Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership



Resilient by Nature: Navigating Change & Delivering Conservation in the Appalachian Trail Landscape

2026 PARTNERSHIP MEETING AGENDA & MEETING DETAILS

Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

November 16-19, 2026

THANK YOU TO OUR 2026 MEETING SPONSORS!

We extend our sincere thanks to our sponsors for their generous support and continued commitment to our shared work.

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** All event updates and details will be posted to the ATLP Partnership Meeting website:
Annual Partner Meeting - Appalachian Trail Conservancy

APPALACHIAN TRAIL LANDSCAPE PARTNERSHIP

Connecting People, Nature & Conservation Across the A.T. Landscape

The Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP) works to accelerate an inclusive vision of a conserved and connected Appalachian Trail Landscape, from Georgia to Maine, as a critically important resource for human and natural communities alike.

As the largest conservation partnership in the Eastern United States, the ATLP brings together a diverse network of land trusts, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, academic institutions, and private partners working at local, regional, and national scales. By combining our unique perspectives, expertise, and shared commitment, we work to ensure that the more than 26-million-acre A.T. Landscape continues to sustain the vibrant natural and human communities that define this remarkable region.

Why the A.T. Landscape Matters

Part of the globally significant Appalachian ecoregion, the A.T. Landscape is far more than the trail itself. It supports extraordinary biodiversity, protects more than 230 watersheds, and includes some of the largest forest carbon stocks in the contiguous United States.

Yet only 32% of the landscape is conserved. The need for collaboration and lasting conservation has never been greater.

Together, ATLP partners protect an average of 30,000 acres each year, working to strengthen ecological connectivity, build landscape resilience, and safeguard this vital resource for generations to come.

Conservation is a Shared Effort

The Appalachian Trail connects more than 2,000 miles of mountains, forests, communities, and cultures. Protecting the broader landscape requires collaboration across boundaries, disciplines, and perspectives.

Through shared knowledge, coordinated action, and lasting partnerships, we can help ensure that the A.T. Landscape remains a place where nature thrives and people and communities flourish. **Thank you for being part of this work!**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE **JOIN THE NETWORK** **VIEW OUR STRATEGIC PLAN**

Or come visit the ATLP's table during Tuesday's Share Fair to learn more!

MEETING OVERVIEW

The Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP) will hold its 11th Annual Partnership Meeting November 16–19, 2026, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

This year's theme, *Resilient by Nature: Navigating Change & Delivering Conservation in the Appalachian Trail Landscape*, will explore how partners across the region are responding to emerging challenges and advancing lasting conservation outcomes for communities, public lands, and the Appalachian Trail (A.T.).

Each year, the ATLP Partnership Meeting brings together national, regional, and local conservation organizations; local, state, tribal, and federal agencies; and partners working in economic development, public health, and community development. Together, participants share knowledge, strengthen relationships, and explore opportunities to connect people, places, and nature across the A.T. Landscape.

The 2026 meeting begins with a welcome reception on Monday evening, November 16, followed by two days of presentations, discussions, and networking on November 17–18. An optional field trip and service project will take place on Thursday, November 19.



MEETING LOCATION & HOTEL INFORMATION

We are excited to welcome attendees to the Crowne Plaza Harrisburg-Hershey! All meeting sessions and events (aside from Monday evening's Welcome Reception & Thursday's A.T. Service Project) will take place on site at the Crowne Plaza.

Crowne Plaza Harrisburg: 23 S 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA 17101

The hotel is located in downtown Harrisburg, within walking distance of local restaurants, shops, and other downtown destinations.



Check-in: 4:00 p.m.

Check-out: 11:00 a.m.

Parking: Overnight valet parking is available for $25 per day, subject to availability. The parking entrance is located near the corner of Second and Chestnut Streets. After passing the traffic light, use the middle entrance to access valet parking.

The garage has a vehicle clearance limit of 6 feet, 2 inches. Please account for this restriction if traveling in a taller vehicle.

TRAVEL & TRANSPORTATION

Harrisburg International Airport (MDT) is the most convenient airport for reaching the meeting venue. Taxis and rideshare services, including Uber and Lyft, are available for transportation to the hotel, with an approximate drive time of 15–20 minutes.

Other nearby airport options include Baltimore/Washington International Thurgood Marshall Airport (BWI) and Philadelphia International Airport (PHL), both approximately a 90-minute drive from the hotel.

Carpooling & Rideshares

Traveling from out of town? If you're flying into Harrisburg, BWI, or Philadelphia and renting a car, consider offering a ride to fellow attendees! If you're looking for a ride, use the link below to connect with other participants and coordinate transportation to the meeting.

CARPOOL & RIDESHARE SIGNUP

SPECIAL NETWORKING EVENTS



Monday, November 16: Welcoming Happy Hour Reception (5-7pm)

Join us at Café Fresco Center City to kick off the 11th Annual ATLP Partnership Meeting! We'll gather from 5-7 p.m.for drinks and hors d'oeuvres, with time to catch up with colleagues, reconnect with fellow partners, and meet others working across the Appalachian Trail Landscape.

Location: Café Fresco Center City, 215 N. 2nd Street, Harrisburg, PA. The event will be held in Cafe Fresco's upstairs event space.

Tuesday, November 17: Share Fair Reception, Networking Social & Dinner

All participants are invited to host a table for their organization (pre-registration required)! Bring materials to share as folks network during a Networking Social before Dinner. Dinner will be provided for all participants on the evening of November 17th.

