



## The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual New Jersey Watershed Conference

### Participant Biographies

**Fred Akers**, *Administrator, Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association*

Fred has been the Administrator of the Great Egg Harbor Watershed Association since 2002, with the principle responsibility of managing and protecting 129 miles of the Great Egg Harbor River that were designated as both part of the National Wild and Scenic River System and as a Unit of the National Park System in 1992, in addition to the entire watershed. Fred also currently serves on the Atlantic County Utilities Authority Board of Commissioners, the Atlantic County Groundwater Advisory Committee, three Advisory Panels for the Mid- Atlantic Fisheries Management Council, the Steering Committee for the NJ Council of Watershed Associations, and has a federal banding permit for the management of an American Osprey colony in the Great Egg Harbor Estuary.

**Karen Argenti**, *Board Member, Save Barnegat Bay*

Karen has a background in administration, municipal governance, politics, environment, and community participation. She has a Masters of Public Administration from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, and BA from Lehman College. In New York City, she was employed by Council President Carol Bellamy's Office of the Ombudsman, the Bronx Democratic County Committee, a New York State Senator, and a New York City Council Member. She consulted on political and environmental campaigns, including as consultant for the Gaia Institute, building Green Roofs and Enhanced Tree Pits. As a community leader, she was Chairperson of her local Bronx Community Board 7 for ten years, founded and served on the board of many local neighborhood associations, and was a candidate for New York State Senator.

As a leader she fought to save her neighborhood -- the Jerome Park Reservoir, from being used as the site for the Croton Water Treatment Plant, and organized upstate watershed stakeholders to cause the New York City Department of Environmental Protection to look at alternatives. In the drinking water watershed, she advocated for extra protection as a member of the Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) Advisory Committee, which was set up as a result of negotiations with the NYS Department of Transportation's Route 120 Environmental Impact Statement Project to establish a state-of-the-art stormwater practice plan to protect the Kensico Reservoir drinking water. In the early 1990's as part of the Bronx Council for Environmental Quality, she worked on a small grant from US EPA Region 2. They held conferences -- two in each upstate watershed county. It was based on the Nonpoint Education of Municipal Officials (NEMO) program, originally started in NJ.

Currently retired, when she moved to Ocean County, NJ she became an active member of Save Barnegat Bay Board of Directors. She brings her organizing and educational experience to help Save Barnegat Bay write grants to start up another NEMO program.

**Richard G. Bizub**, *Director for Water Programs, Pinelands Preservation Alliance*

Rich is responsible for all programs and regulatory issues related to water for the Pinelands

Preservation Alliance (PPA). He has been involved in the water resources field for over 42 years. Prior to joining PPA in 1997, Rich was employed as a ground-water geologist for various environmental consulting firms. During his consulting career he was certified as a professional geologist in three states and served on the Ethics Committee of the American Institute of Professional Geologists.

**Chuck Gullage**, *Volunteer Drone Pilot*

Chuck has 10 years experience with the Musconetcong Watershed Association (MWA) as a river watcher and water quality monitor. In addition, Chuck has investigated several pollution reports along the Musconetcong River including home heating oil, diesel fuel, silt and sewerage spills. Chuck is also an FAA Licensed Commercial sUAS (Small Unmanned Aerial Systems - Drone Pilot). In his capacity as a drone pilot, Chuck supports the New Jersey Highlands Coalition, the Great Swamp Watershed Association, the Musconetcong Watershed Association, and The Nature Conservancy. He is a retired AT&T, Bell Labs and Lucent Technologies Manager, Principle Technical Staff Member and Quality Engineer. In his alternate life Chuck is a retired Coast Guard Reserve Lieutenant Commander with 24 years of service in both the Active Duty and Reserve Components specializing in Port Security and Pollution Response. While in the Coast Guard he graduated for the Marine Environmental Science course and he holds an Associate's and Bachelor's Degree Business Administration in Business Administration and Law Enforcement from Northeastern University. Currently he is a Trustee Emeritus with the MWA where he works on restoring the association's 150 year old stone grist mill in addition to his drone activities.

