

April 8, 2023

University of Rhode Island  
Center for Biotechnology and Life Sciences  
120 Flagg Road, Kingston Campus

# LAND & WATER CONSERVATION MINI-SUMMIT



Audubon Society  
of Rhode Island

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 3 East Alumni Avenue, Kingston, R.I. 02881  
 Visit: [uri.edu/mastergardener](http://uri.edu/mastergardener)



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## LAND & WATER CONSERVATION MINI-SUMMIT

- April 8, 2023* **AGENDA**
- 8:00 a.m. **Registration and Continental Breakfast**  
*Network & Visit Exhibits*
- 9:00 a.m. **Welcome:**  
Vanessa Venturini, URI Master Gardener Program & Food Recovery for RI
- 9:10 a.m. **Land Acknowledgement:**  
Silvermoon LaRose, Narragansett Citizen and Assistant Director, Tomaquag Museum
- 9:20 a.m. **Introductions:**  
Priscilla De La Cruz, Director of Policy - Audubon Society of RI  
Kate Sayles, Executive Director - RI Land Trust Council  
Kate Venturini Hardesty, Program Administrator, Ext. Educator - URI CoopExt  
Vanessa Venturini, URI Master Gardener Program & Food Recovery for RI
- 9:35 a.m. **Keynote Address: Ian McSweeney, Agrarian Trust**  
*Agrarian Commons: Going Beyond Traditional Models of Farmland Conservation to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century*
- 10:20 a.m. **Panel Discussion: Engaging Volunteers**  
Facilitated by Vanessa Venturini, URI Master Gardeners & Food Recovery for RI  
—Cindy Elder, Barrington Land Conservation Trust  
—Tom Hoagland, Friends of Canonchet Farm  
—Jacob Gorke & Clare Brown, Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
- 11:10 a.m. **Coffee Break:**  
*Network & Visit Exhibits*
- 11:30 a.m. **Breakout Sessions: (note these rooms may be subject to change)**
- A. Navigating State and Federal Funding Opportunities – Room 010**  
—Joseph Bachand – Easement Program Manager, USDA-NRCS  
—Jackie Rigley – Conservation Finance Associate, Highstead
- B. Water is Life – Room 252**  
—Silvermoon LaRose – Tomaquag Museum
- C. An Ecosystem Approach to Gardening – Room 100**  
—Katie Schortmann – Garden Coordinator & Environmental Educator, Audubon Society of RI  
—Dave Vissoe – Master Gardener & Project Leader, Kettle Pond Visitors Center
- 12:30 p.m. **Breakout Recap / Discussion**
- 12:50 p.m. **Wrap-up**
- 1:00 p.m. **Adjourn**

# Thank You to these Sponsors of the 2023 Land & Water Conservation Mini-Summit!

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Newport Restaurant Group  
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Young Farmer Network

# Land & Water Conservation Summit

### *Nineteen years and counting...*

The Land & Water Conservation Summit has been held yearly since 2004. The Summit is possible because dozens of conservation leaders and experts in organizational development (fundraising, board development, public relations) are willing to share their expertise and latest ideas with their colleagues and friends. The Summit is widely acknowledged as Rhode Island's go-to conference for workshops and networking with other grassroots conservation leaders.

### *Where we started*

Rhode Island's land trusts held an annual conference since 1999. In 2004, the RI Land Trust Council invited watershed organizations and conservation commissions to join the conference and created the RI Land & Water Summit. The first Land & Water Summit was held at the North Kingstown High School. Partner organizations set up displays in the school's atrium. Lunch was served in the school cafeteria. The energy and enthusiasm for this joint conference was terrific.

In 2005, the conference was moved to the University of Rhode Island where it has remained. The Summit has grown into the state's premier conservation event, attracting hundreds of conservation leaders from Rhode Island and neighboring New England states for a day of learning and networking.

### *Summit Keynote Speakers*

Each year we recruit a keynote speaker for the Summit who can provide summit participants with timely information and inspiration for continuing our work together.

