Troy, NY. Working with RIDEM since 2006, she monitors water quality in streams, invasive plants in freshwater, and dabbles in outreach/education.

**How to Do a Successful Land Conservation Project**

**Joanne Riccitelli** was the South Kingstown Land Trust Director of Land Protection for 22 years before retiring from that job in September 2021. She negotiated and completed 110 land preservation projects, 2148 acres. She raised \$14.8 million for those acquisitions, and processed land donations valued at \$11.9 million. She worked closely with partner agencies to coordinate land conservation efforts in the town of South Kingstown, including US Fish & Wildlife Service, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, RI Department of Environmental Management, The Nature Conservancy, Town of South Kingstown, Audubon Society of RI and Narrow River Land Trust.

Prior to her work at SKLT, Joanne was a strategy consultant with Telesis Inc, an international business consulting firm based in Providence focusing on competitive cost and market analysis for corporate clients and on economic development and organizational strategy analysis for public or nonprofit clients. Joanne received a bachelor's degree in Environmental Biology at Brown University.

Previously, Joanne was a planner and data analyst at the Governor's Energy Office in Providence, a paralegal in the Providence office of the Conservation Law Foundation, and an intern for the bird banding program at the Manomet Bird Observatory in Massachusetts.

**Climate Resiliency Financing: Leveraging Infrastructure Funding to Advance Municipal Resiliency Projects**

**Karen Bradbury** has worked for U.S. Senator Sheldon Whitehouse since 2009 and currently serves as his Rhode Island projects director and a senior member of his environmental policy team. In this role, she serves as the Senator's primary contact and advisor in Rhode Island on energy, natural resources, climate change, oceans, fisheries and other environmental issues. She also is the lead organizer for the Senator's Energy, Environment and Oceans Leaders Day, an annual day-long conference featuring national and local speakers. Ms. Bradbury earned a B.A. in Political Science from Providence College and an M.S. in Labor Relations from the University of Rhode Island. A lifelong Rhode Islander, Karen lives in Lincoln, Rhode Island with her family.

**Aaron Ley** is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Rhode Island and Director of URI's Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program. Professor Ley has experience working with agencies and policymaking organizations in Rhode Island, such as the Department of Labor and Training, the Rhode Island League of Towns and Cities, and the US EPA's

Southeast New England Program (SNEP). Dr. Ley received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Washington State University in 2011. His research appears in the peer-reviewed journals of *Environmental Politics*, *Law & Society Review*, *Society & Natural Resources*, *Review of Policy Research*, and *Law & Policy*. He is a veteran of Operation Enduring Freedom and served as a military police officer during his deployment in Honduras (2003-2004). He has served as a member of the Bristol Town Council since 2018.

**Kate Michaud** is the Town Manager of the Town of Warren, Rhode Island. Kate is a graduate of BMC Durfee High School in Fall River, MA and holds a degree from Providence College. Kate has served in RI municipal government for more than 20 years and has completed studies at the University of Rhode Island's Institute for Housing and Community Development and the Creating Collaborative Solutions Program at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government. Kate is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and has recently obtained certification as a Climate Change Professional (CC-P). She serves on the Board of Directors for the RI League of Cities and Towns, the Steering Committee of the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program, the Risk Management Committee of the Rhode Island Interlocal Risk Management Trust. In May of 2022 Kate was recognized as the Local Leader of the Year by RI Clean Water Action.

**Sydney Usatine** is a Senior Business Development Analyst at RI Infrastructure Bank. Sydney assists clients through all phases of project financing from initial scoping to loan closing. Sydney works to provide borrowers customized financing packages to best serve project needs and helps clients navigate the many funding and financing programs available, each with specific eligibility criteria and requirements. Before joining the RI Infrastructure Bank, Sydney was an engineer for a solar installation company. Sydney has a Master of Environmental Management from the Yale School of the Environment and a Bachelor of Science in Engineering from Harvey Mudd College.

