

2025

# RASCL SUMMMIT

AlMing for Action: Adapting, Innovating, and Mitigating  
the Impacts of Delaware's Changing Climate

March 5, 2025

Del-One Conference Center | Dover, DE

Event Program



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

# SUMMIT AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2025

## 10:00AM OPENING REMARKS

- Danielle Swallow, Coastal Hazards Specialist, Delaware Sea Grant

## 10:15AM WELCOME ADDRESS

The Honorable Matthew S. Meyer, Governor of the State of Delaware

## 10:30AM RASCL COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARD PRESENTATION

- presented to Amy L. Marasco, Councilwoman, City of Lewes

## 10:45AM WHAT'S IN SIGHT FOR DELAWARE'S CHANGING CLIMATE?

- Kevin Brinson, State Climatologist, Delaware Climate Office; Director, center for Environmental Monitoring Analysis
- Tina Callahan, Associate Director, Center for Environmental Monitoring Analysis
- Daniel J. Leathers, Professor Emeritus, Department of Geology and Spatial Sciences, University of Delaware
- Moderator: Susan Love, Administrator, Climate & Sustainability Programs, DNREC Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy

## 11:45AM LUNCH

- Remarks from Greg Patterson, Secretary, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

## 1:15PM POSITIONING OUR COMMUNITIES TO BE MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

- Lauren Good, AICP, Senior Project Manager - Community Planning and Grant Writing, KCI Technologies
- Vanessa Cullen, Delaware State Housing Authority
- Dan Rizza, Director of Sea Level Rise Program, Climate Central and Allison Kopicki, Coordinator, Communications and Outreach, FloodVision
- Danielle Swallow, Delaware Sea Grant and Tina Callahan, Center for Environmental Monitoring Analysis
- Moderated by: Mike Tholstrup, MPA, AICP, Planning Manager, DNREC Division of Parks and Recreation

## 2:15PM IN FOCUS: LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES

- Amy L. Marasco, Councilwoman, City of Lewes
- Ada Puzzo, Ed. D, Mayor, Town of Bowers
- Bryan Lennon, City of Wilmington, Matt Prusko, Arcadis, and Annie Vapaa, RAS
- Moderated by: Will Helt, Director of Oceans and Coasts, The Nature Conservancy

## 3:30PM NETWORKING

# SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

## WHAT'S IN SIGHT FOR DELAWARE'S CHANGING CLIMATE

**10:45 AM-12:00 PM**

This session explores the climatology of Delaware, past, present, and future. Hear about the development of new state climate projections for temperature, precipitation, and sea level rise. Find out whether Delaware is experiencing extreme weather events.

## POSITIONING OUR COMMUNITIONS TO BE MORE RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE

**1:15-2:15 PM**

Learn about strategies that are being undertaken in Delaware to help our communities adapt to extreme events and a changing climate. Panelists will describe efforts that focus on policy, communications, research, and managing disasters.

## IN FOCUS: LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES

**2:15-3:30 PM**

Our annual panel of Local Success Stories highlights the amazing work taking place around the state. We will hear about local initiatives that advance climate resilience in all three counties by dedicated individuals who are working hard to leverage partners, carry out mitigation efforts, identify new funding sources, and/or inspire others through the arts.

# PRESENTER BIOS

*[presented in alphabetical order]*



## **KEVIN BRINSON**

State Climatologist, Delaware Climate Office  
Director, Center for Environmental Monitoring and Analysis,  
University of Delaware

Kevin serves as the Delaware State Climatologist and Director of the Center for Environmental Monitoring and Analysis (CEMA) at the University of Delaware. Previously, Kevin served as the Director of the DEOS Network and Associate State Climatologist and has been with CEMA and the Delaware Climate Office since 2007. His past research has focused on precipitation extremes, variability of evapotranspiration, and drought monitoring.



