

# Defending Our Waters

Working Together to Protect & Restore  
the Nation's Rivers, Coasts & Wetlands

## WaterProtectionNetwork

# MEMBERSHIP MEETING

October 29 & 30, 2019 | Washington, DC

Sponsored by

**MCKNIGHT FOUNDATION**



## Meeting Sessions, Presentations, and Handouts

Tuesday, October 29

### **River Management: Implications for Floods, Droughts, & Habitat**

While most of us are keenly aware of the types of site-specific impacts that result from poorly designed or mismanaged federal water resources projects, the cumulative impacts can be more difficult to assess. In this session, scientific experts will discuss the profound, ecosystem-wide impacts of Corps activities on the Apalachicola River floodplain in Florida and on the way the Mississippi River responds to floods.

- Moderator: **Melissa Samet**, *Senior Water Resources Counsel, National Wildlife Federation*
- **Helen Light**, *Retired Wetland Scientist, US Geological Survey*
  - Handout: [Drying of tupelo swamps caused by long-term decline in water levels in the Apalachicola River](#)
- **Dr. Jonathan Remo**, *Associate Professor in the School of Earth Science and Sustainability and Director of the Environmental Resources and Policy Program at Southern Illinois University*
  - Presentation: [The management of the Mississippi River System: an engineered legacy with a flood of future policy challenges](#)

### **Natural Infrastructure: Cost-Effective Solutions for People & the Environment**

Natural infrastructure solutions that mimic or restore natural systems can provide many benefits to communities, improving public safety while restoring habitats. This session by the World Resources Institute and American Rivers will provide examples of natural infrastructure solutions and tools that will help you advocate for natural infrastructure approaches on your local waterway, and outline federal policy changes that are opening the door to wider use of natural infrastructure approaches in the U.S.

- Moderator: **Jessie Ritter**, *Director, Water Resources and Coastal Policy, National Wildlife Federation*
- **Suzanne Ozment**, *Senior Associate, Natural Infrastructure Initiative, World Resources Institute*
  - Presentation: [Natural Infrastructure for Water Security](#)
- **Eileen Shader**, *Director, River Restoration, American Rivers*
  - Presentation: [Promoting Natural Infrastructure](#)

### **Working with Decision-Makers to Protect Our Waters: Keynote & Discussion**

- **The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy**, *Former Assistant Secretary of the Army-Civil Works*

### Short Film Screening: *Locked*

“Locked”: A short doc about one of the biggest disasters in urban planning in American history you’ve never heard of. “Locked” is a dramatic 100 year history of the Industrial Canal and Lock that dissect the infamous 9th Ward of New Orleans and that have been responsible for multiple catastrophic flooding events in the region. With sea level rise, climate change and coastal erosion, the filmmakers ask why spend a billion on this project when we can use the money for the real problems facing Southeast Louisiana?

- **John Koefler**, *President, Citizens Against Widening the Industrial Canal, New Orleans*
- **Daneeta Loretta Jackson**, *Filmmaker, ElekTriK Zoo Films*
- *Locked*: [Film teaser](#) and [full film](#)
- [Presentation slides by Citizens Against Widening the Industrial Canal](#)

### Strengthening Your Advocacy and Organization: Equity & Inclusion

To be more effective at protecting our watersheds, we need to advance diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice, but *how* do we do this? In this session, we explore the relationships between these complex terms, examples of environmental organizations building equity and inclusion into their work, and recommendations for how to advance equity and inclusion in your own organization and environmental work.

- **Mariah Davis**, *Field Manager, Choose Clean Water Coalition*
- **Ilana Rubin**, *Senior Coordinator, Water Protection Network*
- [Presentation slides](#) and [DEIJ in Action Guide](#)

### Strategies for Greening and Stopping Corps Projects: Collaboration & Pressure Points

Many of us have honed our skills in fighting and improving Corps projects using the familiar tools provided by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, and Clean Water Act (Sections 404 and 401), including by generating technical and general public comments and challenging agency action in court. In this session, we will explore innovative approaches – through engaging local communities, elected officials, and other federal agencies – that can be powerful complements to those traditional strategies to improve and stop Corps projects in order to protect natural and human communities.

