

DRAFT AGENDA: Delaware River Climate Practitioners Workshop

October 28, 2024

Event is free and open to the public.

DELAWARE RIVER

Hosted by the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 3

Climate Practitioners Workshop

 October 28, 2024, 10am-4pm

 The Discovery Center
3401 Reservoir Dr. Philadelphia, PA 19121

 Calling state, local, and community leaders! Join us for an opportunity to gain and exchange practical information on how to build and execute climate adaptation projects that reduce exposure to climate impacts.





Time	Topic
9:30	Doors Open
10:00	Welcome <i><u>Suzanne Biemiller</u></i> , Executive Director, Audubon Mid-Atlantic <i><u>Leslie Gillespie-Marthaler</u></i> , Environmental Justice, Community Health, and Environmental Review (EJCHER) Division Director, EPA Mid-Atlantic Region
10:15	Opening Remarks <i><u>Ned Gardiner</u></i> , Ned Gardiner, Ph.D., Program Manager, Climate Smart Communities Initiative, National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) <i>Understanding NOAA's Steps to Resilience Framework</i>

10:45	<u>Session Theme: Increased Temperature</u> Rural <u>Scott Morgan</u>, Technical Assistance Provider, Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey <i>Climate-Resilient Cropping Systems</i> Urban/Suburban <u>Stacey Henry</u>, Founder, Delaware First Resilience Hub Network <i>Climate & Environmental Resiliency: Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management for Extreme Heat Weather Conditions & Climate-related Events</i>
11:35	<u>Session Theme: Changes in Precipitation</u> Urban/Suburban <u>Grant DeCosta</u>, Director of Community Services, Brandywine Conservancy <u>Stacey Blankin</u>, Community Unit Supervisor, FEMA Region 3 – Mitigation <i>Planning and funding a vision for resiliency: Learning from the Brandywine Conservancy & Museum</i>
12:00	<i>Lunch and Networking</i> <i>Optional Bird Walk with <u>Damien Ruffner</u></i>
12:45	<u>Session Theme: Changes in Precipitation (continued)</u> Urban/Suburban <u>Michael Sachs</u>, Northeast Region General Manager, Resource Environmental Solutions LLC <i>Case Studies in Ecological Restoration Projects with Climate Co-Benefits</i> Rural <u>Rachel Hogan Carr</u>, Director, Nurture Nature Center <u>Jim Wilson</u>, Position Title, Northampton County Conservation District <i>CREATE'ing Resilience: Building Vision and Spotighting Successful Community Efforts in Climate and Hazard Resilience</i>
2:00	<i>Break</i>

2:15	<u>Session Theme: Sea-Level Rise</u> Urban/Suburban <u>Julia Rockwell</u>, Manager, Climate Adaptation and Watershed Protection, Philadelphia Water Department <i>Rising Waters: Philadelphia Water Department's Approach to Understand and Address Sea Level Rise Risks</i> Rural <u>Alex Renaud</u>, Chief of the Coastal Section, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District's Planning Division <u>Steve Rochette</u>, Chief of Government and Public Affairs, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Philadelphia District <i>Advancing Engineering with Nature and Innovative Dredging Practices in USACE's Philadelphia District</i>
3:30	Closing Remarks <u>Klaus Keller</u>, Hodgson Distinguished Professor, Thayer School of Engineering, Dartmouth College <i>Mind the Gap in Climate Risk Management: From Decision Making to Basic Research and Back</i>
4:00	Next Steps and Adjourn <u>Kristen Kavanagh</u>, Deputy Executive Director, Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC)

Speaker Bios



Suzanne Biemiller serves as National Audubon Society's vice president for the Mid-Atlantic region. In this role, she leads a team focused on conservation, policy and environmental action in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Our current conservation priorities include: restoring saltmarsh ecosystems in coastal Maryland; creating healthier, more biodiverse forests in Pennsylvania; improving habitat for birds and people within the Delaware River Watershed; and increasing climate resiliency while restoring migratory bird habitat in Baltimore and Philadelphia.

