

Rhode Island Land and Water Conservation Summit
July 15, 2022
Sustaining and Conserving in Unprecedented Times

Workshop Series 1: Choose One!
10 am - 11:10 am

A. Climate Change & Resiliency Panel Discussion

The state's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change continues to increase, and cities and towns face everyday decisions on how to best adapt to a warming climate and invest in climate resiliency. How can the state meet its Act On Climate goals requiring the state to reduce carbon emissions while supporting municipalities in their climate resiliency needs to ensure communities can adapt to the impacts of climate?

Representative Lauren Carson, House District 75 - Newport

Sheila Dormody- Director Climate and Cities Programs, The Nature Conservancy

Chuck Horbert- Deputy Administrator, Groundwater & Freshwater Wetlands Protection, RI DEM

Pam Rubinoff- Associate Coastal Manager, RI Sea Grant & URI Coastal Research Center

B. Water is Life

Water is Life - Two elements that life cannot survive without, hydrogen and oxygen, come together to form Water. Water that quenches and cleanses, that heals and destroys, is an essential component of Indigenous foodways, technology, medicine, ceremony, spirituality, life...Water Is Life and that is why we fight to protect it. In this presentation, we will explore the cultural significance of water and the Indigenous led movement to protect it with Silvermoon LaRose, Narragansett educator and Assistant Director of the Tomaquag Museum.

Silvermoon LaRose- Narragansett, Assistant Director, Tomaquag Museum

C. Land Stewardship Roundtable

Lightly structured and in an interactive format, this workshop will discuss hot stewardship topics such as easement monitoring and enforcement strategies, trail/property maintenance, using technology, landowner relationships and succession, working with volunteers, and more. Have a new project or a stewardship problem where you need feedback? Come prepared to share. This roundtable discussion will allow you to network with other land trusts experiencing similar stewardship issues.

Alex Chuman- Conservation Director, Aquidneck Land Trust

Tyler Maikath- Land Management Director, South Kingstown Land Trust

Carol Lynn Trocki- Principal Conservation Biologist, Mosaic Land Management, LLC

Randy Tuomisto- President, Cumberland Land Trust

D. The Rhode Island Forest Health Work Project- Funding to Conserve Forests

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will be speaking about a new Forest protection program under the Regional Conservationist Partnership Program (RCPP). The

“Rhode Island Forest Health Works Project” will allow for both Entity Held and US Held Forested easements. In addition, we will introduce other funding opportunities under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program which includes the Agricultural Lands Easement Program and the Wetland Reserve Easement Program. These programs can be used by land trusts, local and state governments, non-governmental organizations, as well as private landowners, to place conservation easements on properties to protect agricultural lands, wetland and forestland. NRCS staff will review the program eligibility requirements and the application process to assist workshop participants in understanding the programs and their benefits.

Joseph Bachand- Easement Program Manager, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service
Brunilda Velez- Assistant State Conservationist, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

E. Successful Board Fundraising

This workshop focuses on the roles and responsibilities of board members when it comes to fundraising for the nonprofit organizations they support and lead. The workshop will cover nonprofit funding streams, board fundraising activities, and the best practices that board members can learn, implement and follow in support of their organization’s fundraising goals.

Keith Tavares- Capacity Building Officer, Rhode Island Foundation

F. Rights to the Shore: Understanding Shoreline Access

Public access to the Rhode Island shore is a right guaranteed in the state’s constitution, but what does that mean? This workshop aims to give a comprehensive overview of the issues surrounding shoreline access, the 2022 legislative session and where our rights to the shore currently stand. Bring your questions!

Rep.Terri Cortvriend- District 72- Middletown & Portsmouth, Legislative Commission on Shoreline Access

David Prescott- South County Coastkeeper, Save The Bay

Nathan Vinhateiro, PhD- Assistant Director, Coastal Institute, University of Rhode Island

Michael Woods- Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Workshop Series 2: Choose One! ***11:20 - 12:30 pm***

A. Environmental Justice Panel Discussion

The state and nation continue to struggle to advance racial equity as environmental justice communities—who tend to be Black, Indigenous, people of color, and low-income communities—suffer from decades of disinvestment impacting every facet of life, including health, housing, heat and pollution exposure experience deep inequities heighten throughout the pandemic. How can we better support environmental communities and center their voices and lived experiences in conservation efforts?

Providence Racial and Environmental Justice Committee (REJC)

Cassius Spears, Jr.- First Councilman, Narragansett Indian Tribe & District Conservationist, USDA-NRCS

David Veliz- Environmental Justice Organizer, RI Sierra Club

Sharad Wertheimer- Senior River Ranger, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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

In just five years, the number of lakes and ponds with invasive water chestnut has nearly tripled across Rhode Island. The annual plant floats on the surface of the water, making boating, swimming and fishing impossible. It easily spreads lake to lake as geese and ducks carry it, and then multiplies exponentially. If you know what it looks like, and pluck it out of the water before it produces seeds, you can avoid its wrath, or if it's just established, plan a volunteer pulling event to eradicate it.

