

The 10th Anniversary

RASCL SUMMIT

Making Space for Sustainable Growth and Resilience:
The Role of Land Use Planning

Thursday, March 5, 2026
Del-One Conference Center | Dover, DE

Event Program



www.derascl.org

SUMMIT AGENDA

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2026

9:00 AM OPENING REMARKS

Danielle Swallow, Delaware Sea Grant

9:15 AM RASCL 10TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

Invited Guests

9:25AM RASCL COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS AWARD PRESENTATION

Presented to The Open Space Alliance

9:35 AM FEATURED SPEAKER

Mark Teschauer, US Climate Alliance

10:00 AM BREAK

10:10AM LAND USE PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Moderator: Susan Love, RASCL Co-Chair, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)

- Caitlin DelCollo, Delaware State Housing Authority
- Jeremy Rothwell,
- Paul Moser, Delaware Department of Transportation
- Mike Fortner, City of Newark

11:45AM LUNCH

9:35 AM FEATURED SPEAKER

Katharine Burgess, Smart Growth America

1:25PM Land Use Planning for Resilience to Weather and Climate Hazards

Moderator: Lynne Pusey, Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC)

- Vanessa Cullen, Delaware State Housing Authority
- Lee Revis-Plank, Town of Milton
- Brian J. Olszak, Town of Georgetown
- Janet Reeves, City of Lewes

2:30 PM BREAK

2:45PM LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES

Moderator: Lisa Swanger, Delaware Center for Inland Bays

- Jill Hicks, Sussex County Land Use Working Group
- Jamila Davey, Green for the Greater Good
- Sara Bluhm, Sussex County Land Trust

3:50 PM CLOSING REMARKS

- Danielle Swallow, Delaware Sea Grant

4:00PM HAPPY HOUR

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

LAND USE PLANNING FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

10:10 AM-11:45 AM

Building affordable housing, bike lanes, and compact communities all help meet climate goals. This session provides a deeper dive on strategies to build thriving sustainable communities, while reducing emissions and meeting climate resiliency goals. Speakers will highlight community success in zoning modernization, tiny homes and ADUs and transportation best practices.

LAND USE PLANNING FOR RESILIENCE TO WEATHER AND CLIMATE HAZARDS

1:25-2:30 PM

What happens when a major weather event displaces fellow Delawareans from their homes for weeks or months? This session features a roundtable discussion with four local experts on planning and best practices for emergency housing when disaster strikes.

LOCAL SUCCESS STORIES

2:40-3:50 PM

Becoming more resilient and sustainable at the local level doesn't happen overnight. It takes vision, perseverance, and patience. This session features three panelists who will discuss their local successes in land preservation and greening urban spaces. Speakers will share strategies for overcoming barriers and building partnerships to secure a successful outcome.



PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



SARA BLUHM

Executive Director, Sussex County Land Trust

Sara Bluhm, a 2004 graduate of Milford High School and 2023 Leadership Delaware fellow, serves as the first full-time Executive Director of the Sussex County Land Trust (SCLT). In this role, she advances the organization's mission to preserve open space and natural resources, acting as its public ambassador and building strong partnerships across the state. Sara brings a broad background in leadership, communications, and community engagement. She was the first Economic Development & Community Engagement Administrator for the City of Milford, managed five international beer, wine, and food conferences with Zephyr Conferences, and has held leadership positions as Publisher of MilfordLIVE, Director of Leadership Central Delaware, and Executive Director of the Delaware Diabetes Coalition, a role she continues today. She has also served as Promotional Marketing and Communications Manager at GROWMARK FS, LLC, President of Downtown Milford, Inc., and as a member of Milford's Planning Commission for over four years. She holds a bachelor's degree from Immaculata University (2008) and a master's degree in Marketing Management from Wilmington University (2016). Sara currently lives in Lincoln with her husband, Jake, a volleyball coach and teacher, their daughter, Joey, and their Weimaraner, Barley. She enjoys supporting local businesses, spending time outdoors, and exploring Delaware's craft brewery scene.