## **TINA CALLAHAN**

Associate Director, Center for Environmental Monitoring  
Analysis, University of Delaware

Tina is the Associate Director of the Center for Environmental Monitoring & Analysis (CEMA) and Assistant State Climatologist at the Delaware Climate Office. With over 25 years of experience in GIS, remote sensing, climatology, data analytics, and web technologies, Tina has worked across private, public, and academic sectors. At CEMA for 14 years, she has led initiatives as a developer, analyst, and principal investigator, mentored interns, and chaired several statewide and regional committees on climate, weather, and flooding. Her major interests include historical and future climate, tropical storms, and severe weather impacts in Delaware and surrounding states.



## **VANESSA CULLEN**

Emergency Management Coordinator, Policy & Planning  
Department, Delaware State Housing Authority

Vanessa is an Emergency Management Coordinator in the Policy & Planning department at the Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA). After earning her MPA at Villanova University, she pivoted from a career in the nonprofit sector to state government work. She is passionate about applying innovative solutions through disaster planning and resiliency measures, as well as developing recovery processes for Delaware's housing



# PRESENTER BIOS

*[presented in alphabetical order]*



## **LAUREN GOOD**

Senior Project Manager - Community Planning & Grant Writing  
KCI Technologies

Lauren is a Senior Project Manager with KCI Technologies, providing community planning, grant writing, and project management consulting services throughout the MidAtlantic. She has an accomplished record leading and planning an array of public projects including comprehensive plans, downtown revitalizations plans, ordinance writing and interpretation, facilitating outreach events, conducting development plan reviews, and serving as the town planner for many local municipalities. Lauren has also successfully obtained over \$61M in grant funding for her clients in a variety of areas. Prior to becoming a consultant in 2015, she worked for both municipal and county planning departments.

Lauren currently serves as the Vice President/President-Elect of the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association (DE APA). She is also a member of the Maryland Chapter of APA, the Association of Climate Change Officers, and Delaware Women Leading Government.

Lauren earned dual BAs from Virginia Tech in Urban Affairs and Planning with a concentration in Urbanization: Planning & Policy and Political Science with a concentration in Legal Studies and minor in Real Estate. She also earned an MA in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.



## **WILL HELT**

Director of Oceans and Coasts, The Nature Conservancy

Will is a coastal ecologist with over nine years of experience implementing nature-based strategies that benefit both people and nature in coastal and nearshore systems. These days Will focuses on improving coastal resilience along the Delaware Bayshore.



## **ALLISON KOPICKI**

Coordinator, Communications and Outreach, FloodVision

Allison Kopicki serves as a coordinator for communications and outreach for Climate Central's FloodVision project. She has worked on economic development, urban revitalization, resiliency, energy, and environmental issues for the New Jersey state government and the non-profit New Jersey Future. Her prior experience in journalism includes writing about polling for NBC News and The New York Times and economic issues for Bloomberg. She earned her Masters in Public Policy from Rutgers University and a B.A. from Boston College.

# PRESENTER BIOS

*[presented in alphabetical order]*



## **DANIEL J. LEATHERS**

Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences, University of Delaware  
Former State Climatologist

Dan Leathers is an emeritus faculty member in the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences at the University of Delaware. He served as Delaware State Climatologist for 25 years and founded the Center for Environmental Monitoring & Analysis (CEMA) in 2017. He also served as Chair of the Department of Geography and Spatial Sciences, and as Deputy Dean of the College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment. His past research focused on snow cover in the global climate system, environmental monitoring and the integration of environmental data sources, and the climate of the northeast United States.



## **BRYAN LENNON**

Assistant Water Division Director, Department of Public Works, City of Wilmington

Bryan holds a Bachelors of Civil Engineering and a Masters of Environmental Engineering from the University of Delaware. He also received a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish Studies also from the University of Delaware. He has 25+ years of experience in the field of water and wastewater engineering, and has worked in both the public and private sector of the water and wastewater industry including: New Castle County Water Resource Agency, the City of Newark, City of Wilmington, Aberdeen Proving Ground/Edgewood Arsenal, Lehigh County Authority, Emerald County Sewer and Water Authority, and Washington DC Water and Sewer Authority Bryan's education and work in the public and private sector have covered a wide range of experience in the practice of water and wastewater engineering, utility management, and environmental compliance. His graduate work included writing and publishing a thesis on the Recycling and Reuse of hi-tech composite plastics and teaching assistantship in water and wastewater analysis.



