

5TH ANNUAL WATERSHED CONFERENCE AGENDA

Theme: Collaborating for Change

Last Updated: Oct. 21, 2021

November 3, 2021

9:15 a.m. - 9:40 a.m.

Morning Coffee and Zoom Networking

Feel free to join us a little earlier and greet other virtual attendees. We will have open breakout rooms on Zoom for attendees who wish to jump into one and network. In-person attendees will be able to enjoy a complimentary buffet of breakfast bagels, coffee, tea, and more.

9:40 a.m. - 9:45 a.m.

Welcome & Introduction

Jim Waltman, Executive Director, The Watershed Institute

9:45 a.m. - 10:45 a.m.

Keynote

Stuart A. Clarke, Program Director, Watershed Protection at William Penn Foundation

Description:

Stuart's work focuses on creating the conditions for a healthy Delaware River watershed. He oversees a \$30 million annual grant portfolio, which includes investments in research, data gathering, and advocacy focusing on priority stressors across the watershed; targeted land protection and restoration; and efforts to broaden equitable public access to and engagement with the basin's rivers and streams. Prior to starting at the William Penn Foundation, Stuart served as Vice President of Strategic Initiatives at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Studies. He served for 15 years as the Executive Director of the privately endowed Town Creek Foundation, which supported environmental advocacy work in Maryland and the Chesapeake Bay. His experience includes national environmental grantmaking at the Turner Foundation and serving as Executive Director of Outward Bound Atlanta.

Join us in welcoming Stuart A. Clarke as the new Program Director for Watershed Protection at William Penn Foundation.

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

The Great Healthy Yard Project (Virtual Only)*Diane Lewis, MD, Founder, Great Healthy Yard Project*Description:

Diane Lewis, M.D. is the founder of the non-profit organization, The Great Healthy Yard Project and author of its sister book, The Great Healthy Yard Project. She is an internist and nephrologist who has combined her knowledge of medicine with her love of the environment to become involved in a movement to protect our most valuable resources as well as our own health. To date, almost 2,000 people across the country have taken The Great Healthy Yard Pledge, promising not to use synthetic pesticides, weedkillers and fertilizers on their yards and lawns, except for localized use on rare occasions to resolve an infestation, to protect native plants and wildlife as well as not disposing of pharmaceuticals or chemicals down the drain.

Join Diane to learn more about her work and strategies for success in reaching audiences with important messages about water protection. **The speaker for this session will be virtual only. In-person attendees will be given space to tune in to this session from The Watershed Center.**

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Art of Commenting*Ed Lloyd, Director, Columbia Law School Environmental Law Clinic**Ryan Knapick, Deputy Chief Advisor, NJ Department of Environmental Protection*Description:

The comment period is the public's opportunity to weigh-in on a proposed regulation or proposed permit. This is when the public can provide information, support the Department's initiative, or explain the implications of a rule or particular section that the agency may not have considered. Learn how to review a proposal, effective ways to structure comments, and how you can make the most of the process. Get answers to questions like if there is a difference between oral and written comments? Most importantly, do comments really make a difference?

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Reconnecting with our Waterways and Watersheds

Emily Baldauff, Mid-Atlantic Organizer, Trout Unlimited

Josh Perlsweig, Program Coordinator, Sustainable Princeton

Kendra McKoy, Delaware River Advocate, The Watershed Institute

Description:

Modern society has become largely disconnected from our local water due to industrialization. Through mindful action and social initiatives, organizations throughout the region have successfully helped local communities forge meaningful, emotional connections with their local waterway. Come learn how three organizations, Trout Unlimited, Sustainable Princeton, and The Watershed Institute, promote environmental engagement and awareness through outreach projects.

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Vacant Lots 1: How Can Nature-Based Strategies Be Used to Address Environmental Justice Issues Including Negative Impacts to Residents Health, the Economy and Local Ecology?

Moderated by Alex Rivera, Land Steward, Mercer County Park Commission

Julia Taylor, AICP, Senior Director of Programs & Partnerships, Trenton Health Team

Samir Dalal, Planning Manager for the Philadelphia LandCare Program, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society

Natalie Cohen, Senior Coordinator for Conservation Programs, National Wildlife Federation's Mid-Atlantic Regional Center

Description:

Vacant lots present tremendous public health, economic and community development challenges to overburdened communities in New Jersey. Nature-based vacant lot redevelopment is an opportunity for an all-in-one solution to public health challenges such as extreme heat and air pollution, access to ecological services, and activation of underutilized spaces. In this session, you will hear from practitioners working on public health, vacant lot, and urban ecosystem challenges. This session is for people interested in activating vacant spaces using nature-based strategies for a comfortable, clean, and green community.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJPACT) Rules with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection

Vincent Mazzei, Assistant Commissioner of Watershed and Land Management, NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Description:

NJ is experiencing the effects of climate change. Those impacts will continue to grow. In 2020 Governor Murphy directed the NJDEP to incorporate climate change considerations into its regulatory and permitting programs among other actions. NJ Protecting Against Climate Threats (NJPACT) is a targeted regulatory reform initiative aimed at modernizing many of the state's environmental regulations. Especially in the wake of severe flooding in the Fall of 2021, considering climate change is vital to our environmental decision-making and regulations. Assistant Commissioner Vince Mazzei will discuss the status of DEP's NJPACT work and give an overview of the future regulations.

