



Western Connecticut  
Leadership

A Program of



## Environment Day October 1, 2018

### Goal and Objectives

- ❖ Gain a deeper understanding of the environmental challenges facing our region, and how they relate to other concerns such as economic development.
- ❖ Learn about the public and private efforts to address these challenges
- ❖ Develop a personal agenda to support and enhance these efforts

### Important Session Information

#### Session Leaders

Heidi Vollmer, *WCL '17*  
Marty Cobern, *WCL '17*

#### Advisor

Josh Carey, Director of Grants Management, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

#### Session Attire

Dressing for comfort is appropriate. Walking shoes are recommended.

#### Venues

**Audubon Center at Bent of the River**  
185 East Flat Hill Road  
Southbury, CT 06488  
(Use street address for best directions)

#### Parking

**Please follow signs for parking. The driveway is a single lane; please drive cautiously.**

## Agenda

- 8:30 Arrival and Light Breakfast
- 8:45 **Welcome**  
Heidi Vollmer, *WCL '17*
- 9:00 **Bent of the River**  
Leslie Kane, Managing Director, *Audubon Connecticut* and Center Director,  
*Audubon Center Bent of the River*
- 9:30 **CT DEEP: Addressing Our State's Climate and Environmental Challenges**  
Rob Klee, Commissioner, *Connecticut Department of Energy and  
Environmental Protection*
- 10:30 Break
- 10:45 **The Role of Land Trusts in Our Communities**  
Amy Blaymore Paterson, Executive Director, *Connecticut Land Conservation  
Council*  
Catherine Rawson, Executive Director, *Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust*  
David Geiger, President, Board of Directors, *Litchfield Land Trust*
- 11:45 **The Magic of Recycling**  
Cyril May, Recycling Coordinator, *City of Waterbury*
- 12:30 Lunch
- 1:15 **River Health and Protection**  
Margaret Miner, Executive Director, *Rivers Alliance*  
Lynn Werner, Executive Director, *Housatonic Valley Association*  
Carol Haskins, Outreach Director, *Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition*
- 2:30 **Experiential Learning in the Environment**  
Bird Walk  
Invasive Plants  
What's in the water
- 3:15 **Discussion**
- 3:30 **Wrap up and Preview of next session**  
Preview of Education session day, Patrice Gans, *WCL '17*

## Speaker Biographies

### **Heidi Vollmer, WCL '17**

Heidi Vollmer recently moved from Woodbury to Goshen with her husband John. She co-owns NaturaLawn of America and Tick Ranger with him. She has a Bachelor's degree from UCONN (Go Huskies) and a Master's in Education from the University of Bridgeport. She has also been a teacher and owned her own hypnosis practice. Recently, she was trained as a Tai Chi instructor and became a therapy dog team with her dog Brady. When not at work or volunteering you can find her in her garden.

Contact info: [heidivol@hotmail.com](mailto:heidivol@hotmail.com)

### **Martin Cobern, WCL '17**

Martin Cobern, Ph.D. retired in 2014 after a long career in the oilfield services industry. His last position was Vice President, Research and Development of APS Technologies, Inc. in Wallingford.

Marty has been active in community activities, serving for over a decade on both the Cheshire Planning and Zoning Commission and Central Naugatuck Valley Regional Planning Commission, and chairing both. He served twice as President of Temple Beth David of Cheshire. He was Chairman of the Yale Graduate Student Alumni Association and a Governor of the Association of Yale Alumni, and is currently an Associate Fellow of Trumbull College.

Since his retirement, he has expanded his volunteer activities to include the Cheshire Community Food Pantry, New Haven Reads and the Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen, and was recently appointed to the Board of the New Haven Jewish Foundation. He has also had more time to indulge in his favorite activities—travel and photography.

Contact info: [mecobern@cox.net](mailto:mecobern@cox.net)

### **Leslie Kane, Center Director, *Audubon Center at Bent of the River***

Leslie Kane, has served as Director at the Audubon Center at Bent of the River for over 10 years. She is now Managing Director for Audubon CT. Additionally, Leslie currently serves as president of the Southbury Land Trust.

Leslie's past work experience includes serving as Environmental Planner for the Town of Guilford, Director of Connecticut River Watershed Programs for the University of Connecticut Cooperative Extension System and managing policy and local land trust programs for The Nature Conservancy. Leslie has a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and bachelor's degrees in Anthropology and Geography from Mount Holyoke College.

