



2nd Annual NW NJ Rivers Conference

2020 Workshop Presenter Biographies

Keynote Speaker

David Robinson, PhD - NJ State Climatologist

Dr Robinson's research interests run the gamut from global to local, with the underlying theme being the development of a better understanding of the climate system. As the New Jersey State Climatologist, Dr Robinson conducts research of an applied nature that focuses on the diverse weather and climate of the Garden State. This includes analysis of climate change, drought, flooding, and its impacts to agriculture, transportation, public safety and commerce. The Office of the NJ State Climatologist also operates one of the most spatially dense observing networks in the nation.

Moderator

Julie LaBar PhD - Assistant Professor of Environmental Science, Centenary University

Julie holds B.S., M.S., and Ph.D. degrees from the University of Oklahoma. At OU, she gained extensive co-curricular experience managing field and laboratory projects, acting as QA/QC officer on EPA and USGS grants, and producing data reports on watershed monitoring efforts.

Plenary Introduction Speakers

James Kern III, Warren County Board of Chosen Freeholders

James Kern III is one of three at-large Freeholders for Warren County. Kern was elected in 2018 and currently serves as deputy director, James is a liaison to many groups, including (but not limited to): departments of public safety, human services, public health, and planning board. Kern is also active in working with the Musconetcong Watershed Association in their efforts for dam removal and achieving wild and scenic designation in the Township.

Krassi Lazarova PhD - Science Department Chair, Centenary University

Krassi received her Masters of Science in Physics with a concentration in Meteorology from Sofia State University (Bulgaria) in 1993. Her Master's thesis was on the stability of the atmosphere and its relation to distribution of air pollutants. She received her PhD in physics at Drexel University (Philadelphia, PA) in 2001. Her research focus was on numerical modeling of air quality. Her thesis enabled the use of small scale diagnostic meteorology input in air quality models, thus achieving more accurate local scale air quality forecasts. While working at the Mid-Atlantic Division of EPA, she was instrumental in creating the DCM (Decision Consequence Model) allowing the agency to run virtual scenarios of pollution release and study the consequences of the release on the air quality.

Workshop Presenters

Alex Ambrose - Policy Associate, ANJEC

Alex is the Policy Associate at the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions since 2019. She works on the Delaware River Watershed Initiative in the New Jersey Highlands Cluster as well as on statewide policy issues including plastic reduction, stormwater, and clean energy. Before coming to ANJEC, Alex was the Policy Assistant at New Jersey League of Conservation Voters, where she worked on statewide legislation such as the Flood Defense Act, the Preserve New Jersey Act, and the Clean Energy Act. She studied Ecology, Evolution, and Natural Resources at Rutgers University with a minor in Geospatial Information Systems.

John Donahue - Superintendent Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area (retired)

John is a former Superintendent of the Delaware Water Gap national Recreation Area retiring in 2017 after 38 years of service as a federal employee. His career started as a permanent employee with the United States as a gardener, first at Cape Cod National Seashore and later at John Muir National Historic Site. He has also served as a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary for Fish Wildlife and Parks in the Department of Interior and as an Environmental Specialist in the Washington Office of the National Park Service. He also held positions as the Chief of Resource Management and Visitor Services at Cape Cod National Seashore and as a Resource Manager at Morristown National Historical Park.

John Hasse, PhD, AICP - Director of the Geospatial Research Lab in the Department of Geography, Planning & Sustainability at Rowan University

Dr Hasse is a professor of geography and director of the Geospatial Research Lab at Rowan University. He is actively engaged in multiple funded projects that provide open source geovisualization of geospatial data in support of environmental management, sustainable community planning and education. John's work in geospatial techniques for land use analysis is recognized throughout the state. He and the GeoLab team have been instrumental in developing the NJ MAP web mapping platform that powers the NJ Conservation Blueprint.

Bruce Hulshizer, P.E. - Financial Services Practice Area Leader, HRG Inc

Bruce is responsible for managing stormwater utility implementation projects, developing rates for stormwater utilities, performing water and wastewater system valuations, reviewing and calculation water and sewer rates, preparing capital plans, assisting clients with the budgets, and reviewing inter-municipal agreements. With over 20 years of professional experience Bruce has successfully designed and managed many water and wastewater infrastructure projects for authorities and municipalities. These services include client and project management, project design, planning, permitting, and quality assurance/quality control.

Alan Hunt, PhD - Director of Policy & Grants at the Musconetcong Watershed Association.

Alan works on implementing the Musconetcong Wild and Scenic River Management Plan, watershed protection policies, reviews development proposals and prepares public comments, recreational resource development, managing the Historic Asbury Mill's restoration and interpretation, and writing and managing grants. Alan grew up along the Musconetcong River, and is bringing up the fourth generation on his family's farm.

