Land & Water Conservation Summit - 17th Annual

Working together to protect our communities

Saturday, March 7, 2020    7:45 am – 4:30 pm

URI Memorial Union, Kingston Campus

This conference gives you the information, skills & connections you need to be more effective!

Who should attend? Watershed Councils’, Land Trusts’ & Conservation Commissions’ board members, staff, volunteers and others interested in land and watershed conservation.

30 “How To” Workshops – Outstanding Networking – Informative Exhibits

Agenda

7:45 – 8:30  Registration & Continental Breakfast
8:30 – 9:40  Welcome - Emcee: Judith Swift, URI Coastal Institute
   Keynote:  Dr. Mamie Parker  - former Northeast Director & Director of Fisheries, US Fish & Wildlife Service
   A Change in Climate - Preparing the Next Generation with Passion, Inspiration & Excellence!
9:40 – 10:20  Business Meetings (everyone invited); Network & Visit Exhibits
   Business Meetings (everyone invited):
   o  RI Land Trust Council Business Meeting
   o  RI Association of Conservation Commissions Business Meeting
   o  Watershed Organizations’ Meeting
10:20 – 11:30  Session I Workshops – Your choice from 10 offered
11:30 – 11:45  Break
11:45 – 12:55  Session II Workshops – Your choice from 10 offered
12:55 – 2:30  Lunch & Awards
   •  Senator Whitehouse (invited)
   •  Roundtable Discussions
   •  Peter Merritt Conservation Award & Blueways Stewardship Award
2:45 – 4:00  Session III Workshops – Your choice from 10 offered

Registration:  $55 before February 21    $80 after February 21 (includes Continental Breakfast & Lunch)

Thank YOU to these Lead Sponsors & Champions:

Register On Line:  www.LandAndWaterPartnership.org/
## Workshops at a Glance

*Download workshop descriptions at: www.LandAndWaterPartnership.org*

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1.A Accounting for Anurans: A Look into the FrogWatch Citizen Science Program
Meg Warburton – Roger Williams Park Zoo
This workshop will focus on the Roger Williams Park Zoo’s chapter AZA’s FrogWatch. This voluntary program relies on citizen scientists to listen and identify the frog and toad species of Rhode Island in a site of their choosing. The workshop will highlight the processes of training and recruitment as well as community engagement. Find out how to become a FrogWatcher and bring this amazing program into your community!

1.B The Rhode Island Bird Atlas 2.0: A Conservation Tool for Land Managers
Charles Clarkson – RIDEM & University of Rhode Island
Peter Paton – University of Rhode Island
Bird Atlases provide data on the distribution, abundance and long-term change of bird populations within a state. Because birds are effective indicators of environmental change, these metrics can be used to determine habitat health. Atlases are often used by conservation agencies to inform land management strategies. The first Rhode Island atlas, conducted from 1982-1987, recorded 164 breeding species. The second Atlas, conducted from 2015-2019, was one of the most comprehensive in North America. It is unique as the first atlas to survey bird’s year-round use of habitats. Data was collected on the use of habitats by breeding, wintering and migrating birds. This enables modeling of the importance of these habitat types on an annual basis. Combined with detailed habitat mapping tools and advances in the use of NEXRAD radar, the current Atlas will be a valuable tool for conservation groups seeking to promote biodiversity through habitat management. The bird atlas will serve as the most comprehensive collection of information on Rhode Island birds to date. This workshop will review the current bird atlas, discuss the important conservation tools stemming from its completion and make recommendations on how conservation groups can utilize the atlas for land management.

1.C Transforming Neighborhoods with Nature Based Stormwater Projects
Steve Ricci – Groundwork Rhode Island
Sara Churgin – Eastern Rhode Island Conservation District
Stormwater pollution from roads and parking lots is a big problem. But even small areas of impervious cover like home roofs and driveways contribute to stormwater pollution. This workshop will share how to create a homeowner outreach program that will result in successful residential stormwater retrofits. Presenters will include tips on how to discuss stormwater pollution with homeowners, how to implement projects that add to property values and how to overcome the unavoidable maintenance challenges.