**Tobiah Horton**, *Assistant Professor in Landscape Architecture, Dept. of Landscape Architecture, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey*

Tobiah (Toby) Horton is Extension Specialist for Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at Rutgers University. Toby's work investigates the reuse of materials and places in the redevelopment process. Professional projects such as the Willow Patch, NJ Urban Parks Trenton, Queens Plaza/Dutch Kills Green (with Margie Ruddick/WRT Design), Bethlehem Steel Stacks and Womrath Park (with WRT Design) demonstrate Toby's fascination with how people and places interact through materials. His research report, *A Layered Place, Reuse of Materials in Recoding Public Space (Material Culture Review)*, projects out from his built works to speculate on how trace meanings embedded in reused materials change the dynamic of "newly built" places. In addition to his landscape built works, Toby's art has been shown in galleries in Montreux, Switzerland, Portland, Oregon and Syracuse, New York.

Toby's current research projects include; *Demolition and Reconstruction Methods with Reused Concrete*, *Chemistry of Reused Concrete: Carbon Dioxide Absorption*, and *Reused Concrete Erosion Control Structures*. Collectively, the research projects aim to show how reuse of materials (especially concrete and stormwater) lowers construction's carbon footprint by extending lifecycle (and by maximizing CO2 absorption through design). As Rutgers Cooperative Extension Specialist, Toby provides research, outreach, service and educational programs to NJ citizens through projects such as the Rahway Residential Rain Gardens, *Green Infrastructure in the Public Educational Context: Library, School and Church Rain Gardens*, and *Deconstruction to Green Infrastructure: Minimizing Waste and Creating Water-Friendly Landscapes when Taking Apart Abandoned Buildings in the Floodplain*.

**Bob Kecskes**, *Freelance Environmental Consultant*

Bob is a Freelance Environmental Consultant in the NJ-PA-NY area, specializing in the evaluation of

proposed local and regional water supply and wastewater projects, integrated water resource management plans, and land use carrying capacity plans. Bob retired from NJDEP in 2011 after 35 years, where he was most recently responsible for state and regional water supply planning in New Jersey, including the development of statewide and regional water supply plans that included water availability, demand projections, and alternative water supply Plans.

**William Kibler**, *Director of Policy, Raritan Headwaters Association*

Bill was the Executive Director of the South Branch Watershed Association from 2005 until RHA was created in 2011. An attorney (JD, Syracuse University) who specializes in environmental law, he served as an Officer with the Army Corps of Engineers after graduating from the United States Military Academy and served in the Persian Gulf War. Bill is a past Chief of the Califon Fire Department. He serves as a trustee of the New Jersey Highlands Coalition and is the chair of their Policy Committee. Bill also serves on the campaign committee for Keep It Green and on the steering committee for the Sustainable Raritan River Collaborative. An avid fly fisherman, Bill lives on the South Branch of the Raritan River in Califon.

**Michele Langa**, *Staff Attorney, Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper*

Michele is the joint staff attorney for Hackensack Riverkeeper and NY/NJ Baykeeper. Previously, she was a legal intern for both organizations and frequent volunteer at Hackensack Riverkeeper's paddling events. Michele is a graduate of Roger Williams University School of Law where she focused on environmental and public interest law. Michele is also a graduate of John Jay College of Criminal Justice (MA) and Montclair State University (BA), where she studied Criminal Law & Procedure and English Literature, respectively. Born and raised in Bergen County NJ, Michele gained a love and appreciation of the ocean from yearly trips to Florida's Atlantic coast, which is also where she first developed her love of ocean life and a desire to preserve and protect the ocean's habitats and inhabitants. When she's not working to protect the environment, Michele enjoys SCUBA diving, reading, and all things geek – movies, TV, comics, and video games.

**Paul Mankiewicz, Ph.D.**, *Executive Director, Gaia Institute*

Dr. Mankiewicz serves as the Executive Director of the Gaia Institute and leads the staff in pursuing the Institute's mission of exploring through research, development, design and education the interrelationship between human communities and natural systems. Dr. Mankiewicz's philosophy, which provides the foundation on which the Gaia Institute is based, holds that human communities and natural systems can coexist to mutual benefit. This rests on the hypothesis that where the flow of "waste" materials from human activities can be cleaned and utilized to create habitat, human industry can be coupled with conserving and creating landscapes that provide an abode for life. Such material cycles can enhance environmental quality, where ecological productivity and diversity become goals of human activity.

