



Connect · Explore · Network · Engage · Inspire

WSA'S 11TH ANNUAL CONFERENCE SPRING INTO ACTION!

Pre-Conference Events

New This Year! Join us to connect in person and virtually before the conference.

Sunday, February 20 at 1-3pm

Jug Bay Wetlands Sanctuary - Hike with a Naturalist **Limited space!**

Lindsay Hollister, Horticulturist of Jefferson Patterson Park & Museum

Bundle up and join us for a hike in the great outdoors! Winter is an amazing and often underrated time to appreciate our environment. Get outside and learn about what's hidden in our forests this time of year.

Monday, February 21st at 1-2pm

Bacon, Beavers, and Perch, Oh My! **Limited space!**

Jack Turner, Ecosystem Restoration Specialist, and Laura Kelm, Project Manager of GreenVest LLC

Visit the large-scale Bacon Ridge Branch stream restoration project at Elks Camp Barrett in the South River watershed to get a behind the scenes tour of an innovative project made possible by GreenVest, LLC, Biohabitats, EQR LLC, Coastal Resources Inc., and the Maryland Department of Transportation State Highway Administration. Modified log jams, or Beaver Dam Analogs, and other all-wood structures were built using trees harvested onsite to restore over 17,000 linear feet of degraded stream channels and the adjacent floodplain.

Wednesday, February 23rd at 1-2pm

Watershed Updates **Virtual**

Watershed Organization Leaders

Connect with the leaders of your local watershed organization(s) and others who live in your watershed for important updates on the state of your river! This is the perfect way to find out about what's coming up in 2022, learn how you can get involved, and share what you're working on!

Conference Day 1- Friday, February 25, 2022

8:30 am Virtual Morning Networking (Optional)

8:45 am Conference Welcome

9:00 am Plenary

1A- A Watershed Moment: Taking a Look Inside WSA's DEI Journey

Jeff Johnson, President and CEO, and Michael Ramsey, Vice President of JIJ Impact

In the midst of today's complex, often troubling racial climate, WSA has continued to evolve into an organization that incorporates diversity, equity, inclusion and justice (DEIJ) into the core of its DNA. As part of this process, JIJ Impact was tasked with gathering insights and guiding the development of a unique DEI strategy. JIJ Impact's Jeff Johnson (President and CEO) and Michael Ramsey (Vice President) will discuss how WSA's equity journey has unfolded to-date and the important lessons that have emerged for the broader environmental community.

10:00 am Break

10:30 am Morning Sessions

2A: Making Collaboration Work: What Research Tells Us

Marc Stern of the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation at Virginia Tech

What does research tell us about how to navigate conflict and disagreements about the management of shared resources? Join Professor Stern for a practical discussion of the lessons that social science has revealed over the past few decades about how to approach these challenges.

2B: Meet The Funders! - Opportunities to Fund your Next Project

Representatives from Chesapeake Bay Trust, Unity Gardens, Maryland-DNR, and AACO Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration

Connect with local funders who invest in restoration and outreach projects in Anne Arundel County. Speakers will share funding opportunities, and how to increase your chances of getting funded. We'll also dive into the changes being made for more equitable funding.

2C: Stop Bugging My Project: Squashing Invasive Insects

Karin T. Burghardt, Ph.D, of the University of Maryland

Spotted Lanternflies, Jumping Worms, GAT Traps, and more! Dr. Burghardt of [Burghardt Lab](#) based in College Park, MD will discuss invasive insect species and how to manage them in restoration projects.

11:30 am Break

12:30 pm Afternoon Sessions

3A: Your local government at work: Restoration, Planning and Resilience

Erik Michelsen, Deputy Director, AA Co Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration and Jackie Guild Deputy City Manager: Resilience & Sustainability for the City of Annapolis Michael Stringer of AA Co Office of Planning & Zoning

Join Anne Arundel County and City of Annapolis environmental leaders to hear the strategies and successes in watershed restoration and progress toward planning for a resilient and green future.

3B: Creating Outdoor Spaces for Peace & Play

Julie Dieguez, Green Schools Specialist at AACPS

If there is one thing during these challenging times that everyone can agree on, it's that we all could use less stress, more peace and reasons to smile. More than ever the outdoors has become a welcoming place of respite, even just a few steps outside your door. Learn how to create easy outdoor spaces for relaxation, mindfulness, healing, play and general well-being, and let the smiles begin.

3C: Digging Into Soils

To Be Announced!

It's time to get your hands dirty! Taking an active role in generating healthy soil will establish a lasting foundation for successful stewardship projects. Increasing soil biodiversity and organic matter set the groundwork where plantings can thrive! Learn the basics of soils, soil health, mycorrhizal networks, and how everything works together.

1:45-3:00 pm Stewards Only [Closed Session]

4A: Calling All Stewards!