Contact Info: [lkane@audubon.org](mailto:lkane@audubon.org), <http://bentoftheriver.audubon.org>

**Glen Somogie**, Land and Facility Manager, *Audubon Center at Bent of the River*

Glen studied at Sacred Heart University where he obtained his degree in Environmental Science and Biology. Prior to his habitat management responsibilities here at the Bent of the River, he was involved in environmental construction and was employed by the Connecticut Department of Energy & Environmental Protection through the Inland Fisheries Division. Glen also has worked as a full-time seasonal fishing guide/instructor in Connecticut and New York for many years. When Glen is not at work you may still find him enjoying his time fishing on the river or ocean.

**Ken Elkins**, Education Manager, *Audubon Center at Bent of the River*

Ken's interest in birds started when he was 10 years old, while watching the birds at his grandmother's feeders in Vermont, and he has been obsessed ever since. After earning a degree in Environmental Biology, he started his career in conservation education at Westmoor Park in West Hartford, CT and quickly moved onto Connecticut Audubon Society. There, he taught at all 5 of their Audubon Centers and became their Director of Education. He led many EcoTravel trips and organized their World Series of Birding team for 8 years. In 2008, Ken moved on to National Audubon, where he's the Education Program Manager at the Audubon Center at Bent of the River in Southbury. As a 2011 TogetherGreen Fellow, Ken co-developed the nationally recognized Bird Tales program and training materials with dementia care specialist Randy Griffin. He has trained over 100 dementia care staff and volunteers to implement the Bird Tales program 10 states, Canada, and Great Britain.

**Rob Klee**, Commissioner, *Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection*

Rob Klee is the Commissioner of Connecticut's Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), the state agency charged with conserving, improving and protecting the state's natural resources and environment, providing first-rate outdoor recreation opportunities, and bringing cheaper, cleaner, and more reliable energy to Connecticut's residents and businesses. DEEP is focused on integrating energy and environmental policies and helping Connecticut to build a sustainable and prosperous 21st-century economy.

Commissioner Klee joined DEEP in April 2011 as Chief of Staff. Prior to joining state service, Commissioner Klee was an attorney with Wiggin and Dana LLP, in New Haven, where he specialized in appellate work and energy and environmental law. From 2004 to 2005, Commissioner Klee worked as a Law Clerk for the U.S. District Court in Connecticut and from 2005 to 2006 as a Law Clerk for the U.S. Second Circuit Court of Appeals. He served as a Research Affiliate in the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies from 2006 to 2008. Commissioner Klee holds a Ph.D. from Yale's School of Forestry & Environmental Studies in industrial ecology, a law degree from Yale, and an undergraduate degree from Princeton in geology and environmental science.

**Amy Blaymore Paterson**, Executive Director, *Connecticut Land Conservation Council*

Amy joined the Connecticut Land Conservation Council (CLCC) in 2010 as its first Executive Director. Working with the CLCC Steering Committee, Amy provides the Connecticut conservation community with technical assistance, training and advocacy to further advance permanent land

conservation across the state. Before joining CLCC, Amy served as a Project Manager for The Trust for Public Land, overseeing several complex conservation transactions, and worked for over twenty years as an attorney, concentrating her practice in land preservation and environmental protection. Prior to moving to Connecticut, Amy was an attorney with the U.S. Department of Justice. She received a BA from Franklin & Marshall College and her law degree from the University of Denver. In recognition of her years of work in conservation, Amy was awarded the 2014 Women Inspiring Conservation in Connecticut Award presented by Connecticut Lieutenant Governor Nancy Wyman and sponsored by The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, The Farm Service Agency and the Connecticut Association of Conservation Districts. In 2015, Amy was awarded the Rockfall Foundation's President's Award. Amy lives with her family in Vernon, CT. An avid trail runner, when Amy isn't helping to conserve land, she's outside enjoying it!

Contact Info: [abpaterson@ctconservation.org](mailto:abpaterson@ctconservation.org), [www.ctconservation.org](http://www.ctconservation.org)

**Catherine Rawson**, Executive Director, *Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Inc.*

Catherine Rawson is the Executive Director of Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Vice-Chair of the Connecticut Land Conservation Council Steering Committee, Commissioner-designate of the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, council member of the Land Trust Alliance Conservation Defense Advisory Council, and a Greenprint Steering Committee member. A graduate of Bates College and Vermont Law School, where she studied environmental law, Catherine also has a Master's Degree in Environmental Management from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies. Prior to joining Weantinoge, she served as an Assistant Attorney General for the State of Connecticut.