Dr. Mankiewicz received his Ph.D. in Biology from the City University of New York/New York Botanical Gardens Joint Program in Plant Sciences. He also received a B.A. in Philosophy from the New School for Social Research; an M.A. in Biology from Lehman College; and a M. Phil. in Biology from the City University of New York. He has substantial experience with enhancing, restoring, and constructing wetland and terrestrial ecosystems. A past president of the Torrey Botanical Society, the oldest such organization in the New World, Dr. Mankiewicz is a member and former chair of the Solid Waste Advisory Board of the Bronx, member and Vice Chair of the Bronx Council for Environmental

Quality, and President of the Soil and Water Conservation District for New York City. Paul lives in City Island, the Bronx, NY.

**Kelsey Mattison**, *Marketing Coordinator, Princeton Hydro*

Kelsey is a recent graduate of St. Lawrence University with a degree in English and environmental studies and a passion for environmental communication. Through her extracurricular work with various nonprofit organizations, she has developed expertise in social media management, content writing, storytelling, and interdisciplinary thinking. Kelsey believes effective communication needs to be multi-faceted, which is reflected in the diversity of her experience. She served as Photography Editor of St. Lawrence University's newspaper, *The Hill News*, worked in digital media for the environmental outreach program of St. Lawrence University, *Nature Up North*, produced stories for Northern New York's public radio station, *North Country Public Radio*, and developed feature content for St. Lawrence County's Chamber of Commerce. As a member of the Princeton Hydro team, she aims to further its mission by taking creative approaches to communicating about our shared home: Planet Earth.

**Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E.**, *Extension Specialist in Water Resources with Rutgers Cooperative Extension and Professor with the Department of Environmental Sciences at the School of Environmental & Biological Sciences, Rutgers University*

Dr. Obropta has a doctorate in Civil Engineering from Stevens Institute of Technology, an M.S. in Civil Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology, and a B.S. in Civil Engineering from New Jersey Institute of Technology. Prior to joining Rutgers, Dr. Obropta was an environmental consultant for 12 years at Omni Environmental Corporation. Dr. Obropta has a background in watershed management, water quality modeling, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, and coastal engineering. His specific experience includes watershed restoration, onsite wastewater treatment system design and management, wasteload allocations and TMDL studies, stormwater management, wetland design, effluent dilution analyses, longshore sediment transport, computer-aided design, and geographic information systems (GIS). He teaches Bioresource Engineering Design I & II, where he directs student design teams to develop solutions to complex real-life engineering problems.

With his extensive and impressive background Dr. Obropta leads his highly specialized team of professional staff who are determined to create innovative solutions to water quality issues in New Jersey.

**Assemblywoman Nancy J. Pinkin**, *New Jersey General Assembly*

Asw. Pinkin was first elected to the New Jersey General Assembly in November 2013. She served on the East Brunswick Township Council from 2005-2014, including a two year term as Council President. Assemblywoman Pinkin serves on the Law and Public Safety Committee, and as Vice Chair of the Health and Senior Services Committee, and Chair of the Environment and Solid Waste Committee.

**Mike PISAURO**, *Policy Director, The Watershed Institute*

Prior to joining The Watershed Institute, Mike was a practicing attorney for 19 years and is licensed in NJ and PA. Prior to joining the organization, he ran his own law firm concentrating on environmental work for citizen and environmental organizations before local land use boards, DEP, and in litigation.

His practice also included business and real estate law. He was the lobbyist for the New Jersey Environmental Lobby for nine years. Mike has served on the Hopewell Valley Green Team and was an appointed board member for the New Jersey Licensed Site Remediation Board. Mike received his B.S.

in Economics from James Madison University and a J.D. from the University of Richmond.