Thursday, November 19: Optional Field Trip & Service Project (9am-2pm)

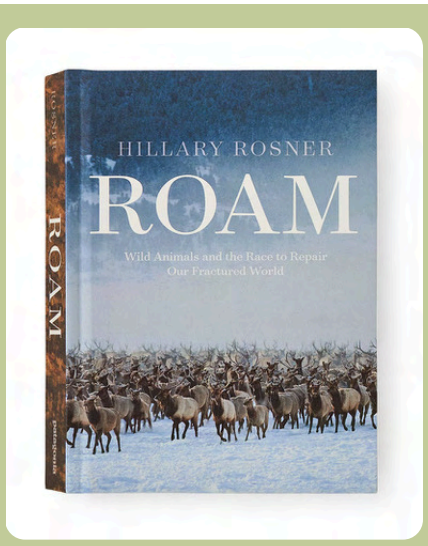
The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's Science and Stewardship team will host us for an optional volunteer workday just outside Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. Participants will work alongside fellow partners to remove invasive barberry, helping protect native habitats and support a healthier, more resilient landscape. Participants will also have the opportunity to hike to Center Point Knob, the historic halfway point of the Appalachian Trail.



KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

Tuesday, November 17th





Hillary Rosner, Author of *Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World*

We are pleased to welcome **Hillary Rosner**, award-winning science journalist, editor, and author, as our keynote speaker!

Rosner's work explores biodiversity, conservation, and the critical connections between people and the natural world. Her writing has appeared in *National Geographic, The New York Times, The Washington Post, The Atlantic, Wired, High Country News, Scientific American, Audubon,* and many other leading publications.

She is the author of ***Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World*** (Patagonia Books, 2025), a compelling exploration of how restoring wildlife and ecosystems can help repair our increasingly fractured relationship with the natural world. She is also the author of the forthcoming *Lichens: Worlds in Miniature* (Timber Press, 2027), part of the *Studies in Nature* series.

Rosner currently serves as publications editor for Ground Shift, a project focused on envisioning the future of America's public lands. She lives in Boulder, Colorado.

Join us for her inspiring keynote and stop by her table during the Share Fair to purchase a signed copy of her book, *Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair Our Fractured World.*

Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership

Connecting People, Nature, and Place

Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership Partnership Meeting

November 16 – 19, 2026

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Harrisburg, PA

Navigating Change: Advancing a Resilient Appalachian Trail Landscape

Conservation•Community•Climate•Well-being

AGENDA



Monday, November 16

5:00 - 7:00 PM: Welcome Reception

All participants are invited to join a welcome reception upon arrival. Refreshments will be provided. Location and additional details to be shared with registrants. RSVP when registering for the event.

Tuesday, November 17: Navigating Change Together

9:00 AM Welcome & Grounding

Meeting hosts and ATLP leadership will open the convening by setting shared intentions for two days of learning, connection, and action.

Featured Speaker:
Simon Rucker, Executive Director, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust & ATLP Steering Committee Member
Katie Allen, Director of Landscape Conservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Secretary Cindy Dunn, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources

9:30 AM Keynote Presentation: Hillary Rosner on the Race to Repair our Fractured World

Award-winning science journalist Hilary Rosner will share her compelling journey to document one of the most overlooked challenges facing our planet: the fragmentation of the natural world. Drawing from her acclaimed new book, *Roam: Wild Animals and the Race to Repair of Fractured World,* she'll explore connectivity and how to rethink humanity's relationship with nature.

10:15 AM BREAK

10:30 AM The Kittatinny Ridge as a Model for What's Possible

Stretching across Pennsylvania, the Kittatinny Ridge is a powerful example of conservation at-scale. Through storytelling and partner perspectives, we'll celebrate the people, partnerships, and persistence behind its protection and role in accelerating conservation across the Appalachian Trail Landscape.

Featured Speakers:
Katie Hess, Conservation Landscapes Director, PA Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Nicole Wooten, Associate Director of Land Protection, The Nature Conservancy
Tanya Dierolf, Coordinator, Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape
Sean Grace, President, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary
Michael Shenk, Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape Assistant Director, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

11:45 AM Navigating Change: Policy & Funding at All Scales

The policy and funding landscape is shifting rapidly. This session unpacks what's changing—from climate investments to infrastructure funding—and what it means for conservation practitioners.

Featured Speakers:

Erin Sito, US Public Policy Director, Wildlands Network
Rex Linville, Eastern Division Director of Field Programs, Land Trust Alliance
Nicie Panetta, Vice President of Advancement, Northeast Wilderness Trust

12:45 PM Lunch provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

1:45 PM Adapting Conservation in the Face of Development Pressures

Real decisions, real tradeoffs, real impact in the face of infrastructure, energy, and housing development across the A.T. Landscape. Experts will share real-world stories from communities responding to development pressure, climate impacts, and evolving needs.

Featured Speakers:
Greg Costello, U.S. Connectivity Program Director, Center for Large Landscape Conservation
Chris Miller, Executive Director, Piedmont Environmental Council
Pamela Roy, Visual Resource Manager, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Katie Michels, Director of Partnerships, Conservation Finance Network

2:45 PM Concurrent: Special Topic Learning Labs

Small group discussion led by experts to provide models, guidance, and lessons learned on special topics and trends from across the A.T. Landscape.

Special topics include: Conservation Decision Support Tools, Community-Led Conservation, Landscape Connectivity Planning (Wildlife Corridors & Crossings)

4:15 PM Day 1 Close

5:00 PM Share Fair Social Hour

Meet and learn more about ATLP Partners!

ATLP Partners will host tables to share more about their work to connect & protect the Appalachian Trail Landscape. Cocktails and appetizers will be served.

*Prior registration required to host a share fair table.

6:00 PM Dinner: Dinner provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

Wednesday, November 18: Getting it Done: Where Conservation is Delivering



9:00 AM Welcome Back & Blazing Trail with the ATLP

Framing remarks from the leadership of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; reflecting on progress across the Appalachian Trail Landscape and the importance of partnership and announcements of new efforts from the ATLP.