Suzanne brings more than two decades of experience in the philanthropic, non-profit, and government sectors. She helped spearhead the creation of and wrote Greenworks Philadelphia, which became the catalyst for Philadelphia's innovative sustainability efforts. Her experience also includes tenure as first deputy chief of staff to Philadelphia's Mayor Michael Nutter and as a senior program officer at The Pew Charitable Trusts. She founded and created Highland Strategies, a consulting firm focused on nonprofit strategic planning and program design.

Suzanne currently serves on the boards of the Academy of Natural Science and Mastery Charter board and was a member of the board of the Philadelphia Outward Bound School and the Community College of Philadelphia. She received a master's degree in public policy from Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government and a bachelor's degree from Williams College. She loves canoeing, knitting and cheering for the Philadelphia Eagles.



Leslie Gillespie-Marthaler is the Division Director for the EPA Mid-Atlantic Region's Environmental Justice, Community Health, and Environmental Review (EJCHER) Division and the region's Senior Climate Adaptation Official. She served as the Deputy Director for the Water Division from 2020 to 2024, where she focused on supporting programs and enabling division operations. Leslie served in various leadership positions within the Office of the Secretary of the Army, EPA Office of Research and Development, and long-term details with the White House Council on Environmental Quality and Office of Management and Budget. Leslie also served as an executive in the Tennessee Department of Environment & Conservation and is an Army veteran. She holds engineering degrees from the United States Military Academy, Georgia Institute of Technology, and The George Washington University, and completed her Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering at Vanderbilt University. She resides in

	Chesterbrook, PA with her husband Skye and 11-year-old son, Magnus.
	Ned Gardiner serves as program manager for NOAA's Climate Smart Communities Initiative and co-manages the Climate Ready Workforce within NOAA's Climate Program Office. He leads engagement efforts for the U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit, where federal data, tools, reports, and expertise are packaged to help state and local governments understand and adapt to climate change. He has led interdisciplinary research in ecology of river systems and the diversity and evolution of fishes in both western North Carolina and in the lower Congo River. He led visualization efforts focused on global ecology, atmospheric chemistry, weather, and climate at New York City's American Museum of Natural History. Having built public programs for networks of large museums, he moved to NOAA where he was an original architect of climate.gov and where he remains content strategist for toolkit.climate.gov. He remains focused on climate-smart decision making by designing processes for people in distinct sectors to leverage climate data and information.
	Scott Morgan is the Technical Assistance Provider for Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Jersey. He has spent his 20+ year farming career focused on organic production. Scott has grown mixed vegetables, specialty crops, baby greens and small fruit. His current farm focus is sustainable and regenerative grain production using organic methods on his farm Morganics Family Farm in Hillsborough, New Jersey. The farm also hosts an ever-expanding facility for cleaning and milling grains of all types. Scott shares his life and farm passions with his acupuncturist wife, Alison Morgan and their three children. His current TAP work involves enrolling farmers in and assisting with the implementation of Climate-smart practices through the PASA Climate-smart Farming and Marketing Program as well as assisting farmers enrolling in an Increasing Land Access grant on public lands in New Jersey.



Stacey Henry, Founder of Delaware First Resilience Hub Network. The Hub was established September 2021, with two additional satellites located in Delaware. She has served with many environmental councils and climate resilience partnerships, to include but not limited to NOAA National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration, Former Vice President Al Gore Climate Reality Project, C.R.E.W. Communities Responding to Extreme Weather, WIST Heat Watch mapping campaign researching urban heat island with The University of Delaware. As well as disaster preparedness training with The American Red Cross, a National FEMA Instructor, The Climate Resilience Hub Network, Anthropocene Alliance, Delaware Concern Residents for Environmental Justice, WE ACT, AARP Community Challenge, National Climate Leaders, Hurricane Katrina Climate Resilience Network just to name a few. She has led many partnership initiatives related to extreme weather solutions across the country through her Resilience Hub work. She has also initiated cooling center networks in the state of Delaware and currently working with communities in Pennsylvania and Virginia. She founded Delaware First Resilience Hub as a result of the devastation from Hurricane Ida that flooded a community in Wilmington. This event elevated her training as a community organizer, mastering skills and knowledge to facilitate environmental and climate change education throughout the United States. Her endless program efforts and community organizing has provided tremendous support and resources for underserved communities. She most recently provided support during the hurricane season for the communities experiencing climate disasters from Hurricane Milton.

