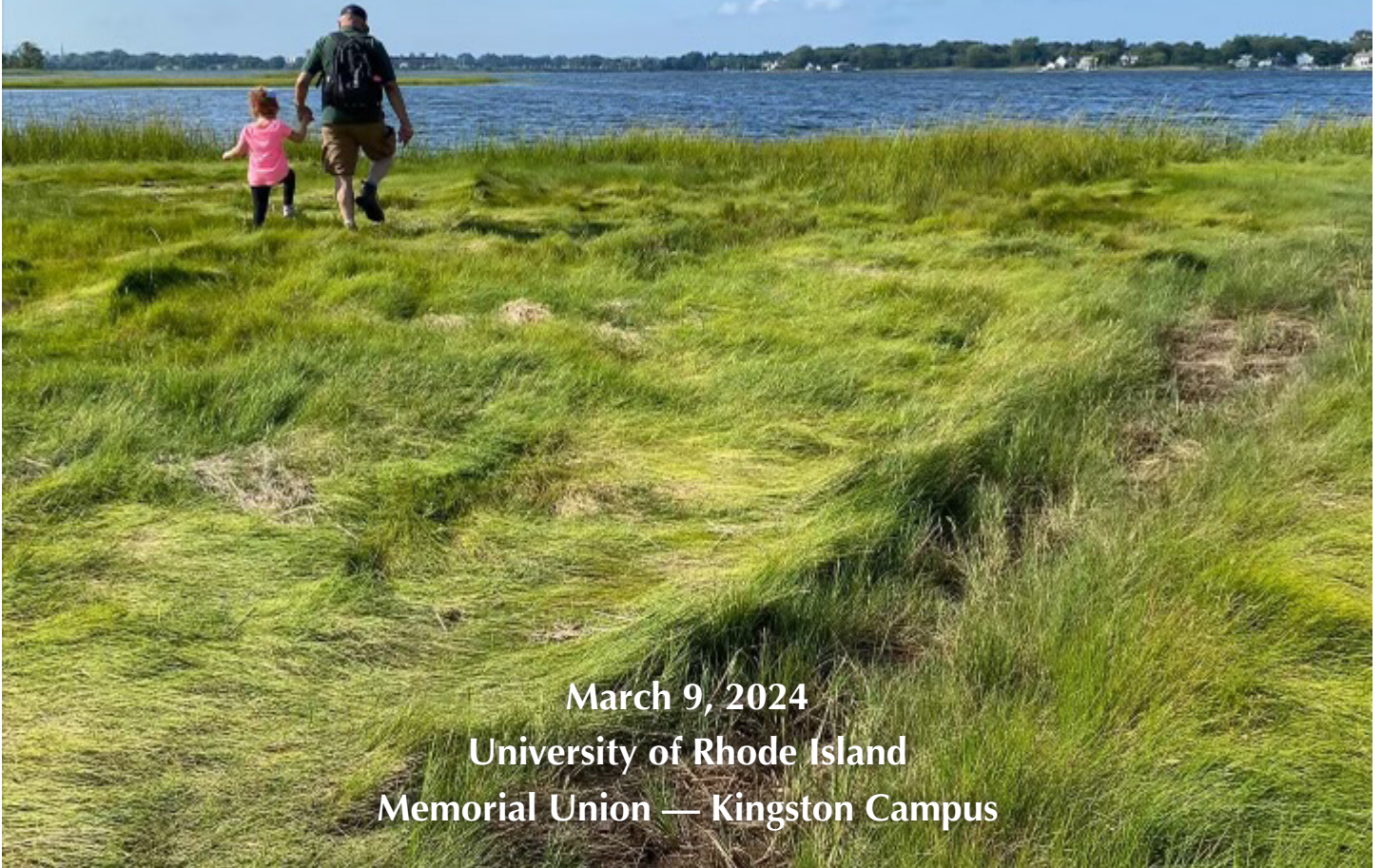


TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY LAND & WATER CONSERVATION SUMMIT



March 9, 2024
University of Rhode Island
Memorial Union — Kingston Campus

Haile Farm Preserve, Warren Land Trust — Photo: Shannon Dowling



Audubon Society
of Rhode Island



NESAWG

The Northeast Region's Food and Farm Network



Roots2Empower



RHODE ISLAND

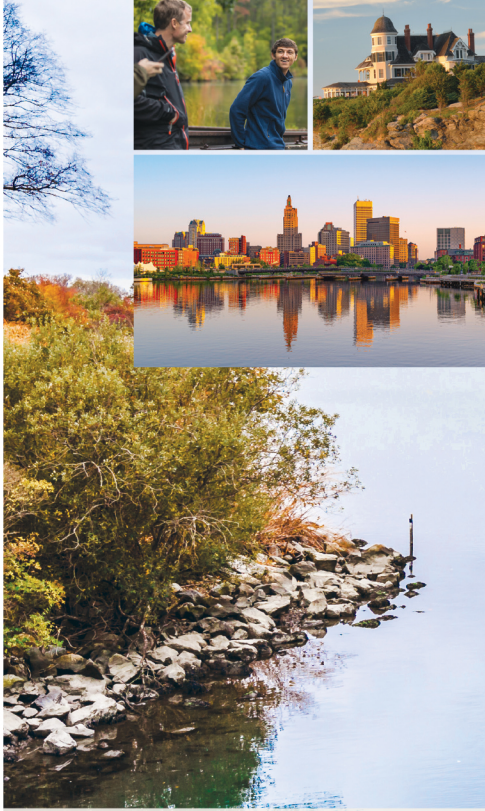
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National Land Conservation Conference · Land Trust Alliance



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Registration will open in May. We can't wait to see you there!