- Moderator: **Olivia Dorothy**, *Director, Upper Mississippi River Basin, American Rivers*
- **Randall L. Behm P.E., CFM**, *US Army Corps of Engineers, Rehired Annuitant, Behm Hazard Mitigation, LLC.*
  - Presentation: [Levee Setbacks: “Changing the Playbook to Increase Resiliency & Restore Habitat”](#)
- **Kim Knowles**, *Attorney & Policy Specialist, Prairie Rivers Network*
  - Presentation: [Stop the New Madrid Levee](#)
- **Jill Mastrototaro**, *Policy Director, Audubon Mississippi*
  - Presentation: [What do the House Minority Whip, Navy SEALs, and a GOAT have in common? Mississippi’s Pearl River](#)

**Defending Our Waters:** *Working Together to Protect & Restore the Nation’s Rivers, Coasts, & Wetlands*  
 Water Protection Network 2019 Membership Meeting  
[waterprotectionnetwork.org](http://waterprotectionnetwork.org)

**WPN Legislative Agenda: Transforming Water Resources Planning One Step at a Time**

The Water Protection Network and its member groups have made important progress in improving the Corps of Engineers' planning practices and policies through a series of reforms included in the Water Resources Development Acts. In this session, we will discuss the role that these reforms should be playing in improving Corps planning and outline a collective agenda for making additional progress. We will also discuss best practices for successfully advocating for legislative reforms to Members of Congress and their staff.

- **Melissa Samet**, *Senior Water Resources Counsel, National Wildlife Federation*
  - Presentation: [Transforming Water Resources Planning One Step at a Time](#)
  - Handout: [Natural Infrastructure Success Stories](#)
  - Handout: [Protect and Restore Natural Infrastructure for People and Wildlife](#)
  - Handout: [Highlights of the Water Resources Development Act of 2018](#)
- **Steve Ellis**, *Vice President, Taxpayers for Common Sense*

**Evening Reception**, Sponsored by the McKnight Foundation

Wednesday, October 30

**Making Our Case to Congress: Legislative Agenda Review & Getting Ready for the Hill**

- **Michael Happ**, *Legislative Coordinator, National Wildlife Federation*
  - Presentation: [Lobby Training 101: 10 Steps to a Successful Hill Visit](#)

**WPN member meetings on Capitol Hill**

## Speakers



### **Keynote Speaker: The Honorable Jo-Ellen Darcy**

*Former Assistant Secretary to the Army-Civil Works*

Ms. Jo-Ellen Darcy was the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works (ASACW) from August 2009 through January 2017. Ms. Darcy was the eleventh and longest-serving ASACW on record. As ASACW, she established policy direction and provided supervision of the Department of the Army functions relating to all aspects of the U.S Army Corps of Engineers' Civil Works program, including all reimbursable work performed on behalf of Federal and non-Federal entities, which include programs for conservation and development of the nation's water and wetland resources, flood control, navigation, and shore protection.

Prior to her appointment as ASACW, Jo-Ellen Darcy was the Senior Environmental Advisor to the Senate Finance Committee, responsible for environment, conservation and energy issues. Previously, she was Senior Policy Advisor to the Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, concentrating on water resource and conservation issues involving the Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, as well as nominations for presidentially-appointed positions. At the start of the 107th Congress, she was the Deputy Staff Director for the EPW Committee. From 1993 through 2000, she served as a professional staff member on the EPW Committee, working on a variety of issues, including the Safe Drinking Water Act, Army Corps of Engineers programs, FEMA, Everglades restoration and the Clean Water Act.

Before joining the EPW Committee, Jo-Ellen was a legislative representative for the Investment Company Institute, the trade association representing the mutual fund industry. She worked on water resources and transportation issues for Governor Jim Blanchard of Michigan in both Lansing and Washington, D.C. Previously, she worked for the Subcommittee on Economic Stabilization of the House Banking Committee and was an elementary school teacher.

She hails from Fitchburg, Massachusetts, and has a B.A. in philosophy and sociology from Boston College and a M.S. in resource development from Michigan State University.



**Randall L. Behm P.E., CFM**

*US Army Corps of Engineers, Rehired Annuitant  
Behm Hazard Mitigation, LLC.*

Randall retired from the US Army Corps of Engineers in 2018 after 34 years of service as a professional engineer where he provided services in the areas of sustainable floodplain management, flood risk management, and nonstructural flood damage reduction.

After the 2011 Missouri River flood event, Randall led a multidisciplinary team in the development of a report which highlighted the potential economic, environmental, and flood resiliency benefits of relocating Missouri River levees back from the river. As a result, two separate levee setbacks were implemented, reconnecting portions of the historic floodplain and increasing resiliency to flooding.