- 2004 **Gus Seelig**—*Keys to the 15 year Success of the VT Housing & Conservation Program*
- 2005 **Peter Forbes**—*The Soul of the Land – Nurturing Our Emotional Connections to Our Communities, Landscapes and Watersheds and Telling Stories that Celebrate These Relationships*
- 2006 **Jeff Milder**—*Using Development to Support Conservation – How to Leverage the Real Estate Market to Help Fund Conservation Projects*
- 2007 **Richard Greenwood**—*Powerful Currents – A Historical Perspective on Rivers and the Making of Rhode Island*
- 2008 **Gina McCarthy**—*No Child Left Inside*
- 2009 **Tom Wessells**—*Reading the Forested Landscape – A Natural History of New England*
- 2010 **Tom Horton**—*Saving the Chesapeake Bay's Land and Water – Lessons Learned after 25 years*
- 2011 **Steve Sloan**—*Connecting People to Place and Your Conservation Mission*
- 2012 **Mayor Lisa Wong**—*Urban Conservation as a Redevelopment Strategy*
- 2013 **Steve Archibald**—*Not a storyteller? Perhaps it's time to reconsider!*
- 2014 **Alvaro Sanchez Sanchez**—*Building Strong Green Economies Using Land & Water Conservation Strategies*
- 2015 **Peter Forbes**—*Innovation & Evolution in Conservation*
- 2016 **Collin O'Mara**—*Conservation in This Century; What America Can Learn from the Ocean State*
- 2017 **Eric Chivian, M.D.**—*Medical Models for Helping Us Understand Global Environmental Threats*
- 2018 **Gus Seelig**—*Building Community Through Conservation: Lessons from 30 Years*
- 2019 **David Vallee**—*Conservation, Meet Development: The Role of Land & Watershed Protection in Building Resilient Communities*
- 2020 **Dr. Mamie Parker**—*A Change in Climate – Preparing the Next Generation with Passion, Inspiration and Excellence!*
- 2021 **Carolyn Finney**—*Building a Stronger Land Movement through Diversity, Equity and Inclusion*
- 2022 **Lorén Spears**—*Sustaining and Conserving in Unprecedented Times: Traditional Ecological Knowledge & Environmental Justice*
- 2023 **Ian McSweeney** – *Agrarian Commons: Going Beyond Traditional Models of Farmland Conservation to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century*

## Keynote: Ian McSweeney

### *Agrarian Commons: Going Beyond Traditional Models of Farmland Conservation to Meet the Needs of the 21st Century*

**Ian McSweeney**, Director of the Agrarian Trust, will speak about the Agrarian Commons- a necessary and innovative land-ownership model that addresses the current realities of how land is owned, how tenure and equity are conveyed, and how land stewardship is carried out. This model challenges corporate and large-scale agriculture land-ownership models, and offers a new, sustainable approach for the small farmer. We will be encouraged to consider how to apply these methods to land and water conservation in Rhode Island.



### *About Ian McSweeney*

Ian McSweeney's life's work is centered on the human connection to land and each other, framed through the understanding that food is a universal point of connection and agriculture is one of the greatest polluters of land and water, and a primary activity that separates people from the land.

Ian has been a social worker focused on developing and operationalizing outdoor experience-based education, a real estate broker and consultant focused on prioritizing conservation, agriculture, and community within land development, and a director of a private foundation focused on assisting landowners and farmers through customized approaches to farmland ownership, conservation, management, and stewardship. Ian has also been an active volunteer board member on conservation, agriculture, planning, and zoning commissions and boards at the local and regional levels.

Throughout his career, Ian has worked in his yard, community, and across the country with well over 100 land trust groups, almost 100 communities, and regional, state, and federal partners. This work has assisted over 100 farms, protecting over 12,000 acres, and raising over

\$24 million all aimed toward providing benefit to farmland, farmers, communities, and the local agrarian economy. Ian participates in many local, regional, and national farmland, food systems, and finance initiatives and has been recognized as a "40 under 40" leader in New Hampshire, selected to the Food Solutions New England Network Leadership Institute, and is an Ashoka Fellow.