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WORKSHOPS



RECEPTIONS



SEMINARS



SPECIAL EVENTS





—2024—
LAND & WATER
CONSERVATION
SUMMIT



March 9, 2024 — University of Rhode Island — 20th Anniversary Celebration
31 Workshops — Outstanding Networking — “Conservation Commons” Exhibitors Hall

AGENDA

- 8:00 am **Registration and Continental Breakfast**
Network and Visit Conservation Commons Exhibitor Hall
- 9:00 am **Welcome**
Kate Sayles, RI Land Trust Council
Cristina Cabrera, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
Land Acknowledgement
Randy Noka, Narragansett Elder and Owner of Nokasett Consulting
- 9:15 am **Introduction**
Kate Sayles, RI Land Trust Council
- 9:30 am **Keynote Presentation: Tarshire Battle, Roots 2Empower**
Rooted in Resilience: Centering Community in Land and Water Conservation
- 10:15 am **Break**
Network and Visit Conservation Commons Exhibitor Hall
- 10:35 am **Session A Workshops**
Your choice from 10 offered
- 11:45 am **Lunch and Presentations**
Rhode Island Land Trust Council Updates
Director Terry Gray, RI Dept. of Environmental Management
RI Advocacy Updates - Senator DiPalma, Rep. Cotter, and Advocates
- 1:15 pm **Session B Workshops**
Your choice from 10 offered
- 2:25 pm **Break**
Network and Visit Conservation Commons Exhibitor Hall
- 2:45 pm **Session C Workshops**
Your choice from 11 offered
- 4:00 pm **Closing Program**
Raffles and Prizes
Peter Merritt Conservation Award and Blueways Stewardship Award
Story by Raffini, RI Black Storytellers, Southside Community Land Trust
Closing
- 5:30 pm **Join us for the after party at Shaidzon Beer Co!**

Thank You to these sponsors of the 2024 Land & Water Conservation Summit!

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Land & Water Conservation Summit

Twenty years and counting...

The Land & Water Conservation Summit has been held yearly since 2004. The Summit is possible because dozens of conservation leaders are willing to share their expertise, updates, 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

Grassroots conservation organizations play a central role in conserving Rhode Island's waters, open spaces, farms, and forestland for the benefit of all Rhode Islanders. We are fortunate to have over fifty land trusts, dozens of watershed organizations, and numerous conservation commissions that can rely on the expertise and passion of hundreds of conservation leaders.

Rhode Island's land trusts have held an annual conference since 1999. In 2004, the RI Land Trust Council collaborated with watershed organizations and conservation commissions to form the RI Land & Water Partnership (the Partnership) to host a joint conference. What resulted was the creation of the RI Land & Water Summit which has been hosted at the University of Rhode Island since 2005. Over the years, 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.



NESAWG

The Northeast Region's Food and Farm Network

We are pleased to welcome our facilitating partner, the Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG). NESAWG unites Black, Brown, Indigenous, Aboriginal Earthworkers and frontline communities in the Northeast region to cultivate a just, regenerative, thriving food system for all. Their purpose is to grow global collective power that uproots systems of oppression in order to co-create a culture of care and sacredness of all living things.

Land & Water Partnership

The Land & Water Partnership (the Partnership) has built the capacity and fostered connections between dedicated grassroots environmental organizations for two decades. Created in 2004, the Partnership was led by Meg Kerr and Rupert Friday until their retirement in 2021. Over the past three years, the work continued through the leadership of Kate Sayles and Priscilla De La Cruz. In 2023 the RI Land Trust Council and Audubon decided to officially dissolve the Partnership, and the Land & Water Summit became a program of the RI Land Trust Council. We are pleased to welcome the Audubon Society of Rhode Island as our Lead Sponsor for 2024.



The Rhode Island Land Trust Council will continue to maintain the landandwaterpartnership.org website to archive the materials from past summits, including workshop handouts, recordings of Keynote presentations, and resources.



City Greener Strategies

**Is pleased to sponsor the
2024 Land and Water Conservation Summit.**

For more information about how City Greener Strategies can help your organization grow and better serve your community, visit our website.

www.citygreenerstrategies.com

The University of Rhode Island Coastal Institute drives and supports interdisciplinary partnerships for coastal solutions.

Our initiatives:

- Climate Response Demonstration Sites
- Coastal Access: Science to Policy
- North Atlantic Coast Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit
- Rhode Island Environmental Monitoring Collaborative
- 41°N: Rhode Island's Ocean and Coastal Magazine
- Sources, Transport, Exposure & Effects of PFAS (STEEP)



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or reach out to a member:

Online Resource Library—

templates for baseline docs, management plans,
monitoring, signage, more

rilandtrusts.org/resources

RI Natural History Survey—

rare species, biodiversity inventory, invasive species

David Gregg (dgregg@rihns.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 2024 YCL, Contact Audubon Society of RI, sruhren@asri.org*

Keynote

We are honored to welcome Tarshire Battle, Founder and Executive Director of Roots 2Empower, as this year's keynote speaker.

Tarshire Battle

Rooted in Resilience: Centering Community in Land & Water Conservation

Through her keynote address, Tarshire will share a wealth of insights and experiences, highlighting the important role that economic empowerment and social justice play in the future of the land and water conservation in Rhode Island.



Roots 2Empower was founded in 2019, to support people of color as they break the cycle of mass incarceration through economic empowerment and connection to the earth. The keynote presentation will explore how Roots 2Empower connects individuals to green spaces and green jobs, provides tools for financial empowerment, and advances environmental justice in Rhode Island and beyond. It will focus on envisioning a Rhode Island where families can thrive without the systemic barriers of poverty, food insecurity, unemployment, and incarceration. In addition to founding Roots 2Empower, Tarshire is the Director of Special Projects for the Southside Community Land Trust.



Roots 2 Empower

Tarshire Battle is a native Bostonian, and has resided in Pawtucket since 2002. She is a self-taught artist, using this medium as a catalyst for change for the homeless, battered women, youths, and returning veterans who have experienced trauma.