Contact Info: [Catherine@weantinoge.org](mailto:Catherine@weantinoge.org), [www.weantinoge.org](http://www.weantinoge.org)

**Margaret Miner**, Executive Director, *Rivers Alliance*

Margaret Miner has served as Executive Director at Rivers Alliance of Connecticut since 2000. This multi award-winning organization serves as the united voice for watershed groups on state policy and education. Rivers Alliance also strives to assist individuals and organizations with questions, difficulties, and frustrations relating to water matters. Prior to joining Rivers Alliance, Miner served as Executive Director at Roxbury Land Trust and as a local reporter for Voices in Litchfield County.

Contact Info: [rivers@riversalliance.org](mailto:rivers@riversalliance.org), [www.riversalliance.org](http://www.riversalliance.org)

**Lynn Werner**, Executive Director, *Housatonic Valley Association*

Lynn Werner, the Executive Director of the Housatonic Valley Association (HVA), spends as much time as possible swimming. Her first paid position in the environmental field had her submerged with snorkel in northwest Connecticut's Sandy Brook, hanging on to rocks and counting the salmon smolts that eventually emerged. She loved it and might still be doing it if it paid enough to live on. Instead, since 1995, Lynn has given voice to the rivers, streams and wildlife she loves in her leadership role at HVA. She is a founding member, past president and continuing board member of the Rivers Alliance of Connecticut. She also serves on the Board of EarthShare New England and Earth Share National, as well as the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters. Lynn

is the recipient of the 2013 Environmental Champion of the Year award from Rivers Alliance. She chairs the Inland Wetland Protection Commission in her hometown of Kent, where she lives with her husband Kevin Honan. She has two grown children - but the cat still lives at home.

Contact Info: [lynnhva@hotmail.com](mailto:lynnhva@hotmail.com), [www.hvatoday.org](http://www.hvatoday.org)

**Carol Haskins**, Program Director, *Pomperaug Watershed Coalition*

Carol Haskins has been splashing around rivers, ponds, and lakes since her early childhood in Vermont and can often be spotted swimming, paddling, and fishing local waters. Now, she professionally gets to share her passion for aquatic environments by teaching other people about the way and wonder of watersheds in her role as Outreach Director at the Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition. Carol joined PRWC in 2008 after receiving her Master of Science in Environmental Studies from Antioch University New England. She was recently honored at the 2013 recipient of the Northwest Conservation District's Conservation Educator Award, which was given in recognition of her dedication to teaching groups of all ages about the importance of our greatest natural resource, WATER. In 2014, Carol received a River Conservation Leadership Award from Housatonic Valley Association. Thanks to Carol's leadership in the collaborative River Smart CT program, PRWC was the recipient of Connecticut Community Foundation's first Trustee Fund Award (2015). The award recognizes exceptional collaboration that benefits the community; River Smart CT consists of seven partnering organizations within the Foundation's service area.

Contact Info: [chaskins@pomperaug.org](mailto:chaskins@pomperaug.org)

**Josh Carey**, Director of Grants Management, *Connecticut Community Foundation*

Josh coordinates the distribution of the Foundation's charitable resources and works alongside a team of dedicated staff on the development and implementation of grantmaking programs that effectively meet a wide variety of community needs. Josh oversees the Foundation's grants distribution efforts in the areas of arts and culture, economic vitality, and environment. He also manages the Foundation's substantial college scholarship program and provides grantmaking services to partner funder Ion Bank Foundation.

Prior to joining the Foundation in 2004, Josh worked for a national family foundation, where he developed a deep appreciation for philanthropy and the critical role of nonprofit organizations in addressing social issues. Josh resides in Beacon Falls with his wife, Erin, and son, Hunter (as well as their rabbit, Max).

Contact Info: [jcarey@conncf.org](mailto:jcarey@conncf.org)

## **Opportunities for further exploration and engagement**

### **Audubon Center at Bent of the River**

The Bent of the River has a variety of volunteer opportunities including trail maintenance, citizen scientists, teacher naturalists, assistance with office activities, assistance with community events and photographers. The center relies on volunteer support and would be glad to discuss your interests and availability!