### **Using Video for Conservation**

**Greg Gerritt** has been a cutting edge environmental and social radical since he organized his High School for the first Earth Day. Gerritt has helped found a number of organizations including the Green Party, the think tank ProsperityForRI.com, his local watershed group Friends of the Moshassuck, and the Environmental Justice League of Rhode Island, and has been an influential voice in the development of the compost industry and green infrastructure in Rhode Island.

One day he found a little rainwater pool that had tadpoles and it just seemed like a perfect video project. Eventually Greg realized that if anyone was going to make videos of the tadpoles, it was him. 10 years later he is still going strong with more than 1400 short nature videos of local urban wildlife. He also started the RI Nature Video Festival to highlight others in RI filming nature and putting it on the web.

A recipient of an Lifetime Achievement award from EPA Region 1, in semi-retirement Greg continually proselytizes for conservation organizations to use more video to reach the public and likes to share what he has learned about making videos with anyone who thinks it might be a good project for them or their organization.



**Elise Torello** is a long-time resident of Rhode Island and a two-time graduate of the URI. With degrees in wildlife biology and computer science, she has been fortunate to be able to combine her interests in the natural world and technology by doing data management and presentation as well as geographic information systems mapping for several local environmental groups. Over the years, she has volunteered and worked for the Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association and the Salt Ponds Coalition. She has been an appointed member of the Rhode Island Rivers Council and the South Kingstown Planning Board and is currently on the Board of Directors of the South Kingstown Land Trust. Most recently, along with her husband Bill McCusker, she co-founded Friends of the Saugatucket to advocate for the Saugatucket River and watershed in South Kingstown, RI.

Elise has become locally “famous” for her trail camera captures in the wilds of South Kingstown. At any given time she has up to six trail cameras deployed at promising spots in the woods. What started as a hobby has become a valuable outreach tool to try to bring friends, family, and community members closer to nature. Elise’s goal is to convince as many people as possible to become cheerleaders for nature and wildlife through her photography and videos. Elise lives in South Kingstown with her husband, two indoor cats, six hens, and lots of wild animals that want to eat the hens. She has two grown sons and passed on her passion for the environment to them by taking them on lots of nature hikes and paddling adventures.

### **Amplifying Community-led Change in the Food System**

**Eva Agudelo** (she/her/hers) is the Hope's Harvest Program Director at Farm Fresh Rhode Island. Since 2008, she has worked with beginning farmers, restaurants, retailers, farmers markets, non-profits, and hunger relief agencies, to improve community food security and bring about a food system that works for everyone. Eva started the National Incubator Farm Training Initiative through the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project, served as a FINI program officer at Wholesome Wave supporting incentive programs at farmers markets across the U.S., and was the Assistant Director of Programs at the Rhode Island Community Food Bank. Most recently, she founded Rhode Island's first farm-based food recovery organization - Hope's Harvest RI. She holds an M.S. from the Friedman School of Nutrition Science and Policy at Tufts University, is a former member of the Rhode Island Food Policy Council (RIFPC), and sits on the board of Osamequin Farm.

**Ella Kilpatrick Kotner** grew up on an organic lettuce farm, where she cultivated an early passion for local food systems, and especially the communities that make them flourish. She continued to nourish this passion through a bachelor's degree in environmental science with a focus in land, water, and food security. Ella has spent several years as a garden and environmental educator, and is passionate about facilitating connections between people, their food, and the places they call home. She now works for Groundwork RI and is the program coordinator for Harvest Cycle Compost, where she works to promote community composting as an embodiment of resilience that allows us to collectively build up our soils and strengthen our communities. Outside of work she is also an activist and organizer for climate justice.

**Dr. Amanda Missimer**, Clinical Assistant Professor in the URI Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences and Co-founder of Food Recovery for RI, has expertise in curriculum design and development, health communication, undergraduate student engagement, and assessment and implementation of behavior change models as a nutrition specialist and registered dietitian. Dr. Missimer instructs courses at the university and splits her Extension time between FRRI and EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program). Coming from a background in biochemistry, it has been a joy of hers to step into the community and share information to help individuals foster a relationship with local food. This program has been a labor of love, and as a new Rhode Islander, the best way to learn about all lil' rhody has to offer its residents.