Over the years, Tarshire has collaborated with nonprofit organizations using art as a vehicle for social change to address pressing issues like homelessness, mental health, and addiction. As a former Mental Health Discharge Planner at the Rhode Island Department of Corrections, Tarshire saw her clients return to prison due to systemic barriers preventing formerly incarcerated folks from gaining employment, dignified housing, and access to basic needs like healthy food and sanitation.

She currently works as the Director of Special Projects for the Southside Community Land Trust and is the founder and Executive Director of Roots 2Empower (formerly Restoration Urban Farm of New England), a social enterprise that provides business and agriculture training for formerly incarcerated individuals.

Tarshire holds a Masters in Public Administration from Northeastern University, a M.A. in Mental Health Counseling from Boston University. She is also an accomplished herbalist and Master Gardener.

Summit Keynote Speakers

Each year we recruit a Keynote speaker for the Summit who can provide 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 **Dave Vissoe** — *The Joy of Winter Sowing: Native Plant Propagation from Seed and the ReSeeding RI Project*
- 2024 **Tarshire Battle** — *Rooted in Resilience: Centering Community in Land & Water Conservation*

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Thank You!

The Rhode Island Land Trust Council is proud of all our supporting members!

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East Providence Land Conservation Trust
Exeter Rural Land Preservation Trust
Foster Land Trust
Friends of Canonchet Farm
Hopkinton Land Trust
Land Conservancy of North Kingstown
Little Compton Ag. Land Conservancy Trust
Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust

Narrow River Land Trust
Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy
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North Smithfield Land Trust
Prudence Conservancy
Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust
Sakonnet Preservation Association
Scituate Land Trust
Smithfield Land Trust
South Kingstown Land Trust
Tiverton Land Trust
Tiverton Open Space Commission
Warren Land Conservation Trust
Warwick Land Trust
Watch Hill Conservancy
West Bay Land Trust
West Greenwich Land Trust
Westerly Land Trust

Special thanks to our “Plus” members:



Richmond Rural Preservation Land Trust



Sakonnet Preservation Association



Scituate Land Trust



Learn more about the extra benefits “plus” members receive:



Our Commitment to Sustainability: Keeping the Summit Green in 2024



At the 2024 Land & Water Summit, we're not just talking the talk—we're walking the walk when it comes to sustainability. This year, we:

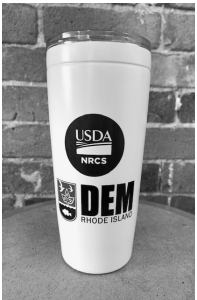
Provided stainless steel reusable mugs to reduce the volume of waste we produce.

Made efforts to serve bulk products rather than single use to cut down on plastic waste.

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.

Worked with URI Catering to ensure that we've done the best we possibly can to make the event as sustainable as possible, and are donating any leftover baked goods to Rhody Outpost, the URI food pantry. Any leftovers from the Summit will be available at the Shaidzon after party!

Partnered with volunteers from Food Recovery for Rhode Island and URI Catering to recover and compost the food waste generated at the event. Last year, we prevented 50+ pounds of food waste and other refuse from entering the landfill.



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**ALL ARE WELCOME!
JOIN ANYTIME!**

Help us build a more equitable, accessible, economically vibrant, and environmentally sustainable food system in Rhode Island.

www.rifoodcouncil.org

The 2024 RI Food System Factbook has arrived!

Our NEW annual publication provides the best available Federal, state, and county data about our local food system! Download it on our website, or email info@rifoodcouncil.org for a printed copy.



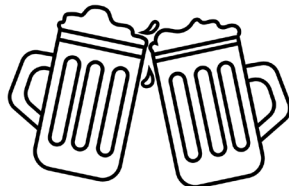
Check out the Conservation Commons!

BINGO!!! Stop by each of the display tables to have your bingo card signed off and enter the Conservation Commons drawing for a chance to win a fabulous prize!

American Farmland Trust
Audubon Society of Rhode Island
Blackstone Valley Tourism Council
Conservation Stewardship Collaborative
Dana Designs
ecoRI News
Food Recovery for Rhode Island
John Kostrzewa
Land & Sea Together/Young Farmers Network
Land Trust Alliance
Narrow River Preservation Association
Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG)
Queer Hikes
RI Families in Nature
RI Food Policy Council
RI Forest Health Works Project
RI Land Trust Council
RI Resource Recovery Corporation
Roots 2Empower
Save the Bay
The Greene School
The Nature Conservancy
The RI Conservation Districts
USDA - Natural Resources Conservation Service
Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council
Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers Stewardship Council

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United States Department of Agriculture



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Soil Survey maps and data



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Session A (10:35 – 11:45 AM)

A1. The Ancestral Land of the Narragansett Nation: Stewardship Through Collaboration

This session will engage participants in:

- Narragansett Brief History
- Indian Country Protocol
- Narragansett Land Stewardship
- Land Rematriation and Potential Collaboration

This interactive presentation will conclude with a Question and Answer Session.

Speaker:

Randy Noka, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

A2. Mapping and Planning to Protect Nature and Grow Solar

Renewable energy sources reduce our dependence on fossil fuels, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and help make the region more resilient to climate change.

Solar energy is an important component of the region's renewable energy portfolio. Small distributed solar arrays are commonly found on rooftops or lawns. Larger solar arrays are typically built on undeveloped land or, less frequently, on parking lots or commercial rooftops.

The conversion of thousands of acres of forests and farmlands to solar arrays has generated much debate over the competing public interests at stake.

This workshop will highlight advances in remote sensing, mapping the locations of solar fields across the region, the type of land use they replaced, and how local NGOs are using the information.

Mass Audubon will share their analysis in "Growing Solar, Protecting Nature," demonstrating how Massachusetts can meet its solar goals while protecting its most valuable natural and working lands.