KATHARINE BURGESS

Vice President of Programs and Operations, Smart Growth America

Katharine Burgess is the Vice President of Programs and Operations at Smart Growth America, where she manages organizational administrative initiatives and oversees programmatic work, with a focus on housing, development, and climate. She brings SGA twenty years of experience in urban planning, research and non-profit management, including work in the U.S. and Europe. Katharine has led much of SGA's climate and land use work, including reports and capacity-building programs addressing the intersections of climate adaptation, housing abundance, and growth. Prior to Smart Growth America, Katharine led the Urban Resilience Program at the Urban Land Institute (ULI), where she built up the organization's work addressing how communities can be more prepared for the impacts of climate change, such as sea level rise, extreme heat and wildfires. Katharine has also worked in the masterplanning in the private sector and began her career coordinating post-Katrina hurricane recovery charrettes, where she saw firsthand the need to better link land use planning, housing strategy and preparedness.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



VANESSA CULLEN

Emergency Management Coordinator, Delaware State Housing Authority

Vanessa Cullen 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.



JAMILA DAVEY

Cofounder of Green for the Greater Good

Jamila Davey is cofounder of Green for the Greater Good, a grassroots community group that was born out of resident organizing and advocacy efforts to transform the Rodney Reservoir site into a community- and nature-focused park. The group's work has expanded to support catalyzing resident-leadership in shaping public spaces and natural lands approaches to urban infrastructure. She is a resident on Wilmington's West Side, the chair of the 5th District Neighborhood Planning Council, and an avid community gardener. Jamila is also an adjunct professor in English and Humanities at Goldey-Beacom College. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and an M.A. in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Texas at Austin. She earned a B.A. in philosophy from Northwestern University.



CAITLIN DEL COLLO

Chief Strategy Advisor, Delaware State Housing Authority

Caitlin Del Collo currently serves as Chief Strategy Advisor at Delaware State Housing Authority (DSHA). Within that role, she works to advance strategic partnerships and initiatives that further DSHA's mission of efficiently providing, and assisting others to provide, quality, affordable housing opportunities and appropriate supportive services to low- and moderate-income Delawareans. Caitlin has over 10 years of experience working for state government, including positions with the Delaware State Senate and Colorado General Assembly. She received a Master of Arts degree in Urban Affairs & Public Policy from the University of Delaware.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



MICHAEL FORTNER

Senior Planner, City of Newark

Michael Fortner is the Senior Planner for the City of Newark Planning & Development Department. His responsibilities include administering the City's Comprehensive Development Plan, leading special planning projects, and providing staff support to the Planning Commission and Board of Adjustment. He also serves as the City's liaison to the Wilmington Area Planning Council (WILMAPCO) Technical Advisory Committee and BikeNewark. In addition, Mike serves on the Executive Committees of the Delaware Chapter of the American Planning Association (DE-APA) and the Delaware Chapter of the National Association of Housing and Redevelopment Officials (DE-NAHRO). Mike earned a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Cincinnati and an M.P.A. in State and Local Government from the University of Delaware. Prior to moving to Delaware, he served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in Togo, West Africa, through the Peace Corps. Mike lives in Newark, Delaware, with his wife, son, dog, and two cats. In his free time, he enjoys running, hiking, CrossFit, traveling, watching movies, eating fine food, and enjoying craft beer.