Featured Speakers:
Casey Reese, Integrated Resource Manager, National Park Service Appalachian National Scenic Trail
Cinda Waldbuesser, President & CEO, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Jeff Hunter, Southern Appalachian Director, National Parks Conservation Association & Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership Steering Committee Member
Katie Allen, Director of Landscape Conservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

10:00 AM All the Small Things: Charismatic Microfauna & Hidden Biodiversity of the AT Landscape

This session highlights the importance of often-overlooked species in maintaining ecosystem health and resilience; connecting biodiversity to climate adaptation strategies. Stories from across the AT Landscape where conservation, stewardship and restoration are making a positive impact.

Featured Speakers:
Jay Leutze, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy & Appalachia Rising
Pete McKinley, Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society
Marian Orlousky, Director of Science & Stewardship, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Jeff Reardon, Habitat Restoration Project Manager, Atlantic Salmon Federation

11:15 AM BREAK

11:30 AM Healthy Lands, Healthy People

Explore the connections between conserved landscapes and physical, mental, and community well-being, with examples of cross-sector partnerships improving health outcomes.

Featured Speakers:
Katie Allen, Director of Landscape Conservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Katie Tiger, Director for Land & Wellness, Center for Native Health
Brett Treadway, Director of Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources, Center for Native Health
Noel Purdy, Executive Director, WellSpan / Healthy Franklin County
Amy Scott, Program Director, Community Investment, Northern Forest Center

12:30 PM Lunch: Lunch provided on-site for all meeting attendees.

1:30 PM ATLP's New Resources & Tools: Salon Rotation

Participants will have the opportunity to visit three themed salons to learn more and ask questions about the ATLP's new resources & tools to support conservation efforts across the A.T. Landscape.

Salon topics will include: ATLP's Strategic Plan, Communications & Membership Benefits; Wild East Action Fund: Ask Me Anything!; A.T. Landscape Conservation Portfolio

3:00 PM BREAK

3:15 PM The Future of Appalachian Trail Landscape Conservation

Paneldiscussion oflong-standing partnershipsuccess,emerging newmodels, non-traditional approaches, and conversation on what the future of Appalachian Trail Landscape conservation holds.

Featured Speakers:
Dr. Claire Jantz, Deputy Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources
Chuck Loring, Director of Natural Resources, Penobscot Nation
Dr. Toni Lyn Morelli, USGS Research Ecologist, Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center
Olivia Porter, National ParksConservationAssociation

4:15 PM Closing: Where We Go From Here, Together

Featured Speakers:
Dan Ryan, Vice President of Conservation & Government Relations, Appalachian Trail Conservancy
Pete McKinley, Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society

4:45 PM Partnership Meeting Close

Thursday, November 19th: Field Trip & Trail Work

9:00 AM – 2:00PM

Field Trip to an A.T. Community & Trail Work on the Appalachian Trail

All meeting participants are invited to spend the day exploring the Appalachian Trail Landscape which will include a visit to a designated Appalachian Trail Community and invasive species removal on a section of the Appalachian Trail! Lunch, snacks, and transportation options are provided. There is no cost to participate; pre-registration is required. More details are provided at event registration.

For more information & agenda updates, please visit:
https://appalachiantrail.org/protect/conservation/at-landscape-partnership/annual-meeting/

FEATURED SESSION SPEAKERS



Katie Allen

Director of Landscape Conservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Email: kallen@appalachiantrail.org

Katie Allen serves as the Director of Landscape Conservation at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), supporting the organization's vision of protecting the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape forever for all to enjoy. She oversees the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, a collaborative of more than 100 partners working to connect the wild, scenic, and cultural wonders of the Appalachian Trail landscape; the Wild East Action Fund, a grant program supporting land protection and partner capacity building; and the Appalachian Trail Community Program™, which recognizes communities along the Trail for their commitment to stewardship, outdoor recreation and economic development, and the conservation of natural and recreational resources.

She holds a Master of City and Regional Planning degree in Environmental and Land Use Planning from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Boston University.



Greg Costello

U.S. Connectivity Program Director, Center for Large Landscape Conservation

Email: gregcostello@largelandscapes.org

As the U.S. Connectivity Program Director, Greg brings close to forty years' experience in conservation policy, law and science. After 16 years as a private practice environmental lawyer in Seattle, he joined the Western Environmental Law Center as its executive director and grew its capacity to provide free legal services to the conservation community, including opening its Montana office. In 2013, he merged his science roots with his law and policy expertise when he joined Wildlands Network as its executive director. Over the next 11 years he helped revitalize and expand the organization to better realize its mission of restoring, reconnecting and rewilding North America, opening offices in Mexico and expanding its operations in the East, the Pacific Northwest and California.

Greg lives in Poulsbo Washington with his wife of 37 years, Cynthia, and their English Springer Spaniel, Rascal. In his spare time Greg enjoys tinkering on and riding bicycles, scuba diving, travel—particularly for riding or diving—and all things related to food.



Cindy Dunn

Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and National Resources

Email: cindydunn@pa.gov

Secretary Cindy Dunn has served in multiple leadership roles at the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) under three governors over the past three decades. Throughout her career, she has helped position Pennsylvania as a leader in land conservation, outdoor recreation, sustainable practices, and public land management.

During her tenure, DCNR has expanded opportunities for youth and young adults through the Pennsylvania Outdoor Corps, advanced water quality and Chesapeake Bay restoration efforts, strengthened climate change mitigation and adaptation practices, managed record visitation at state parks and forests, and secured historic levels of funding to meet the Commonwealth's growing conservation and recreation needs.



Tanya Dierolf

Coordinator, Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape

Email: tanya@legacyworksgroup.com

Tanya Dierolf coordinates the Kittatinny Ridge Sentinel Landscape, where she brings together federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit partners to support military readiness, natural resource protection, working agricultural and forest lands, and community development opportunities. Her work is grounded in curiosity and collaboration, with a focus on building partnerships that advance shared social, environmental, and economic goals. She enjoys discovering synergies among partners and aiding in the transformation of ideas into action.