**Vanessa Venturini** spent the past fourteen years developing and leading community education programs as an Extension Educator, including serving as the Co-founder and Coordinator of Food Recovery for Rhode Island. Rhode Island born and Rhode Island bred, Vanessa is privileged to be in a role to connect motivated people and grassroots organizations doing good work for the environment and food sovereignty. Ms. Venturini has a Master of Environmental Science degree, loves spending time in nature with her precocious three-year-old, and has served as State Program Leader of Master Gardener Program for the last decade.

#### **Providence Storm Water Quality Monitoring Program**

**Ryan Kopp** has been working with the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center for the past 2 years, helping launch the Center with initiatives related to stormwater and green infrastructure training, monitoring and public outreach. Prior to working with the Innovation Center, he worked for 15 years on water resources and data projects with the US Geological Survey and tribal government in Colorado and Washington State. He holds a B.S. degree in Environmental and Engineering Geology.

**Will Helt** is the Coast Restoration Scientist for the Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island. He works to design, implement, monitor, and analyze results of coastal habitat restoration programs and projects focused on marine fisheries and shellfish research and restoration efforts in Rhode Island and southern New England. He also works with the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center's volunteer cyanobacteria monitoring program to document the occurrence and timing of Harmful Algal Blooms, the spatial distribution of toxin producing cyanobacteria and to raise awareness about blooms within the community. Will holds a MS degree in Marine Biology and Biological Oceanography.

#### **Solar Development & Forest Protection Panel Discussion**

**Sue AnderBois** is the Climate and Energy Program Manager with The Nature Conservancy. Her background is in policy in both climate/clean energy and also sustainable food systems. Most recently, she served as Rhode Island's first statewide Director of Food Strategy. Sue has a BA in Environmental Studies from Dartmouth College, an MBA from the Yale School of Management. She is active on several boards including the Green Energy Consumers, the Southside Community Land Trust, and the Local

Return. In her outside-of-work time, she is currently a candidate for Providence City Council, and lives on the East Side with her husband Scott, their dog Captain Ruggles, and two cats Zeni & Wasabi.

**Laura Bartsch** is the Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing at Advanced Energy Economy (AEE). She is responsible for AEE's sales and marketing efforts, overseeing a team focused on revenue growth and working to facilitate a deeper understanding of our members' business and policy goals to maximize their participation in AEE activities. Before joining AEE, she was a co-founding Principal of Millville Partners, a strategic marketing firm. Laura's career incorporates experience in design, marketing and branding, strategic planning and facilitation, project management, and client relations. Laura is Chair of the Rhode Island Distributed Generation Board and serves as a member of the Board of Directors for PowerOptions, the largest nonprofit energy consortium in New England.

**Tee Jay Boudreau** is the Deputy Chief of the Division of Forest Environment within the RI Department of Environmental Management's Division of Agriculture and Forest Environment, where he helps guide the Division's mission of education, outreach, land management, and technical support to RI citizens on a myriad of forest-related endeavors. Before entering State service in 2013, he worked for a number of years in the Philadelphia Parks and Recreation Division. He is a resident of Exeter, RI where he makes his home with his wife Christina, and 2 children, Casey and Finlay.

**Scott Millar** is the Director of Community Technical Assistance and Conservation for Grow Smart RI. Scott joined Grow Smart in September 2015. Scott is working with agriculture, forestry, conservation development and renewable energy siting. Prior to joining Grow Smart, Scott worked for the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (DEM) for 23 years and for the Statewide Planning Program for 12 years. Most recently he served as the Administrator of Sustainable Watersheds Office at DEM where he spearheaded the development of smart growth guidance manuals and training programs on topics such as village growth, farm and forest preservation, conservation development, low impact development, and the transfer of development rights. His work encouraged communities to successfully use their land use authority to accommodate growth while avoiding and reducing impacts to natural resources and community character.