1.D Discover the Power of Questions for Fundraising & Strategic Planning
Gayle L. Gifford – Cause & Effect Inc
There’s a fundraising saying: “If you want money, ask for advice.” But what does that really mean? Asking questions – and really listening to the answers – is a proven way to build awareness of your organization and support from your constituents, your community and your donors. It is essential to good strategic planning, fundraising, donor relations and partnership building. It is also a safe way to get your board members into the community as ambassadors and connectors for your organization. In this workshop, you’ll learn different ways to ask questions. You’ll receive practical tips and tools on how to identify who to talk to, samples of what to ask, advice on how to get the interview and finally, how to use all that information after you collect it.
1.E Strategies for Building Public Support for Your Next Big Land Deal
Laura Pedrick – Aquidneck Land Trust
Gretchen Markert – Aquidneck Land Trust
You've got your next land deal. Now, how do you raise the funds? We work hard to get a land deal in place. Then, we have to figure out how to raise the funds to close the deal. Come learn from two of your colleagues who put together grass roots plans that engaged the community and raised the funds by using low-cost, effective communications tools. Learn how they engaged existing and new constituents by using traditional methods such as house parties, direct mail and letters to the editor (in print!) as well as social media like Facebook, Instagram and other e-communications.

1.F How to Do a Land Conservation Project
Joanne Riccitelli – South Kingstown Land Trust
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.

Jennifer Fusco – Westerly Land Trust
Sebastian Interlandi – Southside Community Land Trust
Many land trusts hold farmland that is not optimally managed. Whether for lack of resources, or staff time, everyone can probably think of a piece of land that they know of that would look a lot nicer with some vegetables growing on it. In this workshop, we will focus on how land trusts can prepare open spaces and make them available to farmers with a minimum of effort. We will discuss an RFP-Open House strategy for finding the right tenants, and lease development strategies for developing durable relationships and sustainable farms. Also, we will talk about some ways in which land trusts can get land in shape for new farmers without a lot of equipment, like using livestock to clear land. Participants are encouraged to come with their ideas for their own farmland access projects, and maybe you and your organization can start development of your next great project right here with us!

1.H Pollinators and Pesticides
Kelly Gill – Xerces Society
Emily May – Xerces Society
Pesticides are commonly used in urban and agricultural environments to kill invertebrate pests, diseases, and weeds. However, many pesticides - including insecticides, fungicides, and herbicides - harm pollinators and other beneficial insects. Their effects include removing important floral resources, causing subtle yet concerning effects on reproduction, navigation and memory and high-profile incidents when pesticides kill bees. Exposure to pesticides can also compound the effects of other stressors on pollinator populations, such as loss of habitat and exposure to pathogens and diseases. This workshop will review pesticides and their impacts on beneficial insects and present strategies employed to reduce and eliminate pesticide use on the landscape.
1.I  Learning from the Providence Climate Justice Plan
   Leah Bamberger – City of Providence
   Court King – City of Providence
   TBD – Providence Racial & Environmental Justice Committee

This fall, Mayor Elorza released Providence’s Climate Justice Plan, one of the first reports that analyzes the root causes and effects of climate change through a justice lens. The plan was created in collaboration with the Mayor’s Office of Sustainability and members of the Racial and Environmental Justice Committee. It aims to create an equitable, low-carbon, and climate-resilient Providence through a comprehensive set of proposed policies and initiatives. This workshop will review plan development and describe the projects underway to implement the plan’s strategies.

1.J  Municipal Land Trust Roundtable Discussion
   Barbara Rich – Smithfield Land Trust
   Tom Rogers – Narragansett Land Conservation Trust

How do you deal with Rhode Island’s open meeting law and negotiate land conservation deals? How do you recruit and work with volunteers? What are the advantages of forming and working with a “Friends” group? How do you maintain good relations with the Town Council? How do you manage finances? What is the best way to contract with consultants? How your town can declare land trust properties, parks and other open space properties public trust properties to ensure their permanent protection. These are just some of the issues that municipal land trusts face that are different from independent non-profit organizations. Join this discussion with your peers from municipal land trusts. Come with your questions and share your land trust’s strategies for success.