Tanya brings nearly 20 years of experience across government and private organizations, with a record of leading projects and advancing strategic planning and implementation. She was

instrumental in the permanent protection of the 8,000-acre DeHart Watershed Property in central Pennsylvania. She holds a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Juniata College and an M.S. in Environmental Science from Antioch University New England and is proudly Pennsylvanian.



Sean Grace

President, Hawk Mountain Sanctuary

Email: grace@hawkmountain.org

Sean Grace is passionate about wildlife and conservation and draws upon a balance of business management and nonprofit leadership experience, connecting communities with conservation through education. He aligns programmatic delivery with fiscal responsibility to advance the Hawk Mountains conservation mission and has consistently exceeded budgetary goals, more than doubled the endowments, and raised $10 million for a capital campaign since arriving in 2018.

Sean ran mountaineering stores as a district manager before moving into conservation in 2000 and brings marketing, branding, exceptional member service, team building and recognition, and partnership development to strengthen the organization. We added fundraisers, launched member-only events, the President's Circle, and developed a new comprehensive education platform that increased earned income and giving. Sean developed programming for and ran Wildlife Expeditions in Jackson Hole, and sanctuaries for New Jersey Audubon, National Audubon, and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary Association. In his free time, he explores natural history and hikes, bikes, and skis with his sons.



Katie Hess

Director of the Conservation Landscapes Program, Pennsylvania Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Email: katihess@pa.gov

As the new director of Pennsylvania's Conservation Landscape Program at the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Katie Hess brings more than 20 years of experience helping communities and organizations develop solutions that are environmentally, economically, and culturally sustainable. Hess is a practitioner of Landscape Conservation, an approach that combines conservation with land-use planning, outdoor recreation, historic preservation, agriculture, and economic development. Her work focuses on bringing diverse partners together

to strengthen communities, protect quality of life and sense of place, and conserve the resources that make Pennsylvania's communities unique. Hess previously served for 11 years as Director of Pennsylvania Landscape Conservation and Director of the South Mountain Partnership at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. There, she built partnerships among communities, businesses, government agencies, and conservation organizations across the 230-mile Pennsylvania section of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. In 2023, Hess led development of Pennsylvania's first State of the Region initiative, bringing together the four counties of the South Mountain Conservation Landscape—Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, and York—with partners from economic development, tourism, public health, historic preservation, outdoor recreation, agriculture, faith-based organizations, and the private sector. The initiative established a shared vision for a healthier region and better quality of life. Hess led implementation of its five highest-priority projects. A native of Franklin and Adams counties, Hess holds a master's degree in landscape architecture and regional planning from Penn State and a bachelor's degree in environmental science and policy from Hood College.



Jeff Hunter

Southern Appalachian Director, National Parks Conservation Association

Email: jhunter@npca.org

Jeff Hunter is the Southern Appalachian Director with the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) in Asheville, NC, where he focuses on Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Blue Ridge Parkway, and the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. His work includes wildlife connectivity projects along Interstates 40 and 26 in North Carolina and Tennessee, avian research in Pisgah National Forest near the Blue Ridge Parkway, and leadership of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP).

After 20 years in the telecommunications industry, a thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail inspired Jeff to pursue a career in conservation. In 2003, he left Verizon in New York to lead the Southern Appalachian Initiative, a joint project of the American Hiking Society and the National Park Service's Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance program.

From 2008 to 2013, Jeff led the Tennessee Wild wilderness campaign, which sought permanent protection for nearly 20,000 acres in the Cherokee National Forest, including 4.5 miles of the Appalachian Trail. The campaign was completed with the passage of the Tennessee Wilderness Act in December 2018. Before joining NPCA in 2015, Jeff led the Bodie Hills Conservation Partnership in eastern California, focusing on sage grouse habitat restoration on Bureau of Land Management lands.

Jeff holds a BA in environmental studies from State University of New York Empire State College. He and his wife, Caara, live in Burnsville, NC, at the base of the Black Mountains.



Dr. Claire Jantz

Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services, Pennsylvania DCNR

Email: cjantz@pa.gov

Dr. Claire Jantz joined the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Recreation as Deputy Secretary of Conservation and Technical Services in December 2023. She oversees the bureaus of Conservation and Recreation and Geological Survey and DCNR's Conservation Landscape Program. Prior to joining DCNR, Claire was a Geography professor at Shippensburg University and directed the Center for Land Use and Sustainability.

Claire works in several statewide roles, including serving as co-chair on the Chesapeake Bay Program's Healthy Watersheds goal team and as a steering committee member for the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership and the Chesapeake Conservation Partnership. She represents DCNR at the National Association of State Outdoor Recreation Liaison Officers and Pennsylvania's Rural Development Council.

A native of east Tennessee, Claire earned an interdisciplinary undergraduate degree in botany and anthropology from the University of Tennessee and a master's and PhD in Geography from the University of Maryland.



Jay Leutze

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy & Appalachia Rising

Email: jayerskine01@gmail.com

Jay Leutze was raised in Chapel Hill, NC, and lives in the Southern Appalachian Mountains on the North Carolina-Tennessee border. Trained as an attorney, he has become a leading voice for state and federal conservation funding for investment in public lands. He is a Trustee and Acquisition Specialist for Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy, one of the nation's most established land trusts. He is the author of Stand Up that Mountain: The Battle to Save One Small Community in the Wilderness Along the Appalachian Trail (Simon & Schuster, 2012). He is a national spokesman for the Land and Water Conservation Fund Coalition and has testified before Congress on the need for increased funding for public land conservation. He is frequently

asked to be a guest lecturer on conservation. In 2012, he was awarded North Carolina's highest civilian honor, The Order of the Longleaf Pine, for his contribution to the conservation of land and water in his home state. He was the winner of the 2013 North Carolina Governor's Conservation Communicator of the Year Award and was named Outstanding Conservation Advocate by the Roosevelt-Ashe Society.