Scott also has over 25 years of community experience in the Town of Exeter, where he has held the following positions: Planning Board Chair, Conservation Commission Chair, Community Comprehensive Plan Coordinator, Vision for Exeter Chair and Town Charter Chair. Scott has a BS in Natural Resources Science and an MS in Wildlife Biology from the University of Rhode Island.

### **River and Watershed Organizations Round Table**

**Veronica M. Berounsky, Ph.D.**, is a coastal ecologist and communication specialist whose professional and personal life are very much intertwined. She has been with the University of Rhode Island (URI) Graduate School of Oceanography (GSO) since 1979 and received her Ph.D. from there in 1990. She became a member of the Board of Directors of the Narrow River Preservation Association (NRPA) in 1990

and has served as Vice-President since 2015. In March of 2013 she was appointed to the RI Rivers Council and has been Chair since September 2013. She is also a member and has served as an officer for the Coastal & Estuarine Research Foundation (CERF) and New England Estuarine Research Society (NEERS). Veronica has over forty years of experience researching the ecology of marine and estuarine ecosystems, presenting papers, and publishing scientific articles. Her work includes studies on eutrophication, nitrogen cycling, bacteria levels, coastal and estuarine water quality issues, human impacts, ecological indicators, anoxic systems, and global climate change. She is interested in investigating in what way activities on land affect water quality in coastal systems.

In 2021, Veronica was the recipient of a “Environmental Merit Award – Lifetime Achievement” from the US Environmental Protection Agency (Region 1- New England) for her 30 years of outstanding and sustained stewardship of Narrow River. Veronica can be reached at [vmberounsky@uri.edu](mailto:vmberounsky@uri.edu)

### **Protecting Municipally Owned Conservation Land- An Opportunity**

**Stephen H. Marsella**, Esquire, is the Assistant Town Solicitor for the Town of Narragansett assigned to support the Zoning Board, Planning Board, Community Development Department, Building Department, Land Conservancy Trust and Historic District Commission. Steve is also the assistant city solicitor to the City of Cranston and counsel to the North Providence Housing Authority and the Cranston Housing Authority. Steve is a graduate of Tufts University and the Catholic University Columbus School of Law. He is admitted to the bar in the State of Rhode Island, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the U.S. District Court in the District of Rhode Island.

**Barbara Rich, RI Land Trust Council, Smithfield Land Trust:** “It has been my honor to devote my volunteer work for the last 15 years to help conserve and protect the natural lands of Rhode Island. I have lived in Rhode Island since 1977 and value our small state and all it has to offer. I have been a member of the Smithfield Land Trust since about 2007. I have served as Treasurer, Vice Chairman and Chairman through the years. I am a member of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council serving my last year as Treasurer.”

**Thomas E. Rogers** is an independent consultant specializing in solving energy- and project-related problems. He retired from National Grid and its predecessor company, the New England Electric System, after 25 years of service. His positions included Vice President of Retail Marketing & Demand Side Management, director of the post-merger integration of Eastern Utilities, director for the divestiture of the generation business and Project Director of the Manchester Street Repowering Project in Providence, RI

Prior to New England Electric, Rogers was a commissioned officer in the US Army Corps of Engineers with troop and engineering assignments. Rogers graduated from the U.S. Military Academy at West Point N.Y. and from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Rogers is a registered professional engineer in Massachusetts.

Rogers is currently the president of the board of the Rhode Island Land Trust Council, Chair of the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust, board member of PowerOptions, Inc and a past president and board member of the board of directors of Save the Bay.

