

Speaker Bios in order of agenda

Joseph Dickerson, CT Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, Sr. Advisor for Outdoor Equity – Keynote and facilitator of Panel Discussion of Accessibility/Inclusion in the outdoors

- Urban Hikers - [WHY WE WALK \(whywewalkfilm.com\)](http://whywewalkfilm.com)
- Akiebia Hicks - PhD, Durational Project Manager, CTDEEP. Akiebia is a former National Park Service (NPS) Park Ranger who was employed at various parks in the Southeast region before seeking a graduate degree. Akiebia's research was fueled by her experiences while working in the NPS. Akiebia conducted her research as a part of her Ph.D. from Clemson University where she collaborated with individual park units and assisted managers in identifying their employee needs, addressing relevancy, sustaining diversity, and boosting morale within their units. Akiebia also works as a Durational Project Manager for the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection where she leads the SCORP and serves as a Board Member of the George Wright Society.

Amy Blaymore Paterson, *Inclusive and Accessible Conservation for All* - Executive Director CT Land Conservation Council (CLCC). Amy joined the CLCC in 2010 as its first Executive Director. Amy serves as the co-chair of the State of Connecticut Natural Heritage, Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition Review Board. She was a member of the Environment Committee for the Lamont/Bysiewicz Administration transition team, the Forests Sub-Group of the Governor's Council on Climate Change, and the Policy on Resilient Forests for Connecticut's Future (PRFCT Future) Working Group. Amy is a member of the Working Lands Alliance Steering Committee, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Keney Park Sustainability Project and the Creative Living Community of Connecticut. Prior to CLCC, Amy served as a Project Manager for The Trust for Public Land, overseeing several complex conservation transactions, worked for over twenty years as a land use attorney, and served as a staff lawyer with the U.S. Department of Justice. She received a BA from Franklin & Marshall College and her law degree from the University of Denver. Amy lives with her family in Vernon, CT. An avid trail runner, when Amy isn't helping to conserve land, she's outside enjoying it.

Emely Ricci - *Inclusive and Accessible Conservation for All* - Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments. Emely was the 2022-23 Sandy Breslin Conservation Fellow at CLCC. As a fellow, she led the Northeast Community Conservation Initiative. She is currently a Community Planner at the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governance. She graduated with a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Connecticut. She was a 2023 graduate of UConn's Master's in Public Administration. Her passions lie in conservation, food accessibility, indigenous rights, and climate justice. In her off time, Emely likes to dive into creative writing, painting, and the occasional hiking trip around the many parks in CT.

Greg Gregory - author "[Many Paths up the Mountain](#)", spring 2023, CT Woodlands Magazine. Greg Gregory is a lifelong hiker and longtime member of CT Forest & Park Association. He has completed the 800-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail Challenge, thru-hiked the New England Trail, and visited every Connecticut state park and forest. Off the trail, he is a veterinary technician with a focus in emergency and critical care, and lives with five cats. He is a passionate member of and advocate for the LGBTQ community.

Nicola Wood* - *Barriers to Meaningful Wilderness Experiences-Outside Perspectives* - With almost two decades of experience working in the outdoors with youth, Nicola found her calling introducing young people to what climbing a mountain can do for one's soul and spirit. After years of working for multiple outdoor education organizations and gaining a deeper perspective on life from traveling the globe, Nicola dreamed of jumping out and starting her own organization. She was inspired to do things a little differently after she noticed gaps of the population missing from the outdoors, observed a distancing of the younger generations from the natural world, and discovered a way to create deeper connections between youth by taking them outside. Nicola received her Bachelors in Arts from Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Oregon in 2006 and her Masters in Social Work from Silberman School of Social Work at Hunter College in New York City in 2014. When she's not working with Outside Perspectives, Nicky, as she is known by most, can be found hiking with her dog in the Litchfield Hills, searching for powder during the ski season, practicing yoga, paddling on local lakes and rivers, gardening, or curling up on the couch for a good action movie. Nicky is a new mom since 2021 and is looking forward to introducing her son to the love of the outdoors in the coming years!

Aaron Maracavitch – *Connecting Across Time – How Trails and History Can Work Together*; CT Landmarks - Aaron is the Executive Director of Connecticut Landmarks. Prior to coming to Connecticut, he was the Executive Director of Anacostia Trails Heritage Area in the Washington DC area where he led and supported efforts to expand local trails in and out of the region – including those that incorporated a variety of history related topics. He sits on the board of the Last Green Valley Heritage Area. He lives in Suffield where he is the Committee Chair for Scout Troop 66.

Joe Lanier - *Building Community Through Partnerships* - Oxford CT - Joe has been teaching biology at Oxford High School for 24 years. He is the Youth Conservation Corps Coordinator / Founder; Town of Oxford Conservation Commission Inland Wetlands Commissioner Rockhouse Hill Sanctuary Land Manager where he is now utilizing a CT Recreational Trails Grant to constructing Connecticut's first adaptive / inclusionary trail system open to the public. Joe Received a BS in Biology from Northeastern University.