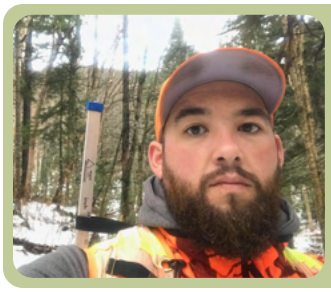
Rex Linville

Eastern Division Director of Field Programs, Land Trust Alliance

Email: rlinville@lta.org

Rex Linville is the Eastern division director of field programs at the Land Trust Alliance. Rex is a land conservation professional with over 20 years of experience in the land trust community. For the 17 years prior to joining the Alliance in 2022, Rex worked at the Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC), most recently as Land Conservation Officer. In this role, Rex initiated and closed land conservation transactions and was directly involved in protecting approximately 70,000 acres, ranging from small and complex trail corridor projects to large conservation deals negotiated over many years. He also solicited gifts from major donors, foundations, and corporations and cultivated funder relationships. He conducted lobbying efforts and served as an expert advisor on tax, transactional and financial matters pertaining to land transactions.

In addition, Rex represented PEC on the Virginia United Land Trusts Board (VaULT), where he served on the VaULT Executive Committee as treasurer. His career started in the mid-1990s as a Program Officer at The Mountain Institute in West Virginia. His experience also includes four years as a Land Protection Specialist at Eastern Shore Land Conservancy. Rex received a Bachelor of Science, Finance, from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and a Master of Science, Forest Sciences, from Colorado State University.



Chuck Loring

Director of Natural Resources, Penobscot Nation

Email: charlie.loring.jr@penobscotnation.org

Chuck Loring is a citizen of the Penobscot Nation. In his work duties, he provides oversight to the Nation's natural resources department. His background is in Forestry, and he is a UMaine alum who graduated in 2012. He has worked for the Nation's natural resources department in

various capacities since then. Though his path has been through forestry, Chuck feels a deep connection to not only the forest, but the animals within it. When he isn't in the office you can find him on any one of the various Penobscot territories connecting with the lands.



Jeff Martz

President, Duncannon Appalachian Trail Community

Email: jmartz889@gmail.com

Born and raised in Duncannon, Pennsylvania, Jeff Martz spent a lot of time on the A.T. around the midstate as a child. After returning home in 2022, Jeff got involved with the Duncannon Appalachian Trail Community (with the expressed intent of taking chainsaws for a walk in the woods) and ended up running the DATC as president of the non-profit, as well as representing the Mountain Club of Maryland (MCM) as the Cove Mountain Shelter maintainer. In the last few years, Jeff is proud to have been a part of growing DATC's membership, expanding Duncannon's annual A.T. Festival, renewing the DATC's influence and relationship with the local community, and creating a strong connection to the ATC and local trail maintaining clMarubs. Outside of the volunteer DATC/Trail work, Jeff is a Quality & Food Safety specialist working for Mars Inc, with big future plans of running the family farm with his wife and 2 boys.



Peter McKinley, Ph.D.

Senior Conservation Biologist, The Wilderness Society

Email: pmckinley@tws.org

Peter McKinley, Ph.D. is a Senior Conservation Biologist based out of The Wilderness Society's Hallowell, Maine office. He is engaged in landscape level conservation planning and collaborative conservation projects across the eastern forest with a focus in Maine and North Carolina and projects in the desert southwest and Alaska as well. His ongoing research into the conservation needs of birds in forest ecosystems informs and inspires land trust partnerships and LWCF funded acquisitions he has helped found to enlarge and defend public lands. He enjoys the intersection of applied science and collaborative conservation especially within the High Peaks Initiative of western Maine and the 14-state Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, both founded on creating and defending large scale networks of ecologically meaningful and protected lands. He holds a B.A. in Biology from Colby College, Maine, an M.S. in Applied Ecology from

Indiana University, and a Ph.D. in Biology from University of New Brunswick, Canada.



Katie Michels

Director of Partnerships, The Conservation Finance Network

Email: kmichels@conservation-finance.org

Katie Michels is the Director of Partnerships at the Conservation Finance Network, where she develops programs and trainings to advance land and resource conservation by expanding the use of innovative funding and financing strategies. Previously, she worked in the intersections between land conservation, land stewardship, affordable housing, and rural economic development at organizations including the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, the High Meadows Fund, and various land trusts in the northeast and Montana. Katie has a Masters of Environmental Science and an MBA from Yale University, and a B.A. in Geography and Environmental Studies from Middlebury College. She lives in Vermont.



Chris Miller

President, Piedmont Environmental Council

Email: cmiller@pecva.org

Christopher G. Miller has served as President of The Piedmont Environmental Council (PEC) since 1996, overseeing its strategic planning and work in land conservation, habitat restoration, rural economics, energy, land use, smart growth, and transportation policy. He is a founding member of the Coalition for Smarter Growth, founding Co-Chair and Steering Committee member of the Choose Clean Water Coalition, and serves on several conservation-focused boards, including the Virginia League of Conservation Voters, Virginia Conservation Network, Chesapeake Conservation Partnership, and Journey Through Hallowed Ground Partnership. He is also a member of the Land Trust Alliance Leadership Council.

Miller first joined PEC as coordinator of the successful campaign opposing Disney's America development proposal. Previously, he served as Assistant Director for Federal Affairs at the Surface Transportation Policy Project and as an associate at the law firm

Beveridge & Diamond, P.C. His earlier experience includes work with the Sierra Club Legal Defense Fund, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, Environmental Law Institute, and American Council on U.S./Soviet Relations.