**Youthful backs and abundant energy:**

**How to effectively partner with Scouts, BSA troops and Eagle Scout candidates to complete your preserve projects**

**Catherine Campbell** is the Associate Director of Philanthropy for The Nature Conservancy in Rhode Island. Catherine is the Scoutmaster of Troop 152 North Kingstown, Boys and a member of the Conservation Committee of the Narragansett Council of Scouts, BSA.

**Terry Gray** was recently confirmed as permanent Director of Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, after serving as interim director over the last year. He has a 35-year career with RIDEM, beginning as a hazardous waste program engineer. He is a leader with Troop 35 West Greenwich and is the parent of two Eagle Scouts. Terry currently is the Chair of the Conservation Committee of the Narragansett Council of Scouts, BSA.

**Andrew Oldmeadow** is an Eagle Scout from Troop 152 North Kingstown. He recently completed his Eagle Scout project installing bog bridges at The Nature Conservancy's Whale Rock Trail in Narragansett.

**Multi-Use Trails: The Intersection Between Active Transportation, Clean Water, Climate Resilience, Social Justice, Public Art and Education**

**Jacob Gorke** joined the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) in August of 2018 as a River Ranger. In August of 2021 he became the Woonasquatucket River Greenway Manager. He holds a BFA from Alfred University, where he studied relationships between art, nature, mathematics, and life sciences. Jake currently leads a team of River Rangers, whose primary job is to maintain the Woonasquatucket River Greenway, a linear park connecting communities from Johnston to Providence RI. Jake has also lead stormwater technical trainings, fish diversity surveys, community river clean ups, mural projects, riparian foliage restorations, and more. Through his work, Jake has learned that community engagement is the strongest way to build long term health and prosperity for the Woonasquatucket River watershed and its users. With the help of local community members, school children, teachers, folks from neighboring organizations, the indigenous community, and a team of River Rangers, thousands of native plants have been planted within the watershed under Jake's direction. Jake hopes to continue this type of work with WRWC, and that one day he will see a swimmable and fishable Woonasquatucket River.

**Amanda Peavey** joined the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) as an Environmental Educator in April of 2021. She quickly moved into the Education Director position

in August 2021. She holds a BA in Biology and a MA in Education, both degrees from the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. Amanda's work at the WRWC has included maintaining and revising existing in-school and after-school environmental education curricula in Providence, expanding WRWC's environmental education programs into new schools throughout the Woonasquatucket River watershed including North Providence, Smithfield and North Smithfield, along with introducing new curricula. This work has led her to maintain and create lasting relationships with various partners within and outside of the watershed.

**Sharad Wertheimer** (often called José by Spanish speakers) joined the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council as a River Ranger in the summer of 2021, and in March of 2022 became the Nuevas Voces/New Voices Program Coordinator.

He graduated from Brown University in 2019 with a degree in American Studies. Following graduation, he worked for two years as a union organizer at health care workers' union SEIU 1199NE in Providence, where he supported legislative and electoral campaigns to improve working and living conditions for nursing home workers and residents. Through this position, he learned the fundamentals of community organizing, and about how working-class communities can change the world for the better when they are united, and supported with the right tools.

Sharad followed his life-long love for the natural world to his current position at WRWC. As coordinator of the Nuevas Voces program, Sharad works with a cohort of Latinx residents in Olneyville to develop their capacity to be leaders for environmental and social justice in their neighborhood.

**Learn how Aquidneck Community Table (ACT) has adapted school and community gardens to build connections, feed neighbors and triumph over covid challenges**

**Bevan Linsley's** path to food system work began in her father's English garden, passed through her mother's excellent kitchen, the Master Gardener Program in Colorado, and eventually led to a Waldorf school, where she organized events, the school's first garden and a CSA (Community Supported Agriculture) program. After moving to Rhode Island in 1998 she managed several farmers market organizations before realizing her passion for food system change when Aquidneck Growers Market merged with two other organizations to form Aquidneck Community Table (ACT) in 2016. Bevan has served as ACT's executive director since then. She is a commissioner on the state's Agricultural Lands Preservation Commission and a member of the RI Food Policy Council.