Katie DeGoosh-DiMarzio- NEIWPC Environmental Analyst/RI DEM

C. How to Do a Successful Land Conservation Project

This workshop will walk through the steps for doing a land conservation deal – from initial conversation with the landowner to recording final documents. We'll explore decision points along the way – easement or fee, donation or bargain sale, and does the land trust really want to protect this land forever? Discussion will include which documentation to prepare and when, and how that sometimes changes. Sample documents will be provided – including basic land protection info for landowners, checklist for land project process, and project summary sheets.

Joanne Riccitelli- Land Protection Specialist

D. Climate Resiliency Financing: Leveraging Infrastructure Funding to Advance Municipal Resiliency Projects

According to Resilient Rhody, "Climate resiliency is defined as the capacity of individuals, institutions, businesses, and natural systems within Rhode Island to survive, adapt, and grow no matter what chronic stresses and weather events they experience." Investments are being made to advance the resiliency of cities and towns across the state. This workshop aims to discuss the potential to leverage federal infrastructure funding to better prepare RI for climate change.

Karen Bradbury- Projects Director, U.S. Senate - Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Anthony Hebert, Senior Planner I, Planning & Redevelopment Department, City of Pawtucket

Aaron J. Ley, Ph.D. - MPA Director, Department of Political Science at URI

Kate Michaud - Town Manager, Warren

Sydney Usatine- Senior Business Development Analyst, Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank

E. Using Video for Conservation

Despite the fact that we want everyone to go outside every day, that will never happen. But conservation organizations need some way to attract the attention of potential participants and donors. One tool that is getting easier and easier to use is to produce video of your work and get it out to the public. There are a variety of ways to create video. And a nearly infinite number of ways to use it. This workshop will highlight two video practitioners focused on communicating information about nature in Rhode Island who work in different ways. Greg Gerritt, proprietor of the Youtube Channel Moshassuckcritters, carries a camera and videos the animals he comes across in his daily walks in Providence. Elise Torello employs trail cameras in South County.. Each of these techniques works well, but they work differently. This workshop aims to provide a short explanation of each person's work, provide examples of finished products, and stimulate attendees to ramp up the video work of their organizations.

Greg Gerritt- Forest Gnome & Urban Wildlife Videographer, Friends of the Moshassuck

Elise Torello- Friends of the Saugatucket & South Kingstown Land Trust

F. Amplifying Community-led Change in the Food System

Food Recovery for Rhode Island is URI Cooperative Extension's newest program that centers equity and community-driven change to strengthen the local food system. In its pilot phase, 120 people came together around the issues of food waste and food access, learned something new, engaged in dialogue, and volunteered with community-based organizations. Collectively, over 130,000 pounds of food waste has been diverted from the landfill, and 48,000 pounds of food donated to feed people, surpassing our goals, with many unexpected collaborations and innovations along the way. Learn from the URI FRRI team and community partners about how we amplified individual and collective change to benefit people and the planet.

Eva Agudelo- Hope's Harvest Program Director, Farm Fresh Rhode Island

Ella Kilpatrick Kotner- Program Coordinator, Harvest Cycle Compost, Groundwork RI

Dr. Amanda Missimer- Clinical Assistant Professor in the URI Department of Nutrition and Food Sciences

Vanessa Venturini- Extension Coordinator, URI

G. Providence Storm Water Quality Monitoring Program

Cyanobacteria blooms in urban ponds are becoming a frequent occurrence during the summer months in New England. These blooms often produce toxins which are harmful to animals and humans. The Providence Stormwater Innovation Center participates in volunteer cyanobacteria monitoring programs to better understand when and where these blooms are occurring and to inform local state agencies of potential risks to people in the community. Learn more about our monitoring efforts in Roger Williams Park and how you can get involved in your own watershed or local pond.

Ryan Kopp, Stormwater Manager, Audubon Society of Rhode Island

Will Helt, Coast Restoration Scientist, The Nature Conservancy of Rhode Island

Workshop Series 3: Choose One!
2:30-3:40 pm

A. Solar Development & Forest Protection Panel Discussion

The state's solar incentives are at odds with our climate goals and the public's investment of protecting our most critical open space for environmental benefits, wildlife habitat, and recreation. This has led to clearcutting large tracts of critical forestland as developers focus on inexpensive and privately owned open space. At the same time, municipalities across the state are pushing back and passing ordinances prohibiting solar. How can we change the status quo?