Workshops – Session II  11:45 – 12:55 (choose from 10)

2.A  Urban Youth Lead the Way
   Brianna Balke – Blackstone Academy Charter School
   Radia Janoudi – Blackstone Academy Charter School
   Matthew Madrid – Blackstone Academy Charter School
   Jocelyn Jimenez – Blackstone Academy Charter School

Blackstone Academy Charter School students are actively engaged with their local communities. In 2018, students attended the Land & Water Summit. They returned in 2019 and led a highly acclaimed workshop showcasing youth led conservation projects. This year, a new class of students will share their energy and inspiration and challenge conservation organizations to partner with youth leaders in their communities.

2.B  Using Storymaps to promote your Land Trust Properties or Town Conservation Areas
   Pete Stetson – Envirothon

Using the ESRI Storymap website, Land Trusts or Town Conservation Commissions can create maps of their properties (including trails) and showcase historical, environmental and/or use information about each property. Come learn more about the program and how to get involved with the statewide storymap competition. You can have middle and high school students create a storymap for your organization.
2.C Sharing Best Practices with the Providence Stormwater Innovation Center

Brian Byrnes – City of Providence Parks Department
Wenley Ferguson – Save The Bay
Sheila Dormody – The Nature Conservancy

The Providence Stormwater Innovation Center leverages the City of Providence’s investment of $1.5 million in natural infrastructure in a concentrated area, Roger Williams Park. When fully operational, the Center will provide training and capacity building to stormwater professionals throughout the region, test innovative practices and assess the cumulative water quality impact of stormwater practices. This workshop will review plans and innovation underway at the Center and present what is been learned to date about green stormwater practices including tips for installation and maintenance.

2.D Fundraising That Matters – Major Gift Development for the Small Nonprofit Organization

David Allen – Development for Conservation

Effective, sustainable, built-for-the-long-haul organizations should be continually engaged in annual gift, major gift, and planned gift development activities, yet grant-writing, event management, and membership systems often seem more urgent and time intensive. As a result, major gift fundraising – building and sustaining relationships with individual donors – is too often left undone. This workshop will be a fast-paced, crash course in all things “major gifts.” We’ll look at motivations behind major gift decisions, where major gift development should fit in a well-rounded fundraising program, how to find major gift prospects, how to think creatively about and plan for cultivation activities, and the differing roles of staff and Board. This workshop is for both fund development staff and Board volunteers and is appropriate for all levels of fundraising experience.

2.E Conservation Finance for Working Landscapes

Reggie Hall – The Conservation Fund
Frank Lowenstein – New England Forestry Foundation
Jacob Israelow – Dirt Capital

The world of conservation finance is constantly evolving as practitioners experiment with private sector finance for conservation. Innovative finance is becoming more important as state and municipal funding for land conservation has decreased. This workshop will present innovative finance strategies that are being used in the conservation of working lands. During this highly interactive session, you will hear from peers and experts on some fresh ideas that they are working on to finance acquisitions as well as stewardship.

2.F Model Conservation Easement & Drafting Guidance

Steve Haire – Moore, Virgadamo & Lynch, Ltd.

Conservation Easements (also called conservation restrictions) are a good way to protect the important environmental values of a property while keeping the property in private ownership. Good drafting of the conservation easement is critical to ensure permanent protection of the conservation values that the easement holder and property owner want to protect. The legal art of drafting a good conservation easement has evolved in recent years based on a growing history of their use and related court decisions. In addition, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) rules and decisions and interpretations have changed "best practices" for drafting a conservation easement for property owners who are donating an easement as a charitable contribution.