Then, the Narragansett Bay Estuary Program will present their plans to create a decision-support tool to help land trusts, municipalities, watershed groups, and advocacy agencies develop plans, ordinances, and bylaws that prioritize land for solar and land for protection. NBEP is seeking information from users on the types of information they want in the tool.

Speakers:

E. Heidi Ricci, Director of Policy and Advocacy at Mass Audubon

Courtney Schmidt, Staff Scientist at Narragansett Bay Estuary Program

John Rogan, Professor of Geography at Clark University

A3. Roots and Roofs: Understanding the Community Land Trust Model

Please join us for a workshop that demystifies Community Land Trusts (CLTs) and how they work in Rhode Island through affordable housing and agriculture. Delve into the core principles that make CLTs an important resource for sustainable, affordable living and community-centered farming communities.

Conservation practitioners will learn more about the dynamic world CLT models, and will gain new perspectives on how these models are important to the conservation landscape in the state.

Speakers:

Melina Lodge, Executive Director of Housing Network of RI

Chandelle Wilson, Education Program Manager at Southside Community Land Trust

A4. Land Protection 101: The Nuts & Bolts of Putting a Project Together

This is a soup to nuts workshop on protecting land including both fee and conservation easement transactions. How do you decide what land to protect? How to approach owners? Obtain land gifts? Secure funding? Buy it outright or get a Conservation Easement? Prepare your land trust and the land owner for a process that may extend for years? Establish relationships that extend beyond the deal and into stewardship? We'll use case studies to dissect a typical land conservation project starting with how a land conservation project begins and how to talk with a landowner. We'll go through the steps and discuss what needs to be done until the project is completed and the property is protected.

Speakers:

Charles B. Allott, Esq., Land Conservation Consultant

Alex Chuman, Conservation Director at Aquidneck Land Trust

A5. The Rhode Island Forest Health Work Project — Funding to Conserve Forests

The new Forest protection program funded by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is now entering its second year. The “Rhode Island Forest Health Works Project” (FHWP) allows for both Entity Held and US Held Forested easements. The program’s eligibility requirements, application process, ranking criteria and funding timeline will be explained. Presenters Marina Capraro and Joanne Riccitelli both work on the program, with Marina assisting private landowners to apply directly to NRCS, and Joanne assisting land trusts who are working with forest landowners. They will also share a status update on the use of the program to date.

Speakers:

Joanne Riccitelli, Land Protection Specialist
Marina Capraro, RCPP & CIG Program Manager at USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

A6. Youth Conservation League: Ready for Action

The Youth Conservation League (YCL) has a proven record of benefitting conservation land owners including many land trusts in Rhode Island for nearly 15 summers. Designed to introduce participants to working with natural resources, the hard-working crews of high school and college-age individuals, has built bridges, improved trails, eradicated invasive species and more with enthusiasm and a passion for the outdoors. Learn more about what YCL can do and how they can come to your land. Ethan was a YCL crew member and then a leader for two years before coming to Audubon as a TerraCorps member.

Speakers:

Scott Ruhren, Senior Director of Conservation at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island
Ethan Paiva, TerraCorps Land Steward Coordinator at the Audubon Society of Rhode Island

A7. How a (Bottle) Bill Becomes a Law: Reducing Plastic Bottle Pollution in R.I.

When done right, a strong bottle bill increases recycling rates, reduces litter, fights plastic pollution in our waterways, and incentivizes the beverage industry to implement a more sustainable model with bottles and containers that are easier to recycle or even reuse. Join us for an insightful workshop led by Jed Thorp of Clean Water Action, as he delves into why now is the time to pass the bottle bill in the Ocean State.

Speaker:

Jed Thorp, State Director at Clean Water Action

A8. Your Plan, Your Funding: A Strategic Planning Model For Sustainable Community Impact

Is your team all pulling together and in the same direction? Are your donors inspired to get closer to you and your work? This workshop will help you assess whether your strategic plan is setting you up for success or holding you back. Participants will learn about a “flywheel” model of growth that is centered on community impact, and share successes with each other.

Speaker:

Kevin Essington, Founder of City Greener Strategies

A9. Walking Rhode Island: Spring Hikes

John Kostrzewa writes the “Walking Rhode Island” column for The Providence Journal. His talk and slide show will include his hiking background, recommendations for Spring hikes and his observations about the history, geological features, vegetation and wildlife he has found along the trails. He’ll also explain what makes Rhode Island’s trails unique and outline some of the challenges Rhode Islanders face to maintain the state’s public preserves.

Speaker:

John Kostrzewa, Walking Rhode Island columnist at *The Providence Journal*

A10. Protecting Farmland for the Next Generation of Farmers

In an era of ever-increasing land and housing costs, how do we both conserve our agricultural landscape and ensure farmland is available to RI’s small farm businesses? Hear a firsthand account of a RI farmland protection project that enabled a diversified farming operation to affordably secure land tenure for their successful business and future home. Learn about the state’s Farmland Access Program and similar efforts to facilitate the transfer of farmland to the next generation of farmers while perpetually protecting the land for agriculture and keeping it affordable for working families.

Speakers:

Michelle Sheehan, State Land Conservation Program Manager at RI DEM

Alby and Heather Brandon, Owner-Operators of Brandon Family Farms in Kingston, RI

Jennifer Fusco, Executive Director of Westerly Land Trust

Session B (1:15 – 2:25 PM)

B1. Transitioning from a White-led Organization to a BIPOC-led Organization

This is an interactive share session showcasing steps and processes that real organizations and groups have taken and are taking to transition from a white-led organization to a BIPOC-led organization.

Speaker:

Cristina Cabrera, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

Karen Spiller, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

B2. Climate-smart Approaches to Caring for Your Woods

What can you do to help the woods you care for adapt to changing climate conditions? What does it mean to increase forest resiliency and is it really possible? This session will introduce climate-adaptive forestry approaches for Rhode Island's forest landscape. Following an overview of ongoing and projected future changes in local weather and climate, we will discuss forest climate adaptation strategies, share helpful resources, and look at examples of specific activities that landowners and stewards may want to consider.