Ian is a husband to Liz, father to Dylan and Bridger, and part of a family living on and stewarding their small New Hampshire farm for perennial food systems and a healthy ecosystem. He comes from generations of immigrants, refugees, activists, abolitionists, and colonists from southeastern Massachusetts. Ian is deeply committed to bringing about innovations to holistically evolve farmland conservation, equity, secure and affordable access and tenure to build community resilience ensuring regenerative, diversified food production that benefits soil, human, and community health.



## Rhode Island Land & Water Partnership

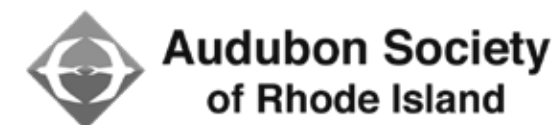
Grassroots conservation organizations play a central role in conserving Rhode Island's water, open spaces, farms, and scenic landscapes. Rhode Island is fortunate to have over 45 land trusts, a dozen watershed organizations and numerous conservation commissions that rely on the expertise and passion of hundreds of volunteer conservation leaders. Since 2004, the RI Land & Water Partnership, consisting of RI Land Trust Council and the Audubon Society of Rhode Island has worked to build capacity and foster connections between these dedicated grassroots organizations.

This year, the RI Land and Water Partnership is pleased to welcome the URI Master Gardener Program as an additional host for the Land & Water Conservation Summit. URI Cooperative Extension's flagship community education program partners with community-based organizations to support food growing and ecological gardening efforts across Rhode Island.

These three organizations represent the breadth of conservation work around the state from residential gardens to conventional farms and hundred-acre forests. Volunteers are the stewards of our natural lands, dedicating their time and talents to make a difference on the ground. Our partnership recognizes that each community-based conservation organization is unique, composed of local advocates who understand the issues in their community and foster local support for their conservation work.

The 2023 Land & Water Mini Summit is dedicated to sharing stories about new approaches to land ownership and community engagement in conservation efforts. We invite you to connect and network with like-minded people, enjoy a conversation over coffee, get to know our sponsors, and learn something new to bring back to your organization!

The Partnership's website stores a wealth of information from past summits and workshops, including videos and presentations. Please check it out and send us your feedback!



## Thank You!

*These Land Trusts are Supporting the RI Land Trust Council This Year with a Dues-Contribution*

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Aquidneck Land Trust	Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust
Audubon Society of Rhode Island	Narrow River Land Trust
Barrington Land Conservation Trust	Norman Bird Sanctuary
Block Island Conservancy	North Smithfield Land Trust
Block Island Land Trust	Prudence Conservancy
Bonnet Shores Land Trust	Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust
Borders Farm Preservation, Inc.	Sakonnet Preservation Association
Bristol Land Conservation Trust	Scituate Land Trust
Burrillville Land Trust	South Kingstown Land Trust
Charlestown Land Trust	Southside Community Land Trust
Conanicut Land Trust	Ten Mile River Watershed Council
Coventry Land Trust	The Nature Conservancy
Cumberland Land Trust	Tiverton Land Trust
East Greenwich Land Trust	Tiverton Open Space Commission
East Providence Conservation Commission	Warren Land Conservation Trust
East Providence Land Trust	Warwick Land Trust
Exeter Rural Land Preservation Trust	Weekapaug Foundation for Conservation
Foster Land Trust	West Bay Land Trust
Glocester Land Trust	West Greenwich Land Trust
Land Conservancy of North Kingstown	Westerly Land Trust
Little Compton Agricultural Land Conservancy Trust	

## Keeping Things Green & Waste-Free in 2023

*Everyone at the Land & Water Conservation Mini-Summit is “talking the talk.” With your help, the Summit is also “walking the walk.” What we are doing:*

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We asked everyone who attends the Summit to bring a reusable travel coffee mug and water bottle to reduce the volume of waste we produce.