RI Land Trust Council worked with attorneys to develop a "model" conservation easement for use in Rhode Island based on a Connecticut model. The model easement is
accompanied by commentary explaining each section of the easement and guidance about the language to use. This model easement reflects nationally recognized state of the art "best practices" for drafting an easement and has been modified to reflect Rhode Island's conservation easement legal code. This workshop will present the Rhode Island model. It will help your land trust, municipality and your attorneys use best practices when you are working with a landowner to draft a conservation easement to protect their property. Steve Haire has many years of experience with land conservation law and adapted the Connecticut model conservation easement and commentary to Rhode Island.

2.G Understanding, Protecting and Expanding Rhode Island’s Forest Resources
   TeeJay Boudreau – RI DEM
   Christopher Riely – Sweet Birch Consulting
   Molly Henry – American Forests
About 56% of Rhode Island is covered by forest. Most of this land is privately owned, yet everyone benefits from the services forested lands provide – beautiful scenery, cooling, flood mitigation, wildlife habitat, carbon sequestration and clean water. Presenters will review forest resources in the state and actions that Rhode Island’s Department of Environmental Management takes to manage these important resources. The workshop will also provide an overview of recent studies that have estimated the economic value of forest lands and give a summary of current work underway to develop a suite of tools that help maximize the potential for urban forests to reduce the effects of climate change such as extreme heat and poor air quality and improve public health in underserved communities.

2.H Responsible Offshore Wind Energy Development
   Nicole DiPaolo – National Wildlife Foundation
   Nate Mayo – Vineyard Wind
States across the region are working to seize the potential of offshore wind power -- the only utility-scale renewable energy resource within Rhode Island’s reach. This workshop by representatives from National Wildlife Federation and Vineyard Wind will include updates on the region’s progress towards responsible development, and the process for getting this untapped clean energy resource on our grid. Learn the details on where development will happen, how locations are determined, how much energy is available, key stakeholders, opportunities for public comment, permitting processes, and how to ensure wildlife and habitat are protected every step of the way. Now is the time to apply the Block Island Wind Farm’s exemplary model for effective stakeholder engagement as we scale up this critical endeavor.

2.I Tackling Climate Change: Accelerating Municipal Resilience Through New Statewide Programs
   Shaun O’Rourke - Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank
   Gary Crosby – Town of Portsmouth
   Kaela Gray – Town of South Kingstown
   Kim Jacobs – Town of Barrington
   Bob Rulli – Town of Warren
   Lisa Pellegrini – Town of Westerly
Over the past year, the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank and The Nature Conservancy facilitated the development of “Community Resilience Building” plans in 5 municipalities: Portsmouth, Westerly, Warren and Barrington and South Kingstown. These plans are being used to develop a pipeline of priority projects that will help increase community resiliency and lead to greater funding and advocacy. This workshop
will provide an update on implementation of the state’s Climate Resilience Action Strategy, Resilient Rhody and include a panel discussion of municipal leaders will describe local climate challenges, implementation success stories, and highlight priorities that emerged from the Municipal Resilience Program.

2.J Land Stewardship Roundtable
Alex Chuman – Aquidneck Land Trust
Meg Lee – The Westerly Land Trust
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.

Workshops – Session III  2:45 – 4:00 (choose from 10)

3.A New Tools and Opportunities for Volunteer Science in the Narragansett Bay Watershed
Courtney Schmidt – Narragansett Bay Estuary Program
Emily Shumchenia – E&C Enviroscape
David McLaughlin – Clean Ocean Access
Michael Bradley – University of Rhode Island
Katie DeGoosh-DiMarzio – RI Department of Environmental Management
The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program will moderate a panel highlighting new research and technology supporting volunteer science. Panelists will describe two new surveys using imagery to examine the recovery of bay bottom ecosystems from nutrient pollution and map the status of salt marshes facing rising seas. Another will discuss a new method to assess potential sources of contamination to beaches that drive beach closures. Finally, we will emphasize the important role local residents play in reporting freshwater invasives, and discuss volunteer opportunities to educate boaters to check and clean their boats and gear. The panelists will describe how these new tools create a better understanding of Bay conditions and new opportunities for people to participate in management and monitoring actions that advance the health of waterways in Rhode Island.