Under Miller's leadership, PEC has received numerous awards recognizing its work in land conservation, land use planning, and historic preservation, including the Kodak American Greenways Award, the National Trust for Historic Preservation's John H. Chafee Trustees' Award, and the Governor's Environmental Excellence Award. In 2004, Miller received the Virginia Conservation Network's Blue Ridge Award for conservation leadership in the Piedmont.

He earned his J.D. from the University of Michigan Law School and a B.A. with honors in Environmental Studies from Williams College. Miller lives with his wife, Catherine Anthony, and their two daughters, Caroline and Claire. In his spare time, he enjoys watching and coaching basketball.



Shyla Miller

Landscape Conservation Program Coordinator, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

Email: smiller@appalachiantrail.org

Growing up in Morganton, a small town in the foothills of western North Carolina, Shyla developed a deep appreciation for the outdoors and Appalachian communities. Surrounded by the Blue Ridge Mountains, pristine lakes, and dense forests, she grew passionate about conservation and outdoor recreation, especially hiking, kayaking, and white-water rafting.

Shyla pursued this passion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, earning both her bachelor's and master's degrees in environmental policy. Her studies focused on the intersection of environmental protection and human welfare, strengthening her commitment to conserving natural landscapes for people and wildlife.

Shyla joined ATC in 2024 as a Community Conservation Innovator Fellow, developing a strategic conservation roadmap to help A.T. Communities identify, plan, and implement local conservation projects. She now serves as Landscape Conservation Program Coordinator, managing and strengthening the A.T. Community Program and supporting coordination of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership (ATLP).

Outside of work, Shyla enjoys exploring North Carolina and beyond with her fiancé and their dog, Junie.



Dr. Toni Lyn Morelli

Research Ecologist, Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center

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Dr. Toni Lyn Morelli earned a B.S. in Zoology at Michigan State University and a PhD in Ecology & Evolution at Stony Brook University. She has spent years trekking around the Appalachians, as well as the mountains of California and Africa, exploring how wildlife are responding to climate change. For 2 decades, including now in her current role with the US Geological Survey Northeast Climate Adaptation Science Center based on the University of Massachusetts Amherst, she has used geospatial analysis, ecological modeling, translational ecology, and decision science to facilitate natural resource management and habitat and species conservation in the face of climate and land use change. She is also cofounder and international coordinator for the Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change (RISCC) Network and the Refugia Research Coalition.



Max Olsen

Land Trust Program Director, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Max Olsen grew up exploring the woods and waterways of north central Pennsylvania, developing in him a deep appreciation for nature and the influence people have in shaping it.

Throughout his career, Max has connected people to place, strengthening conservation outcomes through collaboration, education, recreation, volunteerism, and natural resource stewardship. As Land Trust Program Director, Max continues this work through a systems-based approach that cultivates trust, builds resilient partnerships, and supports thriving communities to help safeguard the Appalachian Trail experience and its associated lands for future generations.

Max holds a Master of Science in Recreation, Parks, and Tourism Management from The Pennsylvania State University, where his research focused on the Human Dimensions of Natural Resources and the Environment. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Environmental Studies and Sociology at St. Lawrence University.



Marian Orlousky

Director of Science and Stewardship, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Marian Orlousky is the Director of Science & Stewardship for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC). She leads a team of staff focused on stewarding and protecting natural resources and biodiversity across the Appalachian Trail Landscape. Working with a team from Georgia to Maine, Marian is focused on identifying areas of the A.T. corridor that serve as critical habitat for rare species and crucial movement corridors for landscape connectivity, and leading efforts to maintain and restore the ecological function and resiliency of these places. Her work includes elements of invasive species management, forest restoration, grassland management, visual resource protection, and visitor use management. Marian received her B.S. in Biology from Juniata College and her Masters in Ecology from SUNY-Environmental Science and Forestry. She was born and raised in Central Pennsylvanian and has been with the ATC for fourteen years.



Nicie Panetta

V.P of Advancement, Northeast Wilderness Trust

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Wandering alone amid the birches in New Hampshire woods and sleeping beneath the stars in a California forest with her big sisters are some of the childhood experiences that seeded Nicie's love for, and sense of home in, wild nature. In her role as Northeast Wilderness Trust's V.P. of Advancement, Nicie brings together her experience in finance, communications and non-profit leadership to lead our fundraising and communications teams and to help build the Wilderness Trust for the future.



Olivia Porter

Southern Appalachian Landscape Program Director, National Parks Conservation Association

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Olivia Porter joined the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) in May 2023. As the Southern Appalachian Landscape Project Director, she builds a broad coalition to protect and uplift the region's unparalleled biodiversity and unique stories, focusing on the landscape anchored by Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, and the Blue Ridge Parkway.

After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Olivia served as a U.S. Peace Corps volunteer in community health advocacy along the Ugandan border with Kenya. This experience inspired her passion for community-based work, leading her to earn a Master's in Urban and Regional Planning with a focus on environmental planning from the University of New Orleans. Her graduate work with communities experiencing rapid land loss due to rising sea levels inspired her to pursue a Juris Doctorate to better understand the legal frameworks shaping decisions that affect communities facing climate change. While attending Loyola University New Orleans College of Law, she interned with the Solicitor's Office of the Division of Indian Affairs at the U.S. Department of the Interior under Secretary Sally Jewell.

Olivia's experience in coalition-building and community engagement informs her work across Southern Appalachia. With family roots in western North Carolina, she considers it an honor to protect the parks, forests, and waters she explored as a child. Olivia and her family live in Candler, NC, where they enjoy camping, hiking, tending an ever-growing native plant garden, and raising chickens under the shadow of Mt. Pisgah.