JILL HICKS

President, Sussex Preservation Coalition

Jill Hicks became active in advocating for the preservation of Sussex County, Delaware, when a 110-acre mature forest full of wetlands located behind her home became the target for a large development. She organized neighbors and others in the surrounding area to oppose the application. Through that loss, she became acutely aware that there are no protections for forests or wetlands in Sussex County. While participating in a rally, "Enough is Enough," Jill met Jane Gruenebaum. Driven by their mutual concern for environmental and social injustices, Jane and Jill founded the Sussex Preservation Coalition. Jill is a graduate of Penn State University with a B.S. in Music Education. Right out of college, Jill's career began with Wawa, Inc. where she progressed through the organization as a Store Manager, Real Estate Manager, Director of Purchasing and Coffee Procurement, and Director of Marketing and Supply Chain Information Technology. Before permanently retiring, she had the privilege of teaching elementary and middle school music. A dream realized and treasured.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



SUSAN LOVE

Administrator, Climate and Sustainability Section, Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy, Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control

Susan Love is the Administrator of the Climate and Sustainability Section of the Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy in the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC). She directs programs to adapt to climate change, mitigate greenhouse gas emissions, and promote sustainable development policies throughout the state. Recently this work included the completion of the state's first comprehensive Climate Action Plan and programs to facilitate electric vehicle deployment. Previously, she worked for the Delaware Coastal Programs, where she led the development of the state's Sea Level Rise Vulnerability Assessment and Adaptation Plan. Susan has worked in the public sector for 24 years and has significant experience conducting collaborative initiatives to solve emerging public policy issues. In addition to her climate change and sustainability projects, she led the development the South Wilmington Special Area Management Plan, which addressed a range of urban social and environmental issues in a vulnerable and underserved community, and led implementation of the Pea Patch Island Special Area Management Plan, which ensured the longevity and productivity of heron nesting habitat. Susan has also spent considerable time engaged with local government planning, wetland policy and permitting issues, and shorebird and horseshoe crab population monitoring. Susan holds a Masters of Public Administration (MPA) and a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture, both from the University of Delaware. She also holds an AICP accreditation from the American Planning Association



PAUL MOSER

Professional Engineer, Active Transportation & Community Connections, Delaware Department of Transportation

Paul Moser is a professional engineer in the Delaware Department of Transportation's Active Transportation & Community Connections section. Paul is responsible for active transportation projects, statewide, from planning to concept to construction. Paul manages DeIDOT's Bicycle/ Pedestrian Program yearly project prioritization process, and acts as a design engineer and project manager, facilitating the development of construction plans for state and federally funded projects to advance mobility and safety in Delaware for people walking and biking. Outside of his work at DeIDOT, Paul has taught courses DelTech and the University of Delaware, is a Standing Member of the Transportation Research Board's Bicycle Transportation Committee, and acts as an independent consultant and subcontractor in his field. Paul is passionate about how street design contributes to quality of life and safety.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



BRIAN OLSZAK

Community Development Director, Town of Georgetown

Brian Olszak has been the Community Development Director for the Town of Georgetown since 2025. Prior to that, he spent 10+ years as a Community Planner and Trails & Open Space Planner for the Montgomery County (PA) Planning Commission. He serves on the board of the Philadelphia Orchard Project and periodically serves as an adjunct professor in City and Regional Planning at Temple University, where he received his master's degree in planning in 2013. Brian originally hails from Willow Grove, PA.



LYNNE PUSEY

Coastal Training Coordinator, Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve

Lynne Pusey is the Coastal Training Program Coordinator with the Delaware National Estuarine Research Reserve (DNERR). Prior to joining the reserve this past September, she spent the past 18 years working for DNREC in the Division of Parks and Recreation and Division of Fish and Wildlife in varying field and educational roles, most recently as manager of the DuPont Nature Center. In her new role with DNERR and the Division of Climate, Coastal and Energy, Lynne is working to provide meaningful learning opportunities and information for community leaders, natural resource managers and conservation partners



JANET REEVES

Deputy City Manager, City of Lewes

Janet Reeves, MPA, MSW has been with the City of Lewes since 2020. She started her city career as the Parks and Marina Manager and in 2024 she moved to the Deputy City Manager position. Janet is a 30-year public servant having work in the State of Delaware and New York State in health care, law enforcement, addiction services, and mental health programs. She has a strong passion for the outdoors and the environment.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



LEE REVIS-PLANK

Vice Mayor, Town of Milton

Lee Revis-Plank, Vice Mayor of the Town of Milton and Delaware native. Graduate of University of Delaware. Retired from the DuPont Company and Bank of America. Served on Milton's Historic Preservation Commission for five years prior to running for Town Council in 2021.