3.B Art for Environmental Advocacy
Melissa Guillet – 15 Minute Field Trips
Learn how to teach complex environmental concepts through art and engage the community in dialogue and action plans. Participate in a variety of art projects including song, dance, costume design, and drawing, and connect them to topics such as climate change, carbon sequestration, erosion control, and even fish migration! Leave with ideas to develop programs for your organization to engage families, partner with schools and youth groups, and more.

3.C Engaging Communities to Transform Urban Spaces with Green Stormwater Practices
Alicia Lehrer – Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Amelia Rose – Groundwork RI
Climate change effects our most vulnerable communities with increased flooding, higher heat in summer, and more. Green Infrastructure (GI) uses soils and plants to capture and treat stormwater before it enters local waterways. It also “softens” urban hard structures
and helps increase communities’ resilience to climate change through increasing shade, cleaning air, filtering stormwater into the ground, making neighborhoods nicer and more. This workshop will describe successful urban stewardship programs, which create economic opportunity for Rhode Island’s urban residents, and at the same time physically improve shared urban environments, especially in economically-distressed areas.

3.D Five Fresh Ideas for Building the Board You Need
David Allen – Development for Conservation
“The first criterion used for considering a new board member is often ‘known to someone on the current board.’ I think it should be ‘totally in love with the mission,’ instead.”

Thus begins an engaging workshop session where we examine every step of the board experience and explore succession planning and leadership development from the inside out. This workshop will present five fresh ideas for identifying, recruiting, training, and empowering the board you need – both now and into the future.

3.E Land Protection and Stewardship using the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs
Joe Bachand – USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service
Brunilda Velez – USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Service implements the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) which includes the Agricultural Lands Easement Program (ALE) and the Wetland Reserve Easement Program. These programs can be used by land trusts, local and state governments, non-governmental organization, as well as private landowners, to place conservation easement on properties to protect agricultural lands, wetlands and forestlands. NRCS staff will review the program eligibility requirements and the application process to assists workshop participants in understanding the programs and their benefits. Staff from the South Kingstown Land Trust will speak about their experience using the ACEP ALE program.

3.F Using Aerial Imagery and RILTC’s New Mapping Toolbox to Monitor Protected Lands
Alex Chuman – Aquidneck Land Trust
Greg Bonynge – University of Rhode Island

New this year, the Rhode Island Land Trust Council is now providing support to land trusts that are interested in using online mapping tools to streamline their approach to easement monitoring. We’ll introduce this new program and step through an easement monitoring workflow using both loaner equipment and Esri ArcGIS Online mapping tools that are now available at no cost from the Council. Along the way we’ll use real-life examples to highlight new fantastically detailed statewide aerial photographs. These free high resolution aerials allow for remote monitoring that can be a substitute for on-the-ground site visits and allow land trusts to easily see land use changes in their service areas. We’ll also discuss the pros and cons of using aerials to supplement your monitoring program with examples from Aquidneck Land Trust’s own remote monitoring policy.

3.G Conserving Pollinators in the Landscape
Kelly Gill – Xerces Society
Emily May – Xerces Society

Pollinators are essential to our environment. The ecological service they provide is necessary for the reproduction of over 85% of the world’s flowering plants, including more than two-thirds of the world’s crop species. Beyond agriculture, pollinators are keystone species in most terrestrial ecosystems. Fruits and seeds derived from insect
pollination are a major part of the diet of approximately 25% of all birds, and of mammals ranging from red-backed voles to grizzly bears. Unfortunately, in many places, the essential service of pollination is at risk from habitat loss, pesticide use, and introduced diseases. This workshop will review the habitat needs of native pollinators and how each of us can act to improve habitat and protect pollinators on protected lands, yards and gardens and along roadsides in cities and towns.