Stacey has served on special task force and committee initiatives with Current President elect President Joe Biden, other senior staff members of environmental leadership offices at the White House, local and state Government Leaders. She also serves as a Technical Assistance Director for organizations planning Resilience Hub startups. As a community organizer, she's had the opportunity to work with environmental leadership opportunities to build climate resilience, preparing communities for environmental climate uncertainties. Today, she is an active member with other EJ organizations, such as EarthFirst and The Environmental Change and Sustainability Network.



Grant DeCosta is the Director of Community Services at the Brandywine Conservancy. Grant has over 18 years of experience in conservation and environmental policy work in the non-profit, private, and public sectors in Pennsylvania, Delaware and Washington, D.C. In his role at the Conservancy, Grant serves as the Co-Director of the Conservancy providing strategic guidance and leadership for the Conservancy to further its mission. Mr. DeCosta specializes in land use planning, conservation, and implementation of land restoration projects for water quality improvement. He works with landowners, municipalities, regulators, and policy makers to provide a holistic approach to natural resource conservation and protection. He holds a M.S. in Geography from West Chester University and a B.S. in Forestry and Wildlife Science from Virginia Tech.



Stacey Blankin joined FEMA Region 3 in 2023 and oversees the region's hazard mitigation planners in Pennsylvania, Maryland, and the District of Columbia. Her team reviews state and local hazard mitigation plans and provides a wide range of technical assistance to aid communities in developing actionable plans that reduce their risks from natural hazards. Prior to joining FEMA, Stacey worked with a national urban design and planning firm, where she focused on large-scale neighborhood revitalization plans integrating green infrastructure for disadvantaged communities in cities across the county including Philadelphia, PA, Newport News, VA, Houston, TX, Trenton, NJ, Augusta, GA. Stacey holds a M.S. in Community and Regional Planning from Temple University and a B.A. in the History of Art from the University of Pennsylvania.



Damien Ruffner has been involved with education for ten years, and specifically environmental education for the past eight. He received his BS in Biology from Francis Marion University. After growing up primarily in the Southeast, Damien spent time in the Lone Star State teaching at-risk youth science in and after-school settings for kids. After moving to Philadelphia in the summer of 2011, he took on the role of Environmental Educator with the Schuylkill Center, as well as a mentor for the Philly based program, EducationWorks. Damien's passion for teaching environmental issues comes from his background of wanting to break down perceived barriers between people in nature. He hopes to take his background and use it to create a supportive learning environment for the Strawberry Mansion community and the Philadelphia region.



Mike Sachs serves as General Manager of RES' Northeast Region. Mike has helped the region grow into a diverse business delivering some of the region's most significant ecological restoration projects, such as compensatory mitigation and pollutant reduction, using various delivery methods. Mike enjoys working every day with an excellent regional team consisting of dedicated, well-rounded professionals under the direction of recognized subject matter experts. Mike says the best part of working at RES is spending time in the field at RES' job sites and working in the fun environment of our Pittsburgh office. Mike takes pride in delivering innovative ecological restoration projects with RES's fast-paced but relaxed approach. Outside of work, Mike enjoys fly fishing and boating.



Rachel Hogan Carr is the Executive Director of the Nurture Nature Center. She holds a master's degree in environmental policy design from Lehigh University, where she focused her research on improving flood risk communication through social science. Rachel helped to found NNC, and prior to that, worked as a community organizer and in urban real estate development. She has served as principal investigator on several flood-related research and education projects in partnership with National Weather Service and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Rachel is co-chair of the InPRHA project of the World Meteorological Organization, focused on the integration of hydrology, precipitation and social sciences to improve flood early warning systems globally. In 2011, Rachel was named Distinguished Informal Science Educator of the Year by the American Meteorological Society. Rachel is a Certified Floodplain Manager and a member of the Board of Governance for Karl Stirner Arts Trail, Inc.