The session will also provide an overview of a research and demonstration project in southern RI where trials of different treatments are being implemented at a site experiencing forest health issues exacerbated by climate stress.

Speaker:

Christopher Riely, Forestry Specialist and Research Associate at the University of Rhode Island

B3. Hydrilla: the World's Worst Weed Coming to a Lake Near You, and How to Prevent It

Hydrilla verticillata, known to many as the "world's worst aquatic weed" is now in Rhode Island. Between August and October 2023, it was confirmed in 3 locations. It threatens lake and pond habitats, fishing opportunities, and recreational pursuits due to its exponential growth rates, and ease of multiplying with only a small inch of stem (no root or seed needed). Learn what it looks like, and the best way to prevent its spread, control its growth, and protect our waters.

Speaker:

Katie De Goosh DiMarzio, Environmental Scientist at RI DEM Office of Water Resources

B4. Perpetual Conservation Protection Using the Public Trust Doctrine on Municipal Lands

Unless municipally-owned conservation properties have existing 3rd party conservation easements, there is a real risk that a town may decide to sell or develop existing conservation land even though it had been acquired as perpetual conservation land. As a result of the RI Land Trust Councils efforts, a new 2021 state law allows towns to perpetually protect conservation properties employing the "Public Trust Doctrine." Since the passage of this bill, over 1000 acres have been placed in the public trust and more on the way. This seminar will discuss the process with case studies from Warwick and Smithfield.

Speakers:

Vinny Gebhart, Warwick City Councilman

Thomas Rogers, Chair of the RI Land Trust Council and Former Chair of the Narragansett Land Conservancy Trust

Stephen Marsella, Esq.

Barbara Rich, Chair of Smithfield Land Trust and Treasurer of the RI Land Trust Council Smithfield Land Trust and RI Land Trust Council

B5. Flowing Legacy: Celebrating 5 Years of Wood-Pawcatuck Wild & Scenic River Designation

The Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed received its prestigious National Wild and Scenic River designation in March 2019. Join us as we delve into the decade-long journey that led to this designation, and explore both the challenges faced and the triumphs achieved over the last five years.

Speaker:

Casey Merkle, Coordinator at Wood-Pawcatuck Wild and Scenic Rivers

B6. Using Video to Help Further Local Conservation and Conservation Education

Greg Gerritt and Elise Torello have been making videos of wildlife in Rhode Island for several years, each with a different technique. The workshop will cover how Greg and Elise go about collecting and processing videos so that it can be shown to the public. There will also be conversation about other approaches, and how we use the video to educate people around wildlife in Rhode Island.

Speakers:

Greg Gerritt, Watershed Steward and Forest Gnome, Friends of the Moshassuck

Elise Torello, Friends of the Saugatucket and South Kingstown Land Trust

B7. Offshore Wind: Discussing the Realities, Dispelling the Myths, and Creating a Path to Climate Justice

Embark on a journey of dispelling myths surrounding offshore wind energy. Unravel the truth about offshore wind's potential, addressing common misconceptions, and exploring how offshore wind aligns with environmental equity, fostering a more inclusive and sustainable energy future for all.

Speakers:

Nicole DiPaolo, Director of Energy Justice at Roots 2Empower

Steven Tadros, Outreach Coordinator and Interim Tribal Relations Manager at Avangrid

B8. Taking the Leap: Hiring Your First Staff Person

Is it time for your land trust to hire its first staff person? What are your expectations, and how will you know if you've found the right person? Cindy Elder, Executive Director of the Barrington Land Conservation Trust, will lead an interactive discussion on managing this important transition.

We'll explore how to know if your organization is ready to hire a staff member, the support they might need, and strategies to keep volunteer involvement and board engagement high. We'll discuss how you and your new staff member can work together to expand your relevance, engage new populations, and navigate a successful first year of employment.

Speaker:

Cindy Elder, Executive Director of Barrington Land Conservation Trust

B9. From Forests to Fashion

This session will showcase the Forest to Fashion workshops held outdoors in September 2021 and 2023 both at the Edward D. Vock Conservation Area, Pascoag, RI. Our workshops were designed to bring people closer to nature, to build community, and to engage in acts of sustainable creation. The natural dye workshop happens because of land that is preserved in its natural state, enabling these connective encounters, conversations, and moments of awe.

Speakers:

Paul Roselli, President of the Burrillville Land Trust
Aleksandra (Sasha) Azbel, Founder & Creative Director of Sashoonya

Hope Leeson, Botanist at the Rhode Island Natural History Survey

Dinalyn Spears, artist, herbalist, master gardener, and Narragansett Indian Tribe Director of the Community Planning & Natural Resources Department

B10. Diversity, Land Trusts, and Farmers and Gardeners from Marginalized Backgrounds in New England, U.S.

Land trusts in the U.S. and beyond play an important role in preventing the loss of farmland to development. Farmers seeking affordable land stand to benefit from these conservation efforts. However, the extent to which these benefits are distributed equally among farmers is unclear. This study asks: To what extent are land trusts meeting the needs of farmers and gardeners from marginalized backgrounds? Data consist of interviews with staff at 15 land trusts in New England that conserve farmland and nine focus groups with 38 farmers and gardeners from diverse populations.

Our analysis indicates a wide range of land access needs among farmers and gardeners, and highlights discrepancies among land trust staff and farmers in how diversity and land access are discussed.