**Josh Price, ASLA, Landscape Architect, Dlandstudio**

Josh is a Registered Landscape Architect (NY) and has over ten years of experience in landscape architecture, planning, and urban design in the public and private sectors. Josh has wide-ranging knowledge of all stages of planning and design work, having led efforts for project visioning, community engagement, and all phases of project execution. Josh has also taught, lectured, and been a guest critic for various landscape architecture, architecture, and urban planning studios. Josh holds a Master's Degree in Landscape Architecture from Cornell University, where he received the ASLA Award of Honor.

**Michele Mateo Putnam, Assistant Commissioner for Water Resource Management at the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection**

Michele is a graduate of Douglass College, Rutgers University and has worked in the environmental protection field for over 25 years. Michele started her career in consulting before taking a job with the US Environmental Protection Agency in New York City. She moved to the NJ Department of Environmental Protection as part of the construction grants/water infrastructure financing program. Michele has experience in variety of program areas, including: hazardous site clean ups, solid waste, hazardous waste permitting, planning and enforcement, water supply planning and permitting, safe drinking permitting and watershed management. Most recently Michele was the Director of the Division of Water Quality and was responsible for NJPDES surface water, ground water, stormwater, pre-treatment and residuals permitting programs, as well as capacity assurance and treatment works approvals. The Division's water infrastructure financing program, administered with the "I-Bank", provides low cost financing and principal forgiveness projects for wastewater, stormwater and drinking water infrastructure improvements. Michele is currently the Assistant Commissioner of Water Resource Management including the Divisions of Water Quality, Water Supply and GeoScience, and Water Monitoring and Standards. This program area includes over 400 staff that administers the water supply, safe drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, water quality monitoring, development of drinking water, surface water and ground water quality standards and water infrastructure finance program.

**Pat Rector, County Agent II, Cooperative Extension of Somerset County, Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station**

**Erin Stretz, Assistant Science Director, The Watershed Institute**

Erin is the Assistant Director of Science and Stewardship at The Watershed Institute, where she has specialized in water quality monitoring, assessment, and protection since 2011. Erin has provided opportunities for thousands of volunteers to become engaged in citizen science through the StreamWatch volunteer water quality monitoring program in Central Jersey. This year, she has taken on a new role to develop a cohesive statewide network for volunteer water monitoring, serving as a capacity-building resource and strengthening the relationship between community-based monitoring programs and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Erin is currently a member of the Lead New Jersey class of 2018 and serves on the board of directors for Bingo's Foundation, a no-kill cat shelter and rescue in Bucks County, PA.

**Chris Sturm, Managing Director for Policy and Water, New Jersey Future**

Chris directs the organization's water programs and policy. Her work focuses on efforts to upgrade

water infrastructure to support healthy, just and prosperous communities, and includes facilitating the Jersey Water Works collaborative and managing the organization's work on green infrastructure, water financing, and community organizing. She has built successful teams and collaborations to accomplish legislative, regulatory and programmatic innovations in areas including climate resilience, state and regional planning, land preservation, and compact, equitable growth. She is a member of the Clean Water Council of New Jersey and the U.S. Water Alliance. Her career experience includes serving as the assistant director of the Capital City Redevelopment Corporation. She holds a master's degree in Public Affairs from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, where she concentrated in Urban and Regional Planning.

**Beth Styler Barry**, *River Restoration Manager, The Nature Conservancy*

Beth is part of The Nature Conservancy's Freshwater Team. She has 16 years' experience in river restoration, water quality monitoring, community outreach, and project and contract management. In her current position, Beth leads development and implementation of major on-the-ground stream restoration projects. She has served as project manager on six dam removals, from permit application to working with engineers, contractors, and partners for successful project completion. Beth previously worked as executive director of the Musconetcong Watershed Association. She has a Bachelors Degree in Biochemistry from Rutgers University and a Masters Degree in Environmental Management from Montclair State University.