Noel Purdy

Executive Director, Healthy Franklin County

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A 1995 graduate of Chambersburg Area Senior High School, Noel Purdy earned a bachelor of arts degree in communication studies at the University of Missouri. She has worked in the

community development space for over 20 years. Before returning to Chambersburg in 2008, Purdy spent five years in Alaska, managing economic development and outreach programs for a regional community development corporation and was a planning director for a rural fishing community in Bristol Bay.

She returned to Chambersburg in 2008 to work for the Greater Chambersburg Chamber of Commerce. During her tenure at the Chamber, Purdy led several of its affiliate non-profit organizations, working in leadership and workforce development and downtown revitalization. In 2015, she was promoted to head up the Chamber as its first woman president, providing strategic leadership to the area's largest business organization. Purdy resigned from the Chamber in 2017 and founded a non-profit that same year, the Franklin County Coalition for Progress, which focuses on social justice and equality issues. She is currently the Executive Director of Healthy Franklin County, a health improvement coalition that works to improve the health and well-being of Franklin County residents.



Jeff Reardon

Project Manager, Atlantic Salmon Federation

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Jeff Reardon works as a Habitat Restoration Project Manager for the Atlantic Salmon Federation in Maine. He has had a long career in trout and salmon conservation, starting with a local land trust on the Sheepscot River in 1996, then working for Trout Unlimited on brook trout, Atlantic salmon, and Arctic charr conservation from 1999-2023. He has worked on land conservation, habitat restoration including dam removal, hydropower relicensing, and advocacy. His current role focuses on restoring Atlantic salmon and other sea-run fish to the Sandy River, a major tributary to the Kennebec whose headwaters are in the High Peaks region of the Appalachian Trail in Maine.”=



Pamela Roy

Senior Visual Resource Manager, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Pamela Roy is the ATC's Senior Visual Resource Manager, overseeing the ATC's Visual Resource Program, which includes the Visual Resource Inventory, a multi-year initiative designed to capture and quantify the spectacular and diverse views of the trail. She analyzes viewshed data collected through the program and evaluates potential external threat developments along the Appalachian Trail. She holds undergraduate and graduate degrees in ecological science, fine arts, and education. She has worked in natural resource and land stewardship positions and was a middle school science teacher in Philadelphia, PA, where she lives.



Simon Rucker

Executive Director, Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust

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Simon Rucker has been the Executive Director of the Maine Appalachian Trail Land Trust since 2014. Prior to that, he worked for The Trust for Public Land in New York City. He has served on the Portland Land Back Commission, the Munjoy Hill Neighborhood Organization, and as a community volunteer for Portland Public Schools. He lives in Portland with his wife, two children, and two cats. In his free time he enjoys riding his bike, playing basketball, and taking advantage of Maine outdoor recreation opportunities statewide.



Dan Ryan

Vice President of Conservation & Government Relations, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Prior to joining the ATC, Dan served as the Director of Conservation for the Georgia Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC), based in Atlanta. While in this role, he oversaw the work of a large, diverse, and geographically dispersed team focused on protecting the region's lands, water, and oceans and tackling climate change.

Dan spent more than a decade with the North Carolina Chapter of TNC building its longleaf pine conservation program, for which he was awarded the Governor's Conservation Achievement Award as Forest Conservationist of the Year. He also worked for two land trusts and is a proud Returned Peace Corps Volunteer, serving as an agroforestry volunteer in Bolivia.

Dan holds a Bachelor of Science in Ecology from the University of North Carolina Asheville and a Master of Public Administration from the University of North Carolina Wilmington.



Amy Scott
Program Director, Northern Forest Center

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As a member of the Center's Community Investment team, Amy works primarily in Western Maine, where she leads the Maine West initiative, supports housing development projects, and partners with community organizations to help build more equitable and vibrant futures for rural places. She also supports school and community partnerships and career pathway development in several rural communities through Extended Learning Opportunities and other collaborative efforts.

Amy has been developing her facilitation skills since her time as a student at College of the Atlantic. She brings more than 20 years of experience working with nonprofits, including College of the Atlantic and the Northern Forest Center earlier in her career. She also served as an associate with Good Group Decisions, a consulting firm that provides facilitation and process management services to nonprofit and corporate clients across Maine and the Northeast. As a resident of Greenwood, Maine, and mother of three, Amy lives firsthand both the joys and the challenges of working and raising a family in a rural place.



Michael Shenk
Associate Director of Kittatinny Ridge Conservation Landscape, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Michael Shenk (He/Him) prides himself on his curiosity of other people, their values, and motivations. He is passionate about working with community members to tell their stories. Michael's goal is to ensure the Kittatinny Ridge Coalition is a diverse and inclusive group that reflects the values of the many communities that live alongside and in the shadow of the Ridge. He looks forward to laboring alongside all the partners in their many endeavors as we together meet the aims of the coalition.

Michael comes to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy from a multidisciplinary background. Most recently, Michael was a consultant in municipal planning, in particular fulfilling many of the requests for GIS work. Previously, Michael served as the Community Engagement and Climate Specialist and an EJ Scholar with The Health, Environment, and Economic Justice Lab at the University of Maryland. In the role with UMD, Michael worked with a broad group of stakeholders across Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Washington D.C., and West Virginia to enhance engagement with partners.

Michael is an Eagle Scout, and it was in scouting that he first hiked sections of the Appalachian Trail in Maryland and Pennsylvania. It was through scouting that he learned the values of Leave No Trace and his enjoyment of the outdoors.

Michael and his wonderful partner have three daughters and one dog. In his free time, he enjoys kayaking, fishing, and hiking.

Michael holds a Master of Professional Studies (2025) in Sustainable Urban Planning from George Washington University. Michael also holds a Religious Studies degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College.