We reduced the amount of paper we used at the Summit by encouraging on-line registration.

We partnered with Green Energy Consumers Alliance to offset carbon emissions from the Summit with renewable energy. The electricity for this event has been matched by local, clean power.

We partnered with volunteers from Food Recovery for Rhode Island and URI Catering to recover (donate to the on-campus food pantry, Rhody Outpost) and compost the food waste generated at the event. We also made efforts to serve bulk products rather than single use to cut down on plastic waste. Last year, we prevented 50+ pounds of food waste and other refuse from entering the landfill!

## Exhibitors and Vendors — Don't Miss These Displays!

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Agrarian Trust  
Audubon Society of RI  
Caldwell & Johnson  
Conservation Stewardship Collaborative  
Connecticut Gardener  
ecoRI  
Food Recovery for Rhode Island  
Fuerza Laboral  
Hidden Brook Farm - Garden Art & Whimsy  
Land Trust Alliance  
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Revolution Wind  
RI AFL-CIO  
RI Association of Conservation Districts  
RI Food Policy Council  
RI Infrastructure Bank  
RI Land Trust Council  
RI Resource Recovery Corporation  
Save the Bay  
Securing Northeast Forest Carbon Program  
The Nature Conservancy  
URI Master Gardeners  
USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council  
Young Farmer Network

## Panel Discussion: Engaging Volunteers

### ROOM 100

This interactive discussion will spark ideas for recruiting and retaining volunteers for your organization. What questions or advice do you have to add to the conversation? Hear from people successfully engaging volunteers in conservation, restoration, and educational efforts here in the Ocean State!

**Facilitator: Vanessa Venturini**, URI Master Gardeners & Food Recovery for RI

**Cindy Elder**—Barrington Land Conservation Trust

**Tom Hoagland**—Friends of Canonchet Farm

**Jacob Gorke and Clare Brown**—Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council



## Breakout Sessions

### A. *Navigating New Federal Funding Opportunities* — Room 010

We've all heard rumblings about the significant amounts of federal funding for land and water conservation headed our way. From the Inflation Reduction Act, to the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, and other increases to Farm Bill Programs, it's hard to understand where to start! This session aims to shed light on new federal programs headed our way over the next four years. Discussion will include updates to USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service programs, and new funding opportunities through EPA, US Forest Service, NOAA and more!

**Jackie Rigley** – Conservation Finance Associate, Highstead

**Joseph Bachand** – Easement Program Manager,  
USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

### B. *Water is Life* — Room 252

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. Back by popular demand, this presentation 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. *An Ecosystem Approach to Gardening*—Room 100

Join us for a discussion on systemic pesticides, plant communities, and lessons from the Audubon Society of RI's Palmieri Pollinator Gardens. We'll also cover learnings from the Kettle Pond Native Plant Garden over the past 6 years, showing what a mature native plant garden looks like and how it truly increases biodiversity. Finally, learn more about ReSeeding RI, an initiative of the RI Wild Plant Society that will affect the availability of RI native seeds and plants in the next several years.

**Katie Schortmann** – Audubon Garden Coordinator/Environmental Educator

**Dave Vissoe** – Master Gardener, Project Leader for Kettle Pond Visitor Center



April 8, 2023  
University of Rhode Island  
Center for Biotechnology and Life Sciences  
120 Flagg Road, Kingston Campus

LAND & WATER  
CONSERVATION  
MINI-SUMMIT

BRIAN JONES

## On the Cover

*Magnolia stellata*, commonly called Star Magnolia, is a small deciduous tree that typically grows 15–20 feet tall with a spreading, rounded crown. It is noted for its compact size and late-winter to early-spring bloom of star-shaped white flowers.

*Magnolia stellata* is synonymous with *Magnolia kobus* var. *stellata*.

Genus name honors Pierre Magnol, French botanist (1638–1715).