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Field Trip: Green Infrastructure and Floating Wetlands at The Watershed Institute

Steve Tuorto, Ph.D., Director of Science & Stewardship, The Watershed Institute

Description:

Join our Science Team at The Watershed Institute to learn more about our Green Infrastructure features like rain gardens, stormwater meadows, and our green roof. Steve Tuorto, our Science Director, will show participants how these systems work within the Watershed's ecosystem, how we maintain them, and some of the lessons learned/challenges we've had along the way. Steve will also showcase our new floating wetlands project at Rosedale Lake and touch on some of the other green infrastructure projects The Watershed Institute is involved in across the region.

November 4, 2021**11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.****Understanding NJ HABs to Improve Management & Resiliency: Tales from the NJ HAB and Lake Management Expert Team**

Jason Earl Adolf, Ph.D., Endowed Associate Professor of Marine Science, Monmouth University

Steve Tuorto, Ph.D., Director of Science & Stewardship, The Watershed Institute

Description:

Changing environmental conditions resulting from climate change and continued development are expected to exacerbate the incidence of HABs in New Jersey. In this session, Jason Adolf will provide an overview of The NJ HAB and Lake Management Expert Team's work to examine statewide data to address important questions concerning the causes, occurrence, monitoring and consequences of NJ HABs. He will contrast and compare HABs in different NJ lake ecosystems that have been impacted over the last several years and discuss solutions that should be part of the conversation about how we as a state deal with our slice of the global HAB epidemic.

Steve Tuorto will provide an overview of the floating wetlands that The Watershed Institute has designed, built and installed in Rosedale Lake to address recurring issues with HABs.

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**Naturalizing Detention Basins**

Kathy Hale, Principal Watershed Protection Specialist, NJ Water Supply Authority

Clay Emerson, Practice Area Lead, Princeton Hydro

Description:

Many New Jersey towns experienced rapid development before the importance of green infrastructure in stormwater management was understood. As a result, detention basins are a common sight in our area. Naturalizing these basins can reduce sediment loading, improve water quality, improve groundwater recharge and provide habitat for pollinators. This session will provide an overview of how to assess which basins are the best candidates for naturalization and what is required for construction and maintenance.

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Important Court Decisions and Regulatory Action

Jennifer Danis, Esq., Senior Fellow, Sabin Center for Climate Change Law at Columbia Law School & Columbia Climate School

Michael Pisauro, Esq., Policy Director, The Watershed Institute

Description:

Examine the importance of recent federal and state cases in protecting New Jersey's environment. Learn about EDF v. FERC, PennEast Pipeline Co. LLC, vs. New Jersey, and other impactful cases. Get an update on regulations like the CWA Section 401, WOTUS/NWPR, NEPA, PFOA/PFOS, and more.

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

How Can My Town Fund Green Infrastructure Projects?

Anne Heasley, Program Manager of Policy and Planning, Sustainable Jersey

Leigh Peterson, Chief Operating Officer Water, New Jersey Infrastructure Bank

Heather Knizhnik, Environmental Specialist 2 in Municipal Finance/Water Infrastructure, NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Description:

Many towns are eager to use green infrastructure to address flooding and improve water quality, but have questions about how to find the funding to do that. Join our panel of experts to learn about a variety of funding sources that are available for this work.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Vacant Lots 2: What Does a Comfortable, Clean, and Green Community Look Like and How Do We Get There?

Moderated by Alex Rivera, Land Steward, Mercer County Park Commission

Caitlin Fair, Program Director, East Trenton Collaborative

Leah Yasenchak, PhD, AICP/PP, CEcD, Principal

Description:

In this session, we seek to build on the conversation from the first Vacant Lots Session on Nov. 3. There will be a moderated discussion with audience participation about past and existing vacant space greening initiatives, uncapitalized environmental opportunities, and the path forward. This session is for people interested in long-term collaboration with others seeking to use nature-based strategies to solve neighborhood challenges.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Is a Stormwater Utility Right For My Town or County? First Steps to Answering the Question

Brianne Callahan, Stormwater Manager, NJ Future

Daniel Bachalis, Environmental Commission Chair, Hammonton, NJ

Jim Purcell, Assistant Municipal Engineer, Princeton, NJ

Description:

In the aftermath of the extreme flooding that New Jersey has experienced, many towns and counties are wondering whether creating a stormwater utility could help. However, it can be daunting to get the process started. This panel will focus on the planning and initial steps in the process of considering a stormwater utility.