Erin Sito

U.S. Public Policy Director, Wildlands Network

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Erin Sito researches, develops, and promotes laws and policies that support habitat connectivity and wildlife conservation at all levels of government. She cut her conservation policy teeth as a Legal Intern with Wildlands Network in 2018, when she drafted model state wildlife coordinator action plan legislation that was subsequently adopted in three states, kicking off almost a decade-long trend of state legislative action on habitat connectivity and wildlife crossings. Prior to Wildlands Network, she was a private practice attorney, specializing in renewable energy transactions and regulatory law and litigation. Erin earned her JD from Oregon Law with a concentration in Environmental & Natural Resources Law. While in school, she clerked with the Bonneville Power Administration, the Regional Solicitor’s Office for the Department of the Interior, and the University of Oregon's Office of General Counsel. Erin lives in Southeastern Connecticut, where she enjoys hiking with her two labs, gardening, and learning how to restore historic homes.



Katie Tiger
Program Director, The Center for Native Health

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Katie Tiger is a citizen of the Choctaw Nation of Oklahoma and serves as Program Director for Weaving Intergenerational Pathways (WIP) at The Center for Native Health (CNH). Through WIP, Katie leads Indigenous approaches to education and training that bring together the wisdom of elders, knowledge and experience of adults, and creativity and energy of youth. Her work connects Indigenous culture, language, environmental stewardship, community health, climate resilience and youth leadership through intergenerational and land-based learning.

Prior to joining CNH, Katie spent 17 years with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (EBCI) Natural Resources Department, where she worked in the Air Quality Program and successfully managed numerous grants from diverse funding agencies. In 2021, she secured funding to launch North Carolina's first electric school bus, replacing a diesel bus and creating a model for cleaner transportation in the Cherokee community. She subsequently obtained supplemental grant funding to transition the Cherokee Boys Club's diesel school bus fleet to electric school buses, while also establishing a dedicated microgrid charging infrastructure to power the fleet.

Katie has served in national Tribal environmental leadership roles, including the National Tribal Air Association and the Tribal Air Monitoring Support Center Steering Committee, where she served as Tribal Chairperson. She also represented Region 4 Tribes on the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Tribal Science Council for 15 years.

Today, Katie's work focuses on creating pathways for young people to connect with their culture, community, and homelands while developing the knowledge and skills to become the next generation of leaders and caretakers. She is especially passionate about bringing Cherokee Ecological Knowledge and Western science together through hands-on, place-based learning.

Outside of work, Katie enjoys watching her two boys compete in sports, running outdoors, and caring for the Tiger family's collection of animals, including dogs, chickens, guinea pigs, bees, a snake, and a bearded dragon.



Brett Treadway (ᏣᎳᎩᏍ ᎦᏣᏁᎭᎩ, EBCI)
Program Director (Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources Program, RTCAR), The Center for Native Health & The Cherokee Preservation Foundation

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Brett Treadway, a citizen of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, serves as the Director of the Revitalization of Traditional Cherokee Artisan Resources (RTCAR) program for The Center for Native Health (CNH) on behalf of the Cherokee Preservation Foundation (CPF). Brett has worked in native-led philanthropy for over 4 years previously serving as a Program Officer under the Stewarding Native Lands Program for First Nations Development Institute. He has worked closely with a variety of tribal grantees from across Indian Country, fellow tribal NGOs, and important funders from across the nation. He is dedicated to supporting Native communities and passionate about uplifting his Native relatives by advocating for the protection of healthy lands and thriving resources through efforts grounded in culture and community.



Cinda Waldbuesser
President & CEO, Appalachian Trail Conservancy

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Cinda Merrill Waldbuesser is an accomplished conservation and public-sector executive with more than two decades of leadership experience spanning the National Park Service (NPS) and the nonprofit sector.

Prior to joining ATC in November of 2025, Cinda most recently served as Deputy Regional Director for the National Park Service's Northeast Region, providing executive leadership for national park units across 1.5 million acres from Maine to Virginia. In that role, she supported 22 park superintendents with park operations and strategic communication.

She also held the roles of Superintendent of Canaveral National Seashore in Florida and First State National Historical Park in Delaware and Pennsylvania at the National Park Service, where she Cinda guided complex park operations that combined conservation, historic preservation, and visitor engagement.

Before joining NPS, Cinda led the Pennsylvania and Delaware Program for the National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA), a national nonprofit dedicated to protecting and enhancing America's national parks. During her time with NPCA, she opened the organization's first Pennsylvania and Delaware field office and directed advocacy, policy, and public engagement strategies that built broad coalitions of partners, secured legislative and philanthropic support, and strengthened long-term protection for park resources.

A Philadelphia native and graduate of Cornell University with a Bachelor of Arts in American Studies, Cinda lives in Philadelphia with her husband, three children, and their dogs and cats. Outside of work, she enjoys family adventures, traveling, and spending time outdoors.



Nicole Wooten

Associate Director of Land Protection, The Nature Conservancy (PA/DE)

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Nicole Wooten (she/her) is Associate Director of Land Protection at The Nature Conservancy (TNC) PA/DE, where she conserves key parts of the Appalachians, a TNC global focal landscape. In addition to direct acquisitions, she supports regional planning efforts with the Kittatinny Ridge Land Protection Partnership to protect critical climate resilient lands. Previously, she served as Director of Natural Resources at the Hudson Highlands Land Trust, Corridor Stewardship Coordinator at the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), and in Environmental Education in the Peace Corps - El Salvador. Her work has included coordination of the NY Highlands Network; policy planning; volunteer engagement; easement stewardship; and preserve management.

Nicole holds an MEM from Yale and BAs in Environmental Studies and English from UNC-Chapel Hill. She is currently an ATC board director and part of a First Light cohort. She enjoys volunteering with her local Tree Tenders group in Philadelphia.