Ellen Kohler - Program Director for Water Resources Environmental Finance Center

Ellen Kohler has been a staff member at EPA Region 3's Environmental Finance Center since 2018. She has 25 years of experience addressing a wide range of legal, regulatory and policy context around water and natural resource issues, from endangered species protection to addressing tribal treaty fishing rights. In 2012 Ellen led a team developing a funding mechanism for source water protection in the Brandywine-Christina Basin as the project manager for the Delaware Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. Her current projects center around providing technical assistance to communities in the mid-Atlantic region on water resource policy and finance topics. Ellen is a licensed attorney in Pennsylvania, Michigan and Colorado.

Nancy Roberts-Lawler - Water Quality Program Coordinator

Nancy Roberts-Lawler has been the Water Quality Program Coordinator for the Musconetcong Watershed Association and managed MWA water quality studies for the past 11 years. Nancy began working on water quality and citizen science issues at South Branch Watershed Association in 1999, where she became an advocate for including their high quality macroinvertebrate data in NJDEP's report to EPA. In 2004 she was hired by NJDEP to work on the design team of the state water quality management system so it would include citizen-collected data. She has presented at regional, state and national conferences on water quality and citizen science-related topics. Nancy has a B.A. in Biology from University of Pennsylvania.

Juniper Leifer - Project Manager: Lopatcong Creek Initiative, NJ Highlands Coalition

Juniper brings her experience as a grassroots community organizer to her role as project manager for Lopatcong Creek Initiative (LCI). Through community engagement and education, LCI aims to raise awareness about local water quality concerns. As project manager, Juniper advocates behavior change, promotes enhanced municipal protections, and facilitates green infrastructure project implementation. Citizen science is critical to learning and communicating the issues threatening Lopatcong Creek. Through this effort, ordinary people, with varying degrees of interest and experience, are able to play a vital role in collecting data, information, and evidence crucial to the future of local and regional water quality.

Chris Miller - Executive Director, Eastern Environmental Law Center

Chris is a seasoned environmental and land use attorney with twelve years of practice at one of New Jersey's pre-eminent private environmental law firms, Maraziti Falcon, LLP, where he was a partner. Chris' keen ability to use the power of law to protect the public interest and promote a clean and safe environment has been instrumental in a number of important cases including: working on behalf of a low-income community, he defeated efforts by the corporate owner to construct a coal-fired power plant in Carneys Point at the foot of the Delaware Memorial Bridge. In another case he obtained a judgment preventing the development of a diesel fuel depot next to a public park and a popular community kayaking facility on the Hudson River.

Chris Obropta, PhD, P.E. - Director of the New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute, Rutgers University

Chris is the Director of the New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute, an Extension Specialist in Water Resources with Rutgers Cooperative Extension, and a Professor with the Department of Environmental Sciences at the School of Environmental and Biological Sciences, Rutgers University. Dr. Obropta leads his highly specialized staff from the Rutgers Cooperative Extension Water Resources Program to identify and address community water resources issues using sustainable and practical science-based solutions throughout New Jersey. Over the last several years, he and his staff have been working with communities to implement green infrastructure practices throughout the urban centers of New Jersey. These practices have been designed to be climate resilient and to help communities reduce their flooding risk.

Eric Olsen - Director of Land Programs, The Nature Conservancy

Eric currently serves as the Director of the Lands Program at the Nature Conservancy. In this role he oversees land protection, land management and land policy work for the New Jersey Chapter. Previously, he served as the Delaware River and Bay Whole System Project Director for The Nature Conservancy; coordinating the organization's work across the four-state Delaware River region. During his tenure with TNC, Eric has been involved with forest and freshwater projects including land protection, stewardship, and restoration projects. One of the things he enjoys most is working with landowners to realize their goal of permanently protecting their land. He holds a B.A. in English with a minor in Environmental Studies from Drew University, and an A.A in Liberal Arts from Sussex County Community College.

Frank Pinto - President at Pinto Consulting, LLC

Frank has 25 years of experience in the public sector using his skills and expertise to assist landowners, non-profits, local and county governments with issues related to farm management, farmland tax assessment, open space planning, open space land management, strategic planning, and non-profit business development. Frank says he has been fortunate to work in a variety of areas within the public sector including: project management, land development review, land acquisition, land preservation, lease management, GIS project development, land use planning and grant management

Kyle Richter - Watershed Programs Coordinator at Musconetcong Watershed Association

Kyle works with local municipalities, schools, and watershed residents to promote a sense of pride and stewardship for the Musconetcong Watershed as well as surrounding watersheds, through education programs, river restoration projects, including Dam Removals, and installation of green infrastructure projects. Kyle has a Bachelor's Degree in Marine Science from Rutgers University, and a Professional Certificate in Watershed Management from Michigan State University.