## **MATTHEW J. PRUSKO, PE, ENV, SP**

Arcaids North America

Mr. Prusko is a senior project engineer with more than 13 years of experience in civil/municipal planning, design, and construction support services specializing in water, wastewater, stormwater, and land development projects in both the public and private sector.

Mr. Prusko's project experience includes civil site design and development; stormwater best management practices design; green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) design; stormwater conveyance; cost estimation; and permitting.

Mr. Prusko resides in Philadelphia, PA with his wife and their two children.

# PRESENTER BIOS

*[presented in alphabetical order]*



## **DAN RIZZA**

Director of Sea Level Rise Program, Climate Centrat

Dan Rizza leads the Program on Sea Level Rise, directing a team dedicated to equipping coastal stakeholders with the tools, information, and products necessary to understand, communicate, visualize, and respond to sea level rise and coastal flooding, while also underscoring the importance of mitigating its drivers. The team continually refines its approach based on stakeholder feedback. He earned his Master's degree from Georgetown University's Graduate School of Foreign Service and his BA from Colby College.



## **DANIELLE SWALLOW**

Coastal Hazards Specialist, Delaware Sea Grant

Danielle Swallow is a Coastal Hazards Specialist with Delaware Sea Grant, where she provides technical assistance and outreach to communities on emergency preparedness and building resilience to weather and climate hazards. She is a co-founder of the Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL) and is active in advising communities about resilient land use practices, hazard mitigation strategies, and capacity building. Danielle is the 2022 recipient of the Mid-Atlantic Sea Grant Award for Outstanding Outreach and the University of Delaware College of Earth, Ocean, and Environment's Community Engagement Award. She has over 20 years of experience in planning, policy, and science communications.



## **MIKE THOLSTRUP, MPA, AICP, CPSI**

Planning Manager, DE State Parks

As the Delaware State Parks Planning Manager, Mike brings experience in land use and sustainable planning to apply a long-range outlook to outdoor recreation. He has managed state grant programs as well as developed and reviewed local and state level long-range plans, including master plans, municipal and county comprehensive plans. Most recently he led the development of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). Mike has a Master's in Public Administration from the UD Biden School, is a Certified Planner (AICP) and current President of the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association, is a Founding member of RASCL, and serves on the City of Dover's Parks, Recreation and Community Enhancement Committee.

# PRESENTER BIOS

*[presented in alphabetical order]*



## **ANNIE VAPAA**

Landscape Architectural Designer, RAS

Prior to joining RAS in 2008, Annie received her BS in Agricultural Sciences with a concentration in Ornamental Horticulture from the University of Delaware and her Master of Landscape Architecture from Virginia Tech. She enjoys working on a variety of projects from state and city parks to zoo habitats and in all aspects from schematic design through the construction documentation process. From new projects to existing sites in need of restoration and renovation, Annie prides herself in being a good listener with attention to detail. After 20 years of gardening on a small suburban property she is looking forward to designing a woodland garden on the new wooded property in Hockessin, Delaware she now calls home. When she is not gardening, she enjoys exploring the local parks with her husband and their dog.



# Thank you to our 2025 Sponsors!

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# Protecting our future

Investment in resilience today means protection and cost avoidance in the future. We help clients and communities around the world build resilience through an extensive understanding of assets, risks and vulnerabilities.



# Additional Funding Support

Our work is made possible with support provided by the following:



# SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR 2025 SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

*[presented in alphabetical order]*

**DELAWARE BEHAVIORAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT TEAM (DE BEST)**  
Celeste Peart

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES & ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL**  
Jordana Cutajar  
Michael Tholstrup  
Lynne Pusey

**DELAWARE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**  
Tricia Arndt  
Stephanie Johnson  
Kelly Valencik

**DELAWARE DIVISION OF LIBRARIES**  
Sarena Deglin

**DELAWARE SEA GRANT**  
Danielle Swallow

**DELAWARE STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY**  
Vanessa Cullen

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Martha Narvaez  
Cai Foster