Laura Kelly - *Social Carrying Capacity Among Trail Users in High-Use Recreation Areas* - UConn- Laura is a graduate student in the Dept. of Natural Resources and the Environment at UConn. She is interested in multiple use public land management. She received her BS from Juniata College. Prior to UConn, she pursued several seasonal positions for the National Park Service and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

Anita Morzillo - *Social Carrying Capacity Among Trail Users in High-Use Recreation Areas* – Uconn - Anita is an Associate Professor in the Dept. Natural Resources and the Environment at UConn. She is a landscape ecologist who focuses on human dimensions of natural resources management and human-environment interactions. Research topics include wildlife management, forest management, nature-based recreation, urban ecosystems, rural communities, and urban-rural relationships.

Clare Cain - *Trail Protection Techniques on Private Land* - CT Forest & Park Association - Clare has served as the Trails Director for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA) since 2009. She is responsible for management of the 825-mile Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System. Clare began her career leading conservation corps teams in Montana and Maine. She also worked as the Director of Trail Management for the North Country Trail Association. She has a 20+ year career in sustainable trail design, volunteer coordination, partnership development, land protection, national scenic trail administration, strategic planning and recreational trail management.

Jeb Stevens - *Trail Protection Techniques on Private Land* - CT Forest & Park Association - Jeb is the Trails Protection Coordinator for the Connecticut Forest & Park Association (CFPA). He received a master's degree in geography from the University of Connecticut, where he conducted research investigating sense of place and perceptions of naturalness. Since joining CFPA, he's taken a leading role in working with landowners and partners to protect access to vulnerable sections of the Blue-Blazed Hiking Trail System. Outside of work, he's an avid outdoor adventure enthusiast and a loving family man.

Carolann Oullette - *Working Together to Grow the Outdoor Recreation Economy* - ME Office of Outdoor Recreation - Carolann was named the first director of the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation in 2018. A graduate of Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration, her career has included time as a whitewater guide, outdoor resort operations manager, restaurant chef/owner, and the Director of the Maine Office of Tourism. She serves on the Maine Sports Commission, Maine Gear Share, Maine Trails Coalition, USM Tourism & Hospitality Program, University of Maine Outdoor Leadership Program, and the Confluence of States. She is a winter sports, hiking and paddling enthusiast, working on her fishing and hunting skills, and an avid traveler.

Emily H. Wilson - *CT Trail Census and CT Trail Finder* - UConn Cooperative Extension - Emily is a Geospatial Educator at the University of Connecticut, Center for Land Use Education and Research (CLEAR). She provides GIS and remote sensing support to CLEAR Extension programs and works to make the state's geospatial information available to all. Emily leads the UConn CT Trails Program where she focuses on trails and trail-related mapping. Emily received BAs in environmental science and botany from Connecticut College and an MS degree in forestry and remote sensing from the University of Maine. Emily loves to hike, bike, read, visit new places, and hang out with her family and friends.

Aaron Budris - *CT Trail Census and CT Trail Finder* - UConn Cooperative Extension - Aaron Budris is the Environmental Planning Director for the Naugatuck Valley Council of Governments where he focuses on planning for trails, bodies of water, open space, and other natural and cultural resources. He also co-founded the Connecticut Trail Census project for which he provides ongoing support. Aaron received his B.A. in Anthropology and M.S. in Geography from Central Connecticut State University. Outside of work, Aaron loves spending time outside hiking, biking, grilling, and pulling (or complaining about) invasive plants!

Neil Johnson - *Improving Equity and Access in the Outdoors for All* - Neil is the Store Manager of REI Co-op in Milford and a founding member of The Connecticut Outdoor Recreation Alliance (CORA). A lifelong active cyclist, skier and hiker, he is passionate about helping all people find their place outdoors, whether on a park bench, on one of CT's myriad trails, beaches, rivers or slopes.

Mick Ferraro - *Building Community to Preserve Outdoor Recreation* - New England Mountain Bike Association (NEMBA) - Membership & Outreach Director. Mick brings a passion for bikes to the NEMBA team that dates back to chasing his brothers on his GT Pro BMX Bike in the 80's. With his first mountain bike race in the mid 90's 24 HR. Granny Gear races, it was clear that the mountain bike would be a part of his life forever. A member of NEMBA since 2006 and a former member of NEMBA Racing, Mick has continued to race and ride throughout the US. Today, he shares his passion for mountain biking and the outdoors as an advocate for the growth of our sport. As a former CCAP mountain bike coach and parent of twin 13 yr old boys; building a future with great trails, access and advocacy is key to the future with NEMBA. Originally from Maryland, Mick is a graduate of Greensboro College (NC). He and his wife Mia, reside in Simsbury with twin boys, Hudson and Hendrix.