Speakers:

Corey Lang, Professor of Environmental and Natural Resource Economics at URI

Julie Keller, PhD., Associate Professor of Sociology and the Director of Social Science Institute for Research, Education, and Policy (SSIREP) at URI

Session C (2:45 – 3:55 PM)

C1. How to Engage with Tribal Nations and People of Color in Racial Equity Work

This panel will address how to engage Tribal Nations and People of Color in JEDI work (Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) covering questions on Deep Democracy, Meaningful Participation, Decision-Making, Gate Keeping, Power Structures, Indian Country Protocol and more.

Speakers:

Cristina Cabrera, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

Bella Noka, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

Marco McWilliams, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

Raffini, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Working Group (NESAWG) Track

C2. Forest Carbon Science, Management, and Markets

Forest carbon is a hot topic and is probably the most important natural climate solution available to us. Come learn about the key science topics along with how to manage for forest carbon on land you own or manage or for conservation easement landowners you are working with. Finally, you will be given a complete update on the status of forest carbon markets for small forest landowners.

Speaker:

Charles Levesque, President of Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, LLC and Coordinator at Securing Northeast Forest Carbon Program

C3. RI Rivers Council Stewardship Roundtable

Sharing in an interactive format, this workshop will discuss important water-related topics such as invasive species, water quality, using technology, working with volunteers, and more. Have a new project or a watershed 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.

Speaker:

Alicia Schaffner, Chair of the Rhode Island Rivers Council and Executive Director of the Salt Ponds Coalition

C4. Ask an Attorney: “Where Queries Meet Esquires”

This panel brings together seasoned conservation “legal eagles” to answer your questions about land trust-related issues. We invite you to pose your burning questions directly to the experts, exploring legal landscapes where knowledge meets action in the realm of land preservation. From encroachments to easements, our experts have you covered.

Speakers:

David Lough, Partner at Hinckley Allen

Martha Day, Attorney at Law

C5. Land Protection and Stewardship Using the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Programs

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 organizations, as well as private landowners, to place conservation easements on properties to protect agricultural lands, wetlands and forestlands. NRCS staff will review the programs and assist workshop participants in understanding their benefits.

Speakers:

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

Brunilda Velez, RI Assistant State Conservationist at USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

Marina Capraro, RCPP and CIG Program Manager at USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service

C6. Creating ADA Accessible Trails in Rhode Island

Learn more about the challenging and rewarding process of creating accessible trails and other facilities. Hear from several land trusts about their projects, both completed and in progress, and about what it takes to create an ADA accessible trail — securing funding, developing the design, inviting community feedback, and more. This panel discussion will include time for a question and answer session.

Speakers:

Alex Chuman, Conservation Director at Aquidneck Land Trust

Jeanne Cooper, Carter, Tillinghast & Shorebird Program Manager at The Nature Conservancy

Rob Bower, Chair of Scituate Land Trust

Joseph McLaughlin, Director of Properties at Norman Bird Sanctuary

C7. The Rhode Island Zoning Atlas: Navigating the Housing, Development and Conservation Landscape across Rhode Island

Discover innovative ways of interpreting and utilizing zoning data for land use decision making through the Rhode Island Zoning Atlas. Developed over two years by the HousingWorks RI Team, this interactive tool can help you better understand the impact of zoning codes on development, housing, and land conservation. We will be joined by Brenda Clement and Bryce Kelly from HousingWorksRI for this interactive presentation.

Speakers:

Brenda Clement, Executive Director of HousingWorks RI

Bryce Kelley, Senior Research Analyst at HousingWorks RI

C8. Volunteers and Board Members: A Discussion About Building Your Community Coalition

Recruiting volunteers and board members can feel like treading water, but it should feel like recharging your batteries. Engagement models can help unify your approach to building a coalition of community members who can inspire, fund, and lead your land trust through good times and bad. This facilitated discussion will provide participants with inspiration and some practical next steps to build your volunteer momentum.

Speaker:

Kevin Essington, Founder of City Greener Strategies

C9. Land Conservation Stewardship Roundtable

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.

Speaker:

Sean Grandy, Stewardship Manager at Aquidneck Land Trust

Carol Lynn Trocki, Principal Conservation Biologist at Mosaic Land Management, LLC

Marc Doherty, Land Stewardship Manager at Westerly Land Trust

C10. What Do You Mean I Need a Permit for My Footbridge?

RIDEM Rules for Freshwater Wetlands and Stormwater permitting can be confusing. While many projects and activities done by land trusts do not need permits, this cannot always be avoided. Most of the time permitting is a straightforward process, but at times it can become complicated and expensive. Land Trust and DEM representatives will tell their stories and answer your questions.

Speakers:

Chuck Horbert, Deputy Administrator at RI DEM Office of Water Resources

Cindy Gianfrancesco, Vice-Chair of the Scituate Land Trust and Chair of the Scituate Conservation Commission

Julia Landstreet, Executive Director of South Kingstown Land Trust

Jennifer Fusco, Executive Director of Westerly Land Trust

C11. New Developments in Farmland Conservation Across New England

What new approaches and policy developments are other New England states using to meet the challenges of farmland conservation? What new partnerships and funding approaches are being developed and tested? This workshop will give an overview of recent farmland conservation and development trends across the region while uplifting innovative programming and policy solutions from other New England states. The workshop will also include an update on recent farmland protection advocacy efforts in Rhode Island.

Speakers:

Chelsea Gazillo, New England Policy Manager at American Farmland Trust

Jamie Potters, New England Program Manager at American Farmland Trust

Diane Lynch, President of the Rhode Island Food Policy Council

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Image: Swamp mallow
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Land & Water Conservation Awards

Peter Merritt Award for Land Conservation

Awarded by RI Land Trust Council, the Peter Merritt Award for Land Conservation is given to recognize a volunteer—a dedicated “in the trenches” individual—who is making an outstanding contribution to land conservation in their Rhode Island community.