JEREMY ROTHWELL

Planner

A native of southern Cecil County, MD, Jeremy Rothwell is a 12th-generation Eastern Shoreman, and currently resides in the rural village of Massey in Kent County, MD. He earned a B.A. in political science and history from Washington College, an M.A. in Urban Affairs and Regional Planning, and a Graduate Certificate in Historic Preservation, both from the University of Delaware. He has served as the Director of Planning for the Town of Smyrna, as the first planner for the City of Harrington, and also as the development review planner in Talbot County, Maryland. He serves as the President of the Delaware Preservation Fund, the Chair of the Kent County (MD) Historic Preservation Commission, on the Board of Directors for the Cecil Land Trust, the Mount Harmon Point-to-Point Races, and Preservation Delaware, Inc., as the President of the Upper Bay Ruritan Club, and Secretary of the Community Fire Company of Millington.



LISA SWANGER

Director of Outreach and Education, Center for Inland Bays

Lisa Swanger is Director of Outreach & Education at the Delaware Center for the Inland Bays, part of the National Estuary Program, where she works at the intersection of science, education, and policy to advance healthy and resilient coastal ecosystems. Her work centers on the human dimensions of systems change—fostering connection and curiosity, advancing awareness, facilitating thoughtful dialogue, and guiding stakeholders toward actionable outcomes. Her focus includes watershed stewardship, stormwater management, and nature-based learning. Lisa holds a Master of Science in Marine Resource Management from the College of Earth, Ocean, and Atmospheric Sciences at Oregon State University and a bachelor's degree in Sociology, with a minor in Biology, from Kutztown University of Pennsylvania.

PRESENTER BIOS

[presented in alphabetical order]



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 Delaware communities on building resilience to weather and climate hazards. She is co-founder of the Resilient and Sustainable Communities League (RASCL), a professional network of organizations dedicated to helping communities thrive in the face of a changing climate. She is also active in advising communities about land use practices and disaster preparedness, response, and recovery. Danielle is a former recipient of both 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 26 years of climate and coastal policy and planning experience.



MARK TESCHAUER

Senior Policy Advisor, U.S. Climate Alliance

Mark Teschauer is a Senior Policy Advisor with the U.S. Climate Alliance, a bipartisan coalition of governors securing America's net-zero future by advancing state-led, high-impact climate action. In his role, he leads the Alliance's transportation work and co-lead development of the Alliance's Climate and Land Use Planning policy guide that outlined how states can leverage land use planning tools to advance their climate goals. His prior work involved supporting transportation agencies and affordable housing/community development non-profits develop, integrate, and implement climate and sustainability programs as part of their work. He holds a M.S. in Community and Regional Planning from the University of Texas at Austin.

Thank you to the 2026 RASCL Summit Sponsors!

10th Anniversary



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LeafFilter Gutter Protection
The Nature Conservancy



You're invited to celebrate Earth & Arbor Day 2026!

This event is sponsored by the Department of Public Works at Cool Spring Reservoir (upper level) at 11th and Franklin Streets, on **Friday, April 17, 2026, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

This **FREE** event celebrates Mother Nature with the theme, "Give A Hoot, Don't Pollute," and will feature music, participation from various schools, exhibitors, vendors, and more!

**GIVE A HOOT,
DON'T POLLUTE!**

RAIN DATE APRIL 24TH



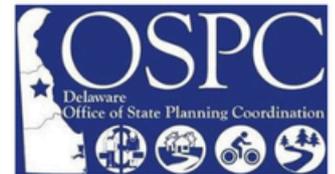


Protecting our future

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 2026 SUMMIT PLANNING COMMITTEE

[presented in alphabetical order]

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