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Field Trip: Stewardship and Trails at The Watershed Reserve

Allison Jackson, Stewardship Coordinator, The Watershed Institute

Sophie Glovier, Assistant Director of Policy, The Watershed Institute

Description:

Learn more about The Watershed Institute's reserve, trails, and history. Allison Jackson, our Stewardship Coordinator, will guide participants through our reserve and talk about the stewardship activities that go into maintaining the various different kinds of habitat. She will touch on the issues we have with invasives and what she is doing to try and maintain a canopy of natives within the reserve. Sophie Glovier, Assistant Policy Director, and author of "Walk the Trails in and Around Princeton," will share her experiences on the trails. She will point out special points of interest and history.

November 5, 2021

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Understanding Permit Requirements for Conservation Activities

Patrick Ryan, Environmental Supervisor, Division of Land Use Regulation, NJ Department of Environmental Protection

Mark Gallagher, Vice President, Princeton Hydro

Description:

Conservation organizations undertake many projects to improve our natural world. Some of these projects are to restore and enhance streams, riparian zones, wetlands, transition areas and other regulated areas. Do these types of projects need permits from NJDEP? Learn when you need and do not need permits. For when you do need permits, learn what are the best practices in preparing your application.

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

Election Results, What do they Mean for the Environment?

Ed Potosnak, Executive Director, New Jersey League of Conservation Voters

Description:

During Election Day on Nov. 2, NJ will be electing a governor and all of the New Jersey Legislature is up for re-election. Days after, hear what happened and what the implications are for New Jersey's environment in the next four years.

11:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.

TMDLs (Virtual Only)

Sean Bothwell, Executive Director, California CoastKeeper Alliance

Evan Isaacson, Director of Policy and Research, Chesapeake Legal Alliance

Description:

Developing a Total Maximum Daily Load is just one step to achieving improvements in water quality once a waterbody is impaired. Learn how other jurisdictions are taking the next step of implementing the reductions set out in the TMDL and what lessons learned can be applied to NJ's TMDLs. **The speakers for this session will be virtual only. In-person attendees will be given space to tune in to this session from The Watershed Center.**

12:15 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

LUNCH

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Building Partnerships with Community Groups in Overburdened Communities

Eric Martin, Director of Finance and Operations, Urban Promise Trenton

John Evangelista, Director of Operations, Groundwork Elizabeth

Noilda Sousa, Environmental Education Program Director, Urban Promise Camden

Vedra Chandler, Community Events Manager, Camden Community Partnership

Description:

The Watershed Institute has invited some of our newest partners across the state to share how their organizations are incorporating unique partnerships within their own communities to help expand environmental benefits, activism, and education. While not necessarily connected to the environment in terms of environmental science, ecology, and water conservation, many community groups value the environment and their waterways in very specific ways including environmental health, mental health benefits, sustainability and economics, professional opportunities, and both cultural and faith-based connections.

The panel will celebrate these ongoing efforts by community groups as well as explore how traditional environmental organizations can better pursue partnerships with them in watershed and water conservation efforts.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

What are Best Practices for Protecting Trees in My Town?

Lisa Rosati, NJ Certified Tree Expert Consultant

Taylor Sapudar, NJ Licensed Tree Expert and Certified Arborist

Patricia Shanley, PhD, Program Director, People and Plants International

Description:

New Jersey's trees are facing unprecedented challenges as a result of invasive species, climate change and continuing development. The decline in our tree canopy reduces habitat, raises ambient temperature and exacerbates flooding. What protections can towns put in place to protect and enhance their trees? During this session we'll address best practices for drafting an ordinance to protect trees on private property, get the perspective of a Municipal Arborist on enforcing these protections and discuss the importance of land preservation and the Master Planning process in protecting older growth and intact forests.

1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.

Working with Farmers to Improve Waters

Laura Tessieri, Executive Director, North Jersey RC&D

David Clapp, Resource Conservationist, New Jersey State Agriculture Development Committee

Description:

Farmers rely on a healthy environment and clean water. Implementing practices to better protect waterways and groundwater takes time, expertise and resources. Learn what grants and other resources are available to farmers and how environmentalists can best work with farmers to implement these practices.

3:30 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Conference After Party

Unwind after the conference with friends and partners. Drinks and food will be served. More information about this event to come.

THANK YOU TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS:

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[MUSCONETCONG WATERSHED ASSOCIATION](#)