Elliott Ruga - Policy & Communications Director - NJ Highlands Coalition

Elliott is Policy and Communications Director of NJHC. He is also the staff liaison with the Coalition's Cultural Resources Committee. Elliott is the Chairman of the Town of Boonton Historic Preservation Commission. He is also the Chairman of the Boonton Trails Committee, which is planning the Boonton Iron Works & Morris Canal Heritage Trail, and which will also serve as the official Boonton segment of the Morris Canal Greenway. Elliott is a former member of the Morris County Heritage Commission.

Leslie Sauer - Founder Emeritus of Andropogon Associates

Leslie is a pioneer in the field of restoring and managing native landscapes through innovative strategies and techniques. She is responsible for the reestablishment of natural systems in a wide range of sensitive, degraded, and developed environments. Leslie was a key player in watershed management projects including the Flood Protection Plan for the Passaic River in New Jersey and the Management Plan for the Rockaway River Watershed. Her book, *The Once & Future Forest* is a guidebook for restoring and managing natural landscapes-especially remnant deciduous forests. Leslie has served on the board of the Society for Ecological Restoration as well as being an adjunct associate professor at the University of Pennsylvania in the landscape architecture Masters program.

Stephen Souza, PhD - CEO, Clean Waters Consulting, LLC

Dr. Stephen Souza has dedicated his 35 year career to the management and restoration of aquatic ecosystems, in particular lakes, ponds and reservoirs. Steve was a founding partner of Princeton Hydro, LLC. Following his retirement in 2018 he started Clean Waters Consulting as a means to continue to provide education and outreach on water resource related issues via classes and courses taught at Rutgers, Montclair and Temple. This allows him to continue working with Princeton Hydro, providing on call consulting services. Dr. Souza received his B.S. in 1974 from U Mass, Dartmouth, his M.S. in 1976 from Rutgers, and his Ph.D. in 1981 from the University of Connecticut. Steve has served as President of the North American Lake Management Society, and as President of the Pennsylvania Lake Management Society

Ben Spinelli - Partner at Greener by Design, LLC

Ben was an original member of the Highlands Council, the founder and president of the Raritan-Highlands Planning Compact and is a Senior Fellow with the Environmental Leadership Program in Washington D.C. Additionally, he has served as a senior adviser to the U.S. President's FEMA Hurricane Sandy Recovery Task Force on matters of local government, land use and planning, as Executive Director of the Office of Smart Growth, and three terms as the mayor of Chester Township where his accomplishments included the permanent preservation of over 3,000 acres of environmentally important open space and farmland. He graduated from Muhlenberg College with a B.A. in Political Science and History and received his J.D. from Seton Hall University-School of Law. Mr. Spinelli is an adjunct professor at NJIT's School of College of Science and Liberal Arts.

Erin Stetz - Assistant Director of Science and Stewardship, The Watershed Institute

Erin Stetz 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. Having previously managed the StreamWatch volunteer water quality monitoring program, Erin took on a new role in 2018 to coordinate the New Jersey Watershed Watch Network. The Network provides technical services to the New Jersey water monitoring community and serves to build volunteer monitoring capacity, strengthen existing programs, and provide a connection between community-based programs and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection. Erin also serves on the board of directors for Bingo's Foundation, a no-kill cat shelter and rescue in Bucks County, PA.

Beth Styler Barry - Director of River Restoration, The Nature Conservancy

Beth has 18 years' experience in river restoration, water quality monitoring, community outreach, and project management. At The Nature Conservancy, Beth leads development and implementation of major on-the-ground stream restoration projects, including dam removals, from permit application to working with engineers, contractors, and partners for successful project completion. Beth co-leads the NJ Statewide Dam Removal Partnership. Beth previously worked as executive director of the Musconetcong Watershed Association. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Biochemistry from Rutgers University and a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from Montclair State University.

Pamela Zipse - Outreach Coordinator, Rutgers Urban Forestry Program of NJAE

Pam manages partnerships between the Rutgers Urban Forestry Program and the network of professional forestry organizations, the community of forestry and arboriculture consultants, and the State's municipal shade tree program volunteers. She is also responsible for the development and delivery of a variety of educational programs and workshops in partnership with the NJ Shade Tree Federation, NJ Tree Foundation, NJ Forest Service Urban & Community Forestry Program, NJ Project Learning Tree, and the NJ Forest, Agriculture & Landscape Pest Roundtable (formerly EAB Task Force) to help enable Rutgers to contribute to statewide community forestry issues. Pam is a Licensed Tree Expert in New Jersey and is affiliated with the NJ Board of Tree Experts, NJ Community Forestry Council, New Jersey Shade Tree Federation and the New Jersey Arborists, Chapter ISA.