Specific epithet is in reference to the star-like shape of the flower.

—Missouri Botanical Garden  
[www.missouribotanicalgarden.org](http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org)



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Saturday, March 9th, 2024



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[newportrestaurantgroup.com](http://newportrestaurantgroup.com)



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### Eastern RI Conservation District

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*We are proud to support the 20th Annual Land and Water Conservation Summit!*

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[rifoodcouncil.org/data-dashboard](http://rifoodcouncil.org/data-dashboard)







United States Department of Agriculture



Oyster reef restoration



Conservation planning and technical assistance

# Conserving Rhode Island's Land & Water



Soil Survey maps and data



Regional Conservation Partnership



Agricultural Lands Easements

At the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, we have a proud history of supporting America's farmers and forestland owners. For over 85 years, we have provided technical and financial assistance to farmers with all sizes and types of operations to conserve our lands and improve our air, water, soil and habitat quality.

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Natural Resources Conservation Service

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Carol Lynn Trocki  
Conservation Biologist  
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**Thank you to the Hazard Family  
Foundation for supporting this year's  
Summit!**

**THANK YOU**  
*to all of our volunteers*

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Without your help, this event wouldn't be possible.

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Interested in volunteering for next year's Summit?  
Contact Kate Sayles at [ksayles@rilandtrusts.org](mailto:ksayles@rilandtrusts.org).

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Join the Planning Committee

Contact Kate Sayles  
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or reach out to a member:

**Online Resource Library—**  
templates for baseline docs, management plans,  
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**RI Natural History Survey—**  
rare species, biodiversity inventory, invasive species  
**David Gregg (dgregg@rinhs.org)**

**RI Land Trust Council—**  
assistance on baseline docs., trail maps & blazing, policy  
**Kate Sayles (ksayles@rilandtrusts.org)**

**Youth Conservation League—**  
trail building, invasive control, & youth  
engagement is looking for land trust partners  
**Scott Ruhren (sruhren@asri.org)**

**RI Wildlife Action Plan—**  
conservation priorities, planning assistance  
**Amanda Freitas  
(amanda.freitas@dem.ri.gov)**

How can the CSC help you  
steward your conservation land?  
Get help, send suggestions:  
**info@ricsc.org or RICSC.org**



The Conservation Stewardship Collaborative is:



Photos: RI Youth Conservation League, Sponsored by RI Conservation Stewardship Collaborative.  
For information on the 2023 YCL, Contact Audubon Society of RI, [sruhren@asri.org](mailto:sruhren@asri.org)

*Narragansett Bay wasn't always like this...*

**Remember the Past. Protect the Future.  
Save The Bay You Love.**

SAVEBAY.ORG/50-YEARS

*Proud supporter of the 2023 Rhode Island Land & Water Conservation Mini Summit*

## Extend your learning

The Land Trust Alliance's Resource Library holds thousands of documents, courses, events and more related to the topics most important to your work.

[landtrustalliance.org/resources](https://landtrustalliance.org/resources)

**Questions?**  
Jen Plowden  
New England Program Manager  
jplowden@lta.org | 978-595-3871

**The Young Farmer Network (YFN) connects farmers, aspiring farmers, and farm allies from all social, racial, and economic backgrounds.**

Our mission is to create an environment within which people of all ages and agricultural backgrounds can cultivate personal and professional relationships across state borders. We work towards a supportive landscape for farmers and prospective farmers in developing socially, ecologically, and economically sustainable farm businesses and fulfilling lives.

Learn more about the events and resources we provide on our website or on Instagram!

[youngfarmernetwork.org](https://youngfarmernetwork.org/) / @youngfarmernetwork

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**Land Trust Alliance · National Land Conservation Conference**  
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Stormwater  
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## MONITORING - TRAINING - COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT - COLLABORATION

The Stormwater Innovation Center is a collaborative organization focused on sharing information about the importance of water quality and green infrastructure. Using Roger Williams Park as our base, we engage the community through trainings, events, and volunteer opportunities.