This session is for Certified Watershed Stewards! If you are a Steward in Anne Arundel County, or another WSA in Maryland, sign up for this session!

Calvert, Cecil, Harford, Howard, National Capital Region, and St Mary's County Stewards: Get the latest updates from your WSA team and get ready to discuss your year ahead!

Anne Arundel Stewards: Get the latest updates from the AAWSA Team and help plan a year of action. Then, join us for a small group discussion around a specific action type for 2022.

Maintenance Corps:

This action group gets together regularly to work on project maintenance. Hear from group leads Amy Clements, Denise Peach, and Ann Jackson to hear about what's been accomplished, what's next, and how you can help!

Residential Site Assessment:

Share your knowledge to make an impact! The RSA group helps community members identify positive changes they can to reduce pollutants entering our watersheds. Learn how you can get involved!

Steward Engagement:

We want to hear how you'd like to engage! You should attend this group if you haven't quite found your niche in WSA, or want to share ideas for how you can stay connected post-certification course.

Big Restoration:

Have you taken on a large restoration project in your community? Perhaps you'd like to, or have some plans brewing! Get together with other Stewards to ask questions, share wisdom, and plan next steps for big restoration projects!

Conference Day 2- Saturday, February 26, 2022

8:30 am Virtual Morning Networking (Optional)

9:00 am Conference Welcome

9:15 am Plenary

5A: Taking Action: Applying Equity and Justice in Our Watershed

Jan-Michael Archer of The Center for Community Engagement, Environmental Justice, and Health at UMD; Abel Olivo, Executive Director of Defensores de la Cuenca; Carmera Thomas-Wilhite, WSA Board Vice-Chair and Director of Urban Conservation Initiatives at The Conservation Fund

In November 2021, WSA hosted an Environmental Justice event in partnership with Anne Arundel County Public Libraries. The final day of Spring into Action will start with our speakers continuing that conversation and exploring how equity and justice connects to environmental stewardship and our collective work.

10:15 am Break

10:30 am Morning Sessions

6A: Equity, Environmental Justice, and Me

You! And experts in equity, justice, and the environment

Dive deeper into what equity and environmental justice mean in your neighborhood and how your environmental work can influence change. Whether you wonder how equity and environmental justice relate to WSA's mission, want to share your experience, or know how to be a better ally, take this opportunity to ask questions, gain a deeper understanding and learn more about how to apply equity in your communities, projects, and actions.

6B: Next Stop on the Pollinator Pathway

*Alison Milligan, Elmer Dengler, Jim MacNicholl, and Lauren Toomey
Watershed Stewards and Native Plant Experts*

You know pollinators are important. You know they need native plants. As we recognize that ecosystems supporting native plants have diminished, there is a growing and increased demand from the public for growing native plants. Yet, finding native plants is more difficult than it should be. Join this session to learn about a new program to grow and distribute native plants to reestablish native ecosystems, and how you can be part of a huge movement connecting habitat throughout Maryland.

6C: WSA 101: Using WSA Resources To Make A Bigger Impact

Brad Knopf and Stacey Wildberger, Watershed Stewards, and Josh Clark, WSA Restoration Coordinator

Are you a long-time Steward who could use a refresher? Or perhaps you're interested in becoming a Steward and want a sneak peek into what that means. Join this session to dive into what's new with WSA resources, and learn how you can have a bigger impact in your community. Plus, see how Cape St Claire Stewards have gotten their community involved!

11:30 am Break

12:30 pm Afternoon Sessions

7A: Boosting Behavior Change

Steve Raabe, Founder and President of Opinionworks; Sally Albright, Grant Manager, AACO Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration

This workshop will explore Baywide trends in stewardship behaviors and dig into local behavior change examples. Steve Raabe of Opinionworks will share a new tool that will help you use real data to choose the best behavior and prioritize the right audience to create an effective campaign. He'll also answer your behavior change questions and explore key social science concepts using real world examples. Sally Albright of Anne Arundel County will preview a new pet waste campaign, *Stop Poolution*.

7B: Trees for All: Increasing Tree Equity

Ryan Alston, Communications & Outreach Manager and Justin Bowers, Chief Operating Officer of Baltimore Tree Trust

Trees help provide clean water, clean air, and reduce the impacts of increasingly high temperatures. Tree equity is when the amount and distribution of trees in an area allows EVERYONE to experience their health, climate and economic benefits. Hear from experts at the Baltimore Tree Trust about how and where they are working to increase tree canopy in Baltimore City, and how we can be strategic about where we plant more trees in Anne Arundel County.

7C: Truly Native: Choosing Plants Inspired By The Natural Ecosystem

Darlene Robbins, RainScapes Planner, of the Montgomery County Department of Environmental Protection

An introduction to reference landscapes, those pockets of unspoiled land that show what our watersheds looked like prior to colonization. Learn why natural ecosystems should inspire what native plants we use in stormwater best management practices (BMPs).