

# **Meet Our Trainers, Moderators, and Panelists**

*2012 New England RCP Network Gathering*

*Grappone Conference Center, Concord, NH*

*Tuesday, November 13, 2012*



**Ole Amundsen III** is a seasoned professional with 20 years of environmental experience. Ole helps private, public, and nonprofit clients reach their full potential by helping organizations articulate their vision, use their limited resources wisely and broadening their implementation options. Ole is the author of Strategic Conservation Planning, published by the Land Trust Alliance in 2011. As a reflective practitioner, Ole has taught courses on negotiation, conservation finance and planning for LTA, Cornell University and the Conservation Leadership Network. Ole leads landscape scale conservation projects across the country with a focus on implementation. He holds a BA in Government from Colby College and a MS in City Planning from MIT.



**Emily M. Bateson** is the Conservation Director of Highstead and the Coordinator of the New England forest conservation initiative, Wildlands and Woodlands. Emily co-founded and served as the first Executive Director of the landscape-scale Northern Appalachian initiative, Two Countries, One Forest (2C1Forest), and has held leadership positions at the Conservation Law Foundation, Hubbard Brook Research Foundation, Sweet Water Trust, and Environment Northeast.



**Karen Bennett**, Extension Forestry Professor and Specialist, joined UNH Cooperative Extension in 1979. She was the Hillsborough and later Merrimack County Forester, helping people care for their forest land. She assumed her current position in 1996 and specializes in private forest management, providing education to landowners, land managers, conservation volunteers, and public decision-makers.



**Katherine (Katie) Blake** is the Coordinator for the MassConn Sustainable Forest Partnership. She manages Forest Legacy program land protection initiatives in Massachusetts and Connecticut, coordinates landowner outreach efforts and organizes trainings and workshops with MassConn's partners. Katie has a Master's in Conservation Biology from Antioch University New England and a B.A. in Environmental Studies from Mount Holyoke College.



**Paul Catanzaro** is an Extension Assistant Professor in the Environmental Conservation Department at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. In this capacity, he teaches, develops outreach programs for forest landowners, and collaborates on research as a part of the Family Forest Research Center, a partnership between the U.S. Forest Service and UMass.

**Tom Curren** is a farmer and conservationist who lives with his wife Kathy Neustadt in South Danbury, New Hampshire. Since 2006, Tom has directed the Northeast Land Trust Consortium, a grant project of the Pew Charitable Trusts that has helped local and regional land trusts to fund the protection of more than 800,000 acres of conservation land in New England, New York, and Pennsylvania. Prior to joining Pew, Tom was executive director of the Lakes Region Conservation Trust in Meredith New Hampshire. To date, he has assisted in or directed the raising of more than \$70,000,000 in private funds in support of land trust conservation projects.



**Steven Fuller** is the Coordinator of the Rangewide New England Cottontail Initiative and has worked as a biologist for the N.H. Fish and Game's Nongame and Endangered Wildlife Program. Steve received his doctoral degree from the State University of New York College of Environmental Science and Forestry. He now works for the Wildlife Management Institute. Steve also represents the Conservation Design Team for the North Atlantic Landscape Conservation Cooperative.

**Reggie Hall** grew up on the seacoast of New Hampshire and received a BA from Williams College and then JD and MSEL degrees from Vermont Law School. He currently is the Manager of the Land Trust Loan Program with The Conservation Fund in their Arlington, VA office and also serves as the State Director for TCF's activities in seven states.



**Jens Hilke** works for the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department as a Conservation Planning Biologist. He helps towns, regional planning commissions and non-governmental organizations with their conservation planning efforts. This includes help with GIS natural resource mapping, advice on prioritizing significant natural features and help with implementing town conservation goals. Jens did his undergraduate work at Connecticut College in Environmental Sociology and then got a Masters in Botany from the University of Vermont as a Field Naturalist. Jens has taught high school science in Vermont, New Hampshire, and New Jersey and for a study-away program in Thailand, Southeast Asia.



**Stephen Thor Johnson** (Principal, Sage Advisors) founded Sage Advisors in 2010. Sage specializes in design and management of complex conservation transactions, conservation easement stewardship, land planning, organizational development, finance, fundraising, and public policy. Stephen served as executive director for two regional land trusts over 15 years (Sudbury Valley Trustees, MA and Gallatin Valley Land Trust, MT). He has worked in commercial real estate managing permitting and financing for complex real estate transactions. He began his career with the Commonwealth of MA, administering the Open Space Bond Program and was instrumental in the creation of the Protected Lands datalayer with MassGIS.



**Bill Labich** is the Regional Conservationist with Highstead and is the Coordinator of the Regional Conservation Partnership (RCP) Network. Bill has been working with RCPs since 1998, more intensively since joining Highstead in 2007. He has worked as a professional forester, land use planner, and regional land conservationist. Bill has co-authored papers on cross-boundary cooperation among landowners, the Wildlands and Woodlands Vision, and RCPs in New England.





**Charles Levesque** is founder (1994) and President of Innovative Natural Resource Solutions, LLC (INRS). INRS is a forest and natural resource consulting firm with offices in New Hampshire and Maine and has clients in the business, non-profit and government sectors. He was previously been the CEO of three non-profits.



**Jennifer Melville** is OSI's Grant and Loan Coordinator and New England/Southern Canada Field Coordinator. She develops and implements OSI funds, such as Saving New England's Wildlife, and Transborder Fund. Jennifer has served as project manager for Trust for Public Land and Conservation Director for Appalachian Mountain Club. Jennifer graduated from UC Berkeley and Yale School of Forestry.



**Marybeth Pettit**, AICP, has a background in urban planning and worked for many years as the Director of Planning for the City of Rensselaer, N.Y., where she oversaw numerous revitalization projects. She currently has her own consulting business and assists local communities and conservation organizations with grant administration, planning and design.

**Jay Rasku**, Partnership Director, provides leadership for the North Quabbin Regional Landscape Partnership and the MassLIFT AmeriCorps programs of Mount Grace and spearheads new community partnerships as opportunities arise. Since joining Mount Grace in 2006, Jay has engaged municipal conservation boards, smaller local and regional land trusts, and state agencies in collaborative conservation partnerships that have boosted conservation capacity across the region and resulted in the protection of nearly 9000 acres.



**Christopher Riely** is a forester and watershed manager for Providence Water, the public utility from which most Rhode Islanders get their drinking water. Previous roles have given him a wide range of professional environmental experience in different parts of New England. He has a B.A. from Tufts, a Master of Forestry from Yale, and an MBA from the University of Rhode Island.



**Wendy Sweetser** is a Community Conservation and Outreach Specialist for The Trustees of Reservations. For the past six years, she was the Director of the Highland Communities Initiative, a program that created conservation awareness and involvement among community leaders and landowners in rural western Massachusetts.



**Joan Weir** (Vermont Land Trust, Southeast Regional Director) is responsible for implementation of all aspects of the Vermont Land Trust's land conservation program in VLT's Southeast Region. Duties include initiating contact and responding to landowner inquiries for land that has potential for conservation; assessment of landowner objectives; and negotiating financial and conservation strategies. She began work at VLT in 1998.