### Upcoming Events

**Green Infrastructure Maintenance Trainings:**

*Wed., April 26, Wed., May 3, and Thurs., May 25*

**Rain Harvest Festival:** *Sun., October 1*

**Stormwater Innovation Expo:** *TBA, Fall 2023*

For more information, visit  
**[stormwaterinnovation.org](http://stormwaterinnovation.org)**.



## WE ARE THE RHODE ISLAND AFL-CIO

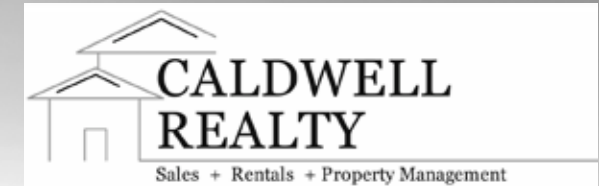
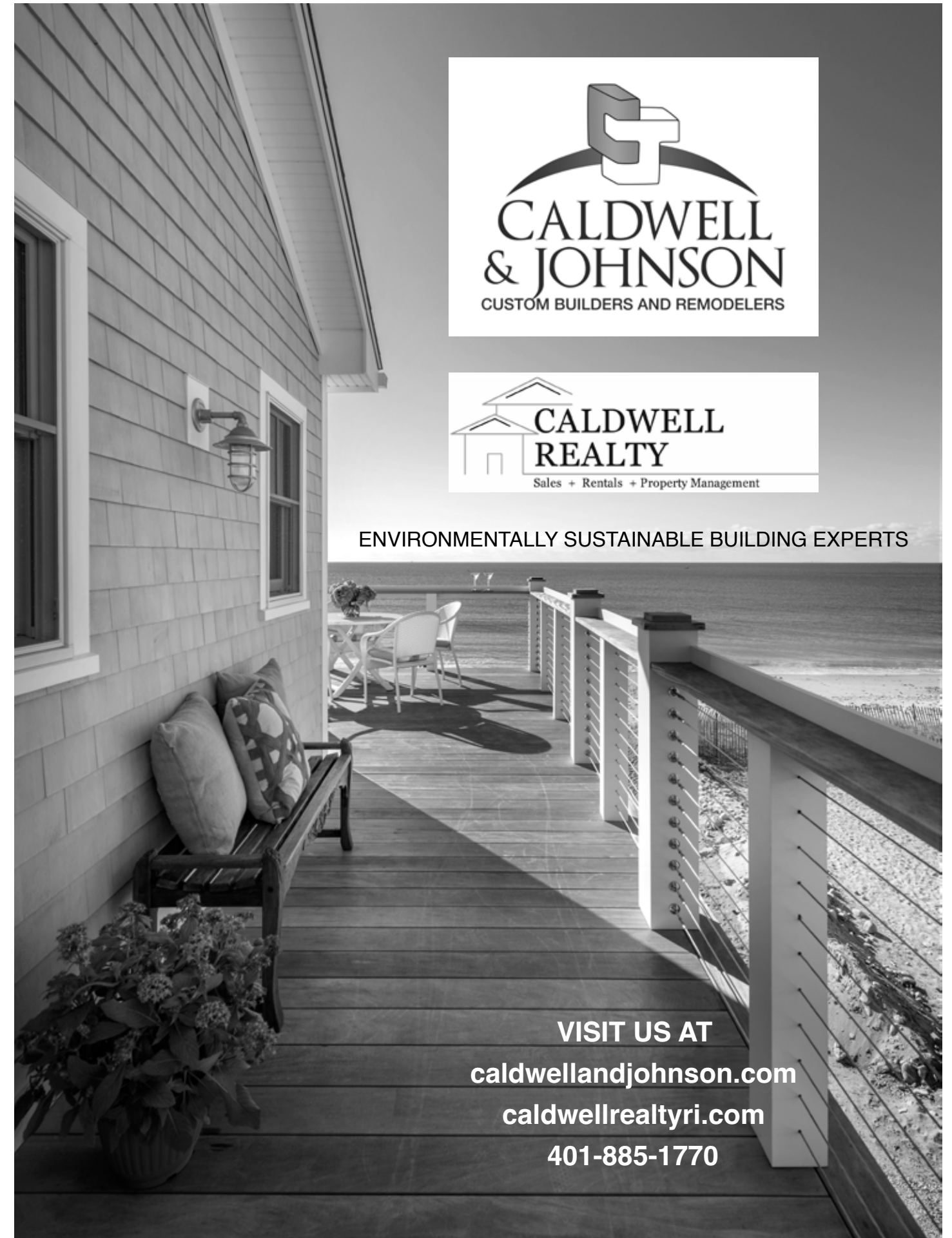
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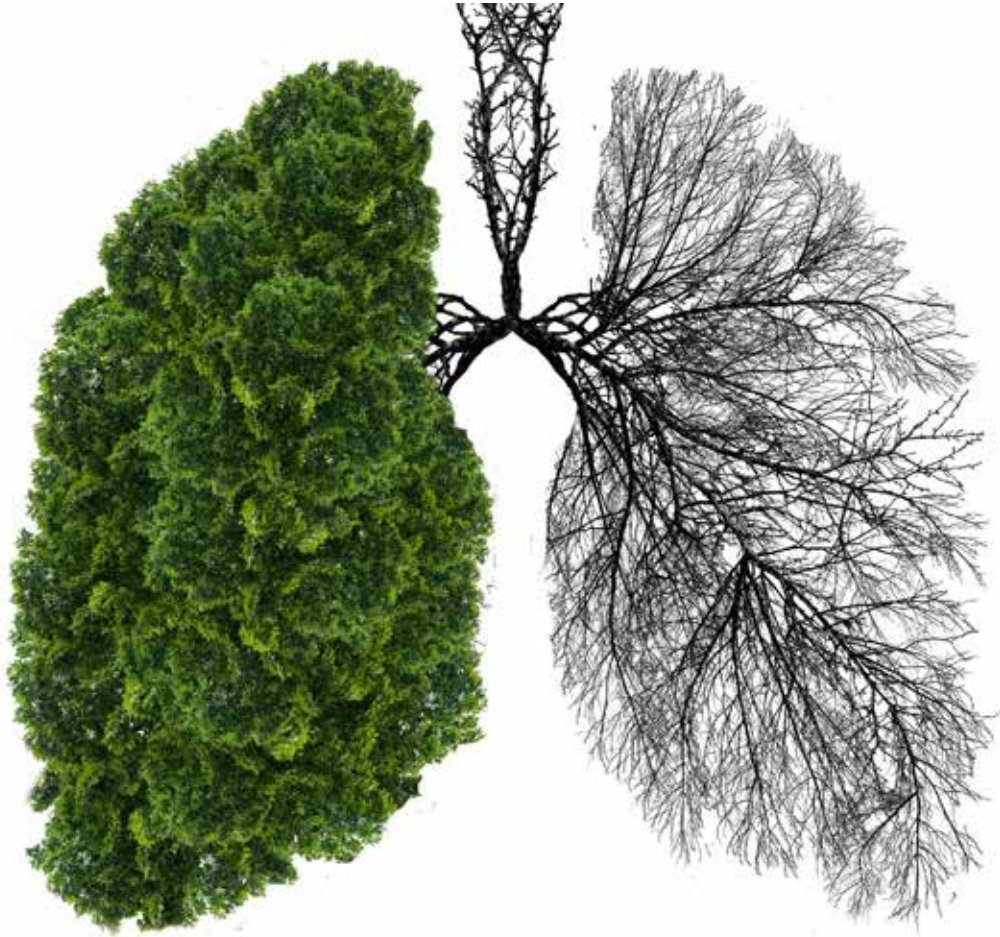
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