<http://bentoftheriver.audubon.org>

### **Connecticut Council on Environmental Quality**

The Council serves as a resource for volunteers who seek CEQ expertise on environmental issues and use its data in their work. Citizen input is welcome at the Council's monthly meetings, and there are often scheduled presentations by citizen experts on specific environmental issues.

[www.ct.gov.ceq](http://www.ct.gov.ceq)

### **Connecticut Farmland Trust**

Connecticut Farmland Trust seeks individuals who are committed to preserving the state's working farms to serve on its Board of Directors, Advisory Council, and committees, and volunteer at its annual fundraising and outreach events.

<http://ctfarmland.org/>

### **Connecticut Land Conservation Council**

CLCC welcomes volunteers to assist with its annual CT Land Conservation Conference. Opportunities include: participation in the conference planning committee, sponsorship committee, and reception committee; helping with set-up and/or serving as a day-of volunteer; helping with photography and videography and more.

[www.ctconservation.org](http://www.ctconservation.org)

### **Connecticut League of Conservation Voters**

Visit [www.ctlc.org](http://www.ctlc.org) and CTLCV Facebook page to find out more about the current key environmental issues being addressed, the scorecard and electoral work, and links to get alerts and other information. Internship and volunteer opportunities are listed on the website.

### **Housatonic Valley Association and Partners**

HVA is looking for people who care about protecting our special natural places, rivers and streams. Volunteers can help assess land, monitor river and stream water quality, document shoreline conditions, assess the condition of stream crossing culverts, help out in the classroom and on field trips, and assist with paddling trips. HVA needs volunteers with writing, photography, and community outreach skills, as well as those with fundraising, event organizing, and graphic design expertise.

<https://hvatoday.org/>, [www.facebook.com/hvatoday](https://www.facebook.com/hvatoday), [www.naugatuckriver.net](http://www.naugatuckriver.net),

### **Litchfield Land Trust**

Established in 1968 as one of Connecticut's earliest land trusts, LLT is dedicated to helping protect the New England character, scenic vistas and natural resources of Litchfield for present and future residents. Today, LLT owns approximately 1100 acres--including the 340-acre Prospect Mountain Preserve--and holds conservation easements on another 2100 acres.

<http://www.litchfieldlandtrust.org/>  
[info@litchfieldlandtrust.org](mailto:info@litchfieldlandtrust.org)

### **Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition**

PRWC works to ensure the availability of high quality water in the Pomperaug Watershed communities through the use of science and education. PWRC needs your talents to help provide youth and community education programs, citizen science opportunities, accurate watershed information for local decision-making, and community-based restoration projects that protect and improve our rivers and streams. To learn more about volunteer opportunities, visit: [www.pomperaug.org/get\\_involved.htm](http://www.pomperaug.org/get_involved.htm), call [203-263-0076](tel:203-263-0076), or email [info@pomperaug.org](mailto:info@pomperaug.org).

### **River Smart CT**

River Smart is led cooperatively by Housatonic Valley Association, Pomperaug River Watershed Coalition, Kent Land Trust, Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust, Rivers Alliance of Connecticut, and the Farmington River Watershed Association. This community education effort provides resources for individuals, groups and municipalities to introduce, improve and maintain practices to protect our rivers and watersheds.

[www.riversmartct.org](http://www.riversmartct.org),  
[www.facebook.com/RiverSmartCT](https://www.facebook.com/RiverSmartCT)

### **Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust**

Weantinoge Heritage Land Trust is the largest land trust in Connecticut and the 18th largest land trust in the United States by the number of lands conserved. Weantinoge permanently protects more than 10,000 acres in 17 communities. Properties include wildlife sanctuaries, 28 working farms and 12 nature preserves open to the public with more than 15 miles hiking trails. Learn more about how to get involved at

[http://weantinoge.org/get\\_involved/](http://weantinoge.org/get_involved/)

### **Yale Center for Business and the Environment**

Yale CBE produces a variety of digital publications and webinars. Follow the link and select your area of interest and receive relevant publications and announcements.

<https://signup.e2ma.net/signup/1730234/32870/?v=a>

**Cyril 'CJ' May**, Recycling Coordinator, *City of Waterbury*

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