The Award honors the late Peter Merritt (1943–2000), a founding and dedicated Board member and second president of the Aquidneck Land Trust. Peter worked ceaselessly to establish a vision for land conservation on Aquidneck Island and to marshal the Island’s citizens, municipalities and financial resources toward implementing that vision. He was an eloquent, articulate spokesperson for the need—and the immediacy of the need—for sustainable land conservation. Peter advocated for open space preservation tirelessly. Wherever he was, his enthusiasm and persuasive arguments were a catalyst for action that changed our landscape forever. Peter is described as one part visionary, one part organizer, and one part trench negotiator. Yet, Peter was always the first to give credit and praise to others for the land trust’s accomplishments that he so often led.

We celebrate Peter’s spirit and enthusiasm with this Award in his honor.

Past recipients: Paul Roselli (Burrillville Land Trust, 2022), Clarkson Collins (South Kingstown Land Trust 2020), Joe Pailthorpe (Cumberland Land Trust 2019), Marilyn Grant (Hopkinton Land Trust 2018), Sheila Mackintosh (Sakonnet Preservation Association 2017), Ann Marie Aubrey (Smithfield Land Trust, 2016), Helen Tjader (Barrington Land Conservation Trust and Neutaconkanut Hill Conservancy, 2015), Garry Plunkett (Tiverton Land Trust, 2014), Sophie Lewis (South Kingstown Land Trust, 2013), Heather Steers (Sakonnet Preservation Association, 2012), Bob Marshall (Prudence Conservancy, 2011), Julie Sharpe (Narrow River Land Trust and other land trusts, 2010), Linda Steere (Narrow River Land Trust, 2009), Karen Saucier (Cumberland Land Trust, 2008), Larry Anderson (Sakonnet Preservation Association, 2007), Charlotte Sornborger (Barrington Land Conservation Trust, 2006), Harvey Perry (The Westerly Land Trust, 2005), Bob Kimarx (Barrington Land Conservation Trust, 2004), Kate Smith (West Bay Land Trust, 2003), and Bob Hawksley (Glocester Land Trust, 2002)



Land & Water Conservation Awards

Blueways Stewardship Award

Awarded by the Rhode Island Rivers Council



The Blueways Stewardship Award was created in 2010 by the Rhode Island Blueways Alliance to recognize an individual who exemplifies dedication to the stewardship and conservation of Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and coastal waters. The mission of the Blueways Alliance was to develop a water trail network linking Rhode Island's rivers, lakes and ponds to Narragansett Bay and to use the trail to promote safety, conservation, recreation and economic development. While the Blueways Alliance as an organization dissolved in January 2022, the spirit of the organization remains alive and well through the The Blueways Stewardship Award, which will now be awarded by the RI Rivers Council. The RI Land Trust Council has taken up the charge of maintaining and updating the Blueways website on ExploreRI.org.

The Blueways Stewardship Award is given to an individual who has the respect of their peers and who has notable accomplishments in watershed management in any of the following areas:

- water quality monitoring and protection,
- development of trails on water,
- promoting land use that protects waterways,
- working to make connections between watershed conservation and their community.

Past recipients: Walt Galloway (Wood-Pawcatuck Watershed Association, 2022), Richard Grant (Narrow River Preservation Association, 2020), Keith Gonsalves (Ten Mile River, 2019), Ted Callender (Salt Ponds Coalition, 2018), Art Ganz (Salt Ponds Coalition, 2017), Lisa Aurecchia (Woonasquatucket River Watershed Council, 2016), Denise Poyer (Wood Pawcatuck Watershed Association, 2015), Judy Colaluca (Save The Lakes, 2014), Caroline Wells (Town of Warren, 2013), Paul Earnshaw (Buckeye Brook Coalition, 2012), Eugenia Marks (Audubon Society of RI, 2011), Frank Matta (Blackstone River Watershed Council/Friends of the Blackstone, 2010)