Sue AnderBois- Climate & Energy Program Manager, The Nature Conservancy

Laura Bartsch - Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Advanced Energy Economy (AEE)

TeeJay Boudreau- Deputy Chief, Division of Agriculture & Forest Environment, RIDEM

Scott Millar- Senior Policy Analyst, Grow Smart RI

B. River and Watershed Organizations Round Table

Sharing in an interactive format, this workshop will discuss important water-related topics such as invasive species, water quality, using technology, working with volunteers, and more. Have a new project or a watershed problem where you need feedback? Come prepared to share. This roundtable discussion will allow you to network with other land trusts experiencing similar stewardship issues.

[Veronica Berounsky](#)- RI Rivers Council, Narrow River Preservation Association
Members of RI Rivers Council

C. Protecting Municipally Owned Conservation Land- An Opportunity

Unless municipally-owned conservation properties have existing 3rd party conservation easements, there is a real risk that a town may decide to sell or develop existing conservation land even though it had been acquired as perpetual conservation land. As a result of the RI Land Trust Councils efforts, a new state law allows towns to perpetually protect conservation properties. This seminar will introduce the risk and the solution, focusing on a process towns may find useful in protecting their conservation land.

Steve Marsella, Esquire

Barbara Rich- RI Land Trust Council, Smithfield Land Trust

Thomas Rogers- RI Land Trust Council, Board President & Chair of Narragansett Land Conservancy
Trust

D. Youthful backs and abundant energy: How to effectively partner with Scouts, BSA troops and Eagle Scout candidates to complete your preserve projects

Join members of the Narragansett Council Scouts, BSA Conservation Committee and stewardship staff from The Nature Conservancy to learn how to connect with local troops to

identify, develop and complete service projects at your land trust properties. The panel will discuss protocols for working with youth, the requirements for an Eagle Scout project, and what to expect from scouts and troop leadership. Learn how to get more done on your properties and fulfill service requirements with local scouts.

Catherine Campbell- Associate Director of Philanthropy, The Nature Conservancy & Conservation Committee Narragansett Council of Scouts, BSA

Terry Gray- Conservation Committee Chair, Narragansett Council of Scouts, BSA & Director, RI DEM

Andrew Oldmeadow- Eagle Scout, Troop 152, North Kingstown

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

The Woonasquatucket River Greenway is a 7-mile multi-use trail and park system designed to offer active transportation and access to parks and river resources in urban Providence. But Greenways like the Woonasquatucket are opportunities for so much more. Come learn how to make the most of a trail from the Woonasquatucket River Greenway example. Presenters Jacob Gorke, Greenway Manager; Amanda Peavey, Education Director; and Sharad Wertheimer, New Voices/Nuevas Voces Program Coordinator, will discuss how the Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council (WRWC) has used the Greenway to improve neighborhoods, clean an industrial river, mitigate climate change, and as an educational and artistic community resource. In addition to learning how the Greenway is an art trail, a showcase of nature-based stormwater solutions, an outdoor classroom, and a trail for hiking, biking and more, we will share how every new section of trail intentionally builds in these multiple functions. You will see the latest designs for the section of Greenway between Olneyville and downtown Providence, a \$10 million project. A giant price tag for one mile of trail but when you hear what is included, you will understand why it is worth it!

Jacob Gorke- Greenway Manager, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Amanda Peavey- Education Director, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

Sharad Wertheimer- New Voices/Nuevas Voces Program Coordinator, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council

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

ACT works with many partners to build and manage school and community gardens on Aquidneck Island, providing spaces to grow fresh produce while building community bonds. While restrictions were in place to reduce the spread of covid, some of ACT's gardens were forced to close to the public, but with local support, ACT adapted swiftly, developing a bold plan to use garden spaces to grow as much fresh produce as possible for distribution to food insecure households. Last year, through a new and innovative summer job program, ACT engaged high school students in the meaningful work of growing food; during the summer vacation months, students took ownership of five school and community gardens in Newport's North End where they harvested and shared fresh produce with the local community,

commuting between work sites by bicycle. ACT continues to grow and adapt programs that utilize outdoor green spaces to grow food and connect people of diverse backgrounds, rallying around the shared goal of building a healthy, equitable, and environmentally sustainable community-based food system.

Bevan Linsley- Executive Director, Aquidneck Community Table

G. Advancing Offshore Wind with Wildlife Considerations

Offshore wind plays a huge role in the advancement of Rhode Island's renewable energy goals, especially as we Act on Climate. How can we advance these important technologies while also taking into consideration their interactions with wildlife?

Nicole DiPaolo- Offshore Wind Energy Program Manager, BlueGreen Alliance