**Daniel J. Van Abs, PhD PP/AICP**, *Associate Professor of Practice for Water, Society & Environment at Rutgers University, School of Environmental and Biological Sciences*

Dan Van Abs focuses on planning and management policy for water infrastructure, water supply, wastewater and watershed protection. Previously, he was Senior Director for Planning & Science with the Highlands Water Protection and Planning Council (NJ), where he managed staff efforts regarding implementation of the Highlands Regional Master Plan. He also has served as Director of Watershed Protection, NJ Water Supply Authority for over eight years; with the NJ Department of Environmental Protection for 12 years, six as manager for statewide water resources planning; and as Technical Director of the Passaic River Coalition for four years. He holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science from SUNY-College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He is a licensed Professional Planner in New Jersey and former Chair of the New Jersey Clean Water Council. Dan is co-editor with Karen O'Neill of a new Rutgers University Press book (June 2016) Taking Chances: The Coast After Sandy.

**Maya K. van Rossum**, *Delaware Riverkeeper*

Maya is the Delaware Riverkeeper and leader for the Delaware Riverkeeper Network. The Delaware Riverkeeper Network works throughout the four states of the Delaware River watershed (NY, NJ, PA & DE) and at the national level using advocacy, science and litigation. van Rossum, who is skilled as an environmental attorney, strategist, community organizer, facilitator, coalition builder and manager, has led DRN for over 23 years. van Rossum is author of a book titled, *The Green Amendment, Securing Your Right to a Healthy Environment* and is currently advancing The Green Amendment movement, seeking to inspire and secure constitutional protection for environmental rights across the nation.

van Rossum was appointed to NJ Governor Murphy's transition committee on environment and energy, was named One Of The "10 Most Influential People of 2015" When It Comes to Energy Issues by SNL Energy, and has testified, by invitation, twice before U.S. Congressional committees.

Through appointments by governors and agency heads, she has played a role in shaping water quality,

quantity and habitat policies and regulation in the Delaware River watershed for nearly two decades.

**Jim Waltman**, *Executive Director, The Watershed Institute*

Jim has served as Executive Director of The Watershed Institute since April 2005. He regularly speaks at community events and municipal meetings throughout central New Jersey, serving as a go-to resource for government officials and community leaders on how to best protect clean water and the environment throughout the region.

Prior to joining the Watershed, Jim was director of the refuges and wildlife program for The Wilderness Society in Washington D.C. For 10 years he represented the Society on issues relating to the National Wildlife Refuge System, Alaska public lands, endangered species, and other wildlife matters. He spent five years as a wildlife specialist at the National Audubon Society before joining The Wilderness Society. Jim is also a member of the State Agriculture Development Committee, which oversees New Jersey's farmland preservation program and serves on the board of ReThink Energy NJ, a non-profit that seeks a rapid transition from fossil fuels to clean, renewable energy. Jim has a biology degree from Princeton University and a Master of Environmental Studies from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

**Louise Wootton, Ph.D.**, *Full Professor and Director of Sustainability, School of Science and Mathematics, Georgian Court University*

Dr. Louise Wootton is a Full Professor and Director of Sustainability in the Department of Biology, School of Science and Mathematics, at the Georgian Court University in Lakewood, N.J. She began her career at the university in 1997 after receiving her Doctorate of Science in Marine and Estuarine Environmental Sciences from the University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland, in 1996. She also has a Master of Science, in Oceanography from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, in 1989, and a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Acadia University, Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Canada in 1986.

Dr. Wootton's interest is in studying the impact of invasive plants and animals in wetlands and dunes on community structure (e.g. abundance and diversity of native species) and function (e.g. dune geomorphology, storm protection, sediment storage etc.). Because of its significant impacts on New Jersey's coastal ecosystems, her current focus is on measuring distribution, expansion rates and impact of the invasive Asiatic sand sedge (*Carex kobomugi*), and on developing and monitoring management strategies for this species. Louise does this by promoting the restoration of resilient natural communities and thereby increases the growing awareness for the need for diverse plantings both to enhance ecological function to adapt to future environmental stressors. She works with state and federal governmental agencies, as well as in the public realm by researching and creating effective tools for environmental education and sustainability at all levels from Pre K to college, as well as for community education beyond the formal education system. Louise, the Vice President of the Board of Directors of Save Barnegat Bay, lives in Brick, NJ.

**David Zuckerman**, *Volunteer Licensed Drone Pilot*