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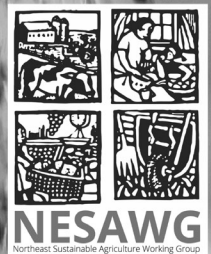
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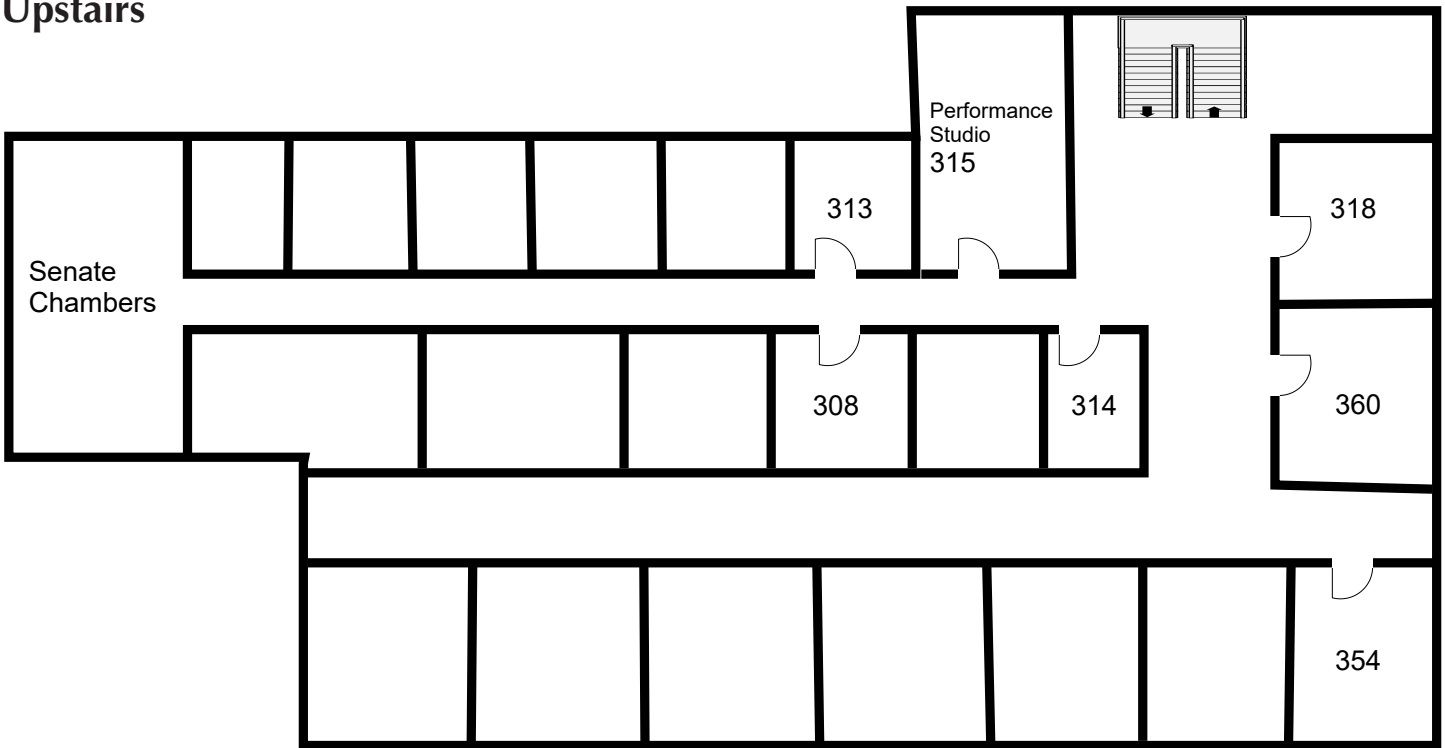
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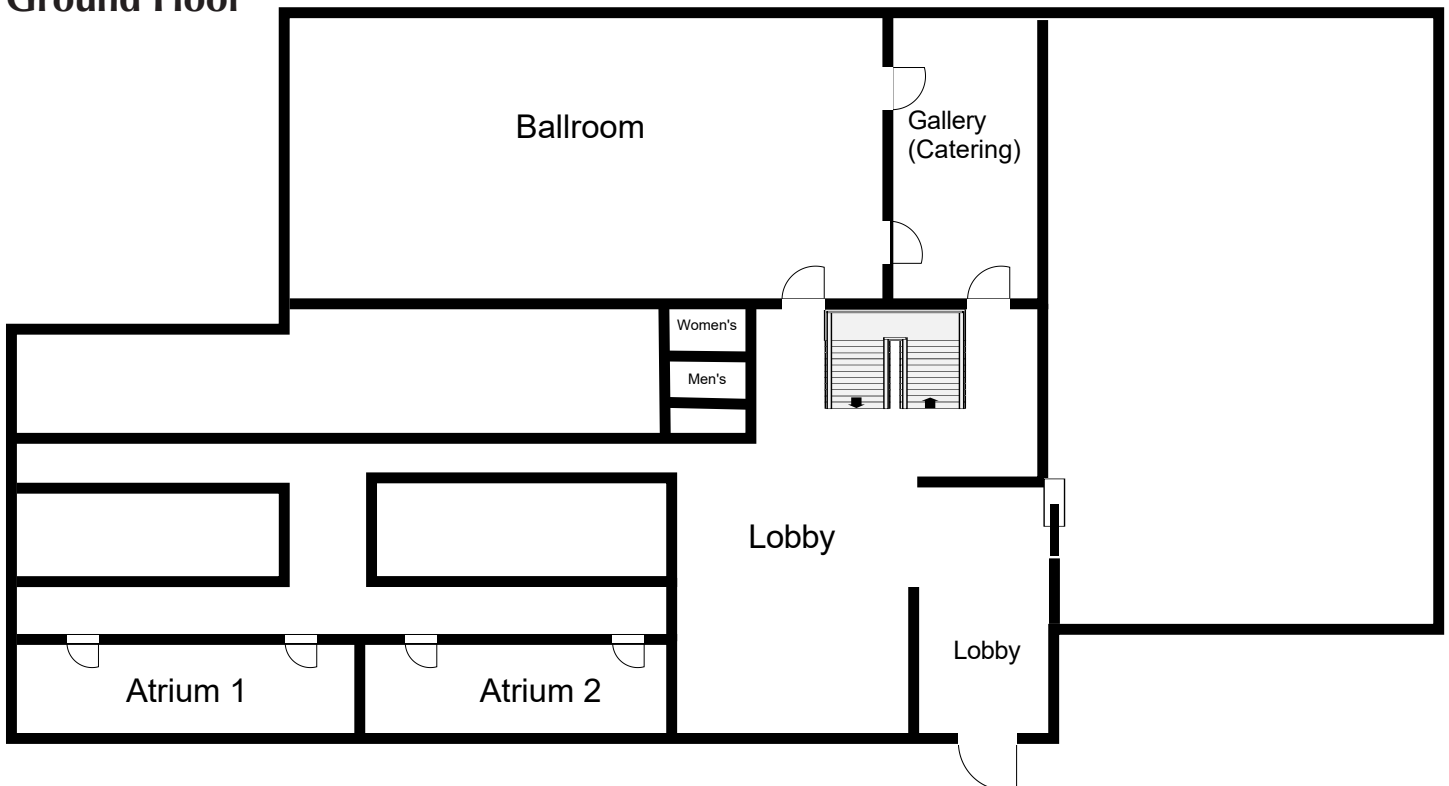
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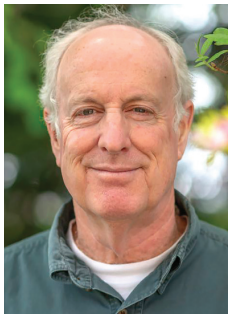
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- Shannon Kingsley, Seed Collector/Botanist, Rhode Island Wild Plant Society
- Donna Merrill, Founder and President of Pollinator Pathway
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