3.H The Fight Against Plastic Pollution
Kevin Budris – Conservation Law Foundation
Carol Hagen McEntee – Representative District 33 (South Kingstown, Narragansett)
Kate Weymouth – Barrington Town Council
Amy Moses – Conservation Law Foundation

Plastic pollution is a world-wide problem. We produced 8.3 billion tons of plastic between 1950 and 2015. Most of that—5.8 billion tons—was single-use plastic, and only 6% of that single-use plastic was recycled. The rest ended up in landfills, incinerators, and in our environment. Plastic bags—380 billion of which we use every year in the U.S.—and plastic bottles—481.6 billion of which were sold worldwide in 2018—litter our parks, clog our waterways, and burden cities and towns with clean up and disposal costs. In 2019, Governor Raimondo convened a taskforce to consider plastic pollution and craft solutions. Several pieces of legislation were introduced during the 2019 session including a bag ban bill sponsored by Representative McEntee. None of the bills passed, but local cities and towns are taking action to reduce plastic pollution. This session will provide an overview of the plastics problem, then highlight local progress and state legislation under consideration this session.

3.I Balancing Renewable Energy Development with Land Protection
Jerry Elmer – Conservation Law Foundation
Sue AnderBois – The Nature Conservancy

Booming solar development has caught the conservation community by surprise. This workshop will provide an overview of Rhode Island’s policy landscape that supports renewable energy development, then discuss best practices for siting commercial scale solar projects. Presenters will discuss the roles energy off-takers, municipalities and the state legislature and agencies can play to direct projects to preferred locations like landfills and gravel pits and provide examples of successfully sited projects.

3.J Conservation Stewardship Toolbox from the “RICSC”
David Gregg – RI Natural History Survey & Conservation Stewardship Collaborative

With innovative programs, better coordinated data, and guides and protocols, the Conservation Stewardship Collaborative helps you tackle bottlenecks that hamper responsible land stewardship. In this session, hear about CSC initiatives including the Youth Conservation League: what is it, how does it help with stewardship, and how can you bring it to your town? Also, hear about templates and other tools you can use to improve the baseline documentation of your land. What other CSC products are available to you? ...rare species data, invasive species strategies, maps and mapping, student interns, more. Stymied by a problem in meeting your stewardship responsibilities? Maybe there’s a CSC tool to help you, or if there isn’t we’d love to hear about the need. So bring ideas for future CSC projects and join in the discussion.
Registration Form
Rhode Island Land & Water Conservation Summit

Saturday, March 7, 2020
Location: URI Memorial Union, Kingston

Registration Cost (includes continental breakfast, lunch, breaks & coffee mug):
Early Registration before February 21: $55 After February 21: $80

Name____________________________ Telephone Number_____________________
Affiliation_______________________________________________________________
Land Trust _____ Watershed Council _____ Conservation Commission _____
I am a:   Board Member/Trustee _______; Volunteer _______; Staff _______; Other _______
Address__________________________ Email_________________________________
(Note: we need email addresses if possible so that we can send last minute communications about the Summit)
City _____________________________________________________State____Zip_________

Please add my name to the Land & Water Partnership mailing list?    ____ Yes;    ______ No
The Land & Water Partnership does NOT sell or otherwise share our mailing or email list.

Please enter the letter “A – L” of your first choice workshop for each session:

Session 1 Session 2 Session 3

(This will help us know how many people will attend each session and schedule rooms.)

Amount Enclosed ($55.00 before February 21; $80.00 after February 21):  $________
Refund Policy: registrations may be cancelled until March 1 for a fee of $5. No refunds after March 1.

Do you have any dietary restrictions for lunch?   _____ Vegetarian;   _____ Gluten Free
Would you like to lead a lunch time roundtable discussion on a topic not covered by a workshop?
If yes, What is your discussion topic?  ____________________________________________

Please submit your registration before February 21 if possible.
Please submit a separate registration for each person attending the Summit

Make checks payable to:  Land & Water Partnership
Mail registration and checks to:
RI Land & Water Conservation Summit
c/o RI Land Trust Council
PO Box 633
Saunderstown, RI 02874

Questions/Information? Contact:
Meg Kerr mkerr@asri.org; 401-714-2313 OR Rupert Friday rfriday@rilandtrusts.org; 401-932-4667

REGISTER ON LINE:
www.LandAndWaterPartnership.org