Jim Wilson has been a recreation & conservation professional for 35 years. He has been a Northampton County employee since 2008; having worked seven years with the County Conservation District as a watershed specialist & the past nine years with the County Parks & Recreation Department as a recreation & conservation specialist. Previous to his employment with Northampton County, Jim spent 13 years with PA DCNR, Bureau of State Parks as an environmental education specialist at Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center in Northampton County. In his earlier years, Wilson was the director of camp nature center in the Pocono Mountains of northeastern PA.



Julia Rockwell is a water resources management professional with over 10 years of experience working at the Philadelphia Water Department. Julia has a diverse set of experiences at PWD that include serving as a project engineer on the nationally recognized Source Water Protection Program, leading development of a new, department-wide capital planning process, and developing and managing the Department's Climate Change Adaptation Program (CCAP). Through her current work, Julia seeks to ensure that PWD's long-term planning and decision-making processes take into consideration climate change impacts and risks. She participates in a variety of local, regional and national climate resilience and watershed protection projects and initiatives and currently services as Staff Vice Chair of the Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA). Julia holds a bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering from Bucknell University and a Master of Environmental Management Degree from Duke University.



Alex Renaud works in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Philadelphia District's Planning Division, where he is chief of the Coastal Section. Prior to his role here in Philadelphia he worked for the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center's Field Research Facility in Duck, NC (part of their Coastal and Hydraulics Laboratory). He started his career with USACE as a NOAA Sea Grant Knauss Fellow sitting at USACE Headquarters in DC. Alex received his M.S. in marine science from the Virginia Institute of Marine Science and his undergraduate degree from Princeton University. Between college and graduate school he worked in DC on science policy for several years. Beyond the work world he's a Dad to 3 daughters and a dog. He is an ocean and map nerd that enjoys whatever escapades allow him to get out on the water or on nice trail in the mountains.



Steve Rochette is Chief of Government and Public Affairs for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Philadelphia District. He has served with USACE for the past 15 years and has been involved with a variety of water resources projects in the mid-Atlantic region including Coastal Storm Risk Management studies and projects, dredging and beneficial use projects, and environmental restoration activities. He deployed to assist with federal responses for Hurricane Irma (2016), Hurricane Sandy (2012) and 2011 flooding along the Mississippi River. He has a Master's degree from Villanova University and a Bachelor's degree from Boston University.



Klaus Keller is the Hodgson Distinguished Professor at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth College. Before joining Dartmouth, he was a professor of geosciences at Penn State, worked as a research scientist and lecturer at Princeton University and as an engineer in Germany. Professor Keller graduated from Princeton with a Ph.D. in civil and environmental engineering. He received Master's degrees from M.I.T. and Princeton, as well as a Diplom-Ingenieur Degree from the Technische Universität Berlin. His research addresses two interrelated questions. First, how can we mechanistically understand past and potentially predict future changes in the Earth system? Second, how can we use this information to design sustainable, scientifically sound, technologically feasible, economically efficient, and ethically defensible risk management strategies? He analyzes these questions by mission-oriented basic research covering a wide range of disciplines such as engineering, Earth sciences, economics, philosophy, decision science, and statistics. He contributed to reports from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, co-edited an open-source textbook, and published more than 150 peer-reviewed studies. His research, mentoring, and service have been recognized by several prizes, for example the 2019 Penn State Outstanding Postdoc Mentor Award.



Kristen Bowman Kavanagh, P.E., is the Deputy Executive Director of the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC). She is responsible for the Commission's technical and managerial programs, as well as for developing and effectuating plans, policies, and projects relating to the water resources of the Delaware River Basin. Kavanagh also serves as the DRBC's staff liaison to its Advisory Committee on Climate Change, coordinates the commission's technical work on climate change and sea level rise, and has initiated the process for developing the commission's first climate resilience plan. Ms. Bowman Kavanagh has decades of experience in water resources management, modeling, and engineering, and she is the current Interstates Representative on the board of directors of the Association of Clean Water Administrators. Prior to joining the DRBC in 2019, she worked as a consulting civil engineer. She holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in Civil Engineering from Stanford University. She is a registered professional engineer in multiple states including Pennsylvania and New Jersey.