Randall is Co-Chair of the Association of State Floodplain Managers' Nonstructural Floodproofing Committee, where activities focus on the advancement of nonstructural flood damage reduction mitigation, from educational outreach to implementation. He also provides consultation from his Behm Hazard Mitigation, LLC and works nationally on the education and implementation of nonstructural mitigation.



**Mariah Davis**

*Field Manager, Choose Clean Water Coalition*

As a Field Manager for the National Wildlife Federation, Mariah manages outreach, grassroots advocacy, and civic engagement efforts to support the Choose Clean Water Coalition's policy priorities. Mariah coordinates conservation organizations efforts in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New York, West Virginia and the District of Columbia. This includes working with conservation organizations at the local, state and regional level to enact sound state policies to ensure progress in the Chesapeake Bay restoration effort.

Mariah is a native to Virginia and has always had a deep affection for civic engagement. Prior to her experience at the Coalition, she drove strategic action at the state and federal level to defend regulatory rollbacks under the EPA's Clean Water Rule and Clean Power Plan. She regularly engaged elected officials on environmental justice issues and played an active role in the formation of Virginia's Advisory Council on Environmental Justice established under Governor McAuliffe.

Mariah is currently pursuing her master's degree in Public Management from the University of Maryland. In 2013, she earned her bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies, with a minor in Chemistry from Virginia Commonwealth University.



**Olivia Dorothy**

*Director, Upper Mississippi River Basin, American Rivers*

Olivia joined American Rivers in 2014 and focuses on reforming the management of the Mississippi River. She facilitates the Nicollet Island Coalition, a group of environmental, taxpayer, and conservation organizations focused on restoring a sustainable Upper Mississippi River through federal policy reform. Prior to working at American Rivers, Olivia worked on similar issues at the Izaak Walton League of America. Before entering the non-profit sector, Olivia worked in Illinois government as a rivers and water policy advisor for Illinois Governor Pat Quinn and Lt. Governor Sheila Simon. Olivia grew up in Urbana, IL and in her free time, she enjoys planning nature excursions with her family. Every year, Olivia takes her family to a different national park and collects selfies with famous rivers. Olivia has a Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences and a Master of Art in Environmental Studies from the University of Illinois.



**Steve Ellis**

*Vice President, Taxpayers for Common Sense*

Steve joined TCS in 1999 and serves as Vice President, overseeing programs and serving as a leading media and legislative spokesperson. A persistent critic of the mounting budget deficit and federal fiscal policy, Steve has testified before numerous Congressional Committees and has appeared on national network news programs, including programs on CBS, NBC, ABC, Fox, CNN, MSNBC, PBS, and NPR. His expertise ranges from earmarks to flood insurance and a lot of spending issues in between.

Steve formerly served as an officer in the U.S. Coast Guard for six years, including tours of duty as a department head and deck watch officer aboard the U.S. Coast Guard Cutter Sorrel, managing the Coast Guard's inland waterway fleet, and managing a small boat-acquisition contract.

Steve received a B.S. in Government from the U.S. Coast Guard Academy. He has earned both the Coast Guard Commendation Medal and the Coast Guard Achievement Medal.



**Daneeta Loretta Jackson**

*Filmmaker, ElekTriK Zoo Films*

Daneeta Loretta Jackson is a native of Southeast Louisiana, a filmmaker, writer, activist and visual artist. She is one half of the creative partnership known as the ElekTriK Zoo with her longtime creative partner and transplant from Sweden, Patrick Jackson. The Jacksons are best known for their award-winning "Down the Road" films and writings that hone in on the experience of working class Louisianans specifically children and the elderly. Their documentaries "Locked" and "Homeland/Wetland" center on water issues in the region where they tell local water stories that have a larger national and international context. They have received funding from the likes of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Louisiana Division of the Arts, the Magnifying Glass, and the New Orleans Film Society.

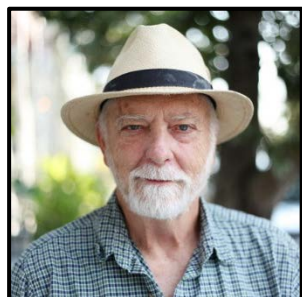


### **Kim Knowles**

*Attorney & Policy Specialist, Prairie Rivers Network*

Kim leads Prairie Rivers Network's efforts to promote resilient rivers and communities through the protection and restoration of natural floodplain functions, and through the promotion of renewable energy, with a particular focus on low income community solar programs.

Kim joined the staff of Prairie Rivers Network in November 2008. She is a former staff attorney for the Missouri Coalition for the Environment and has a long history of working in the public interest, including working with Native American communities. In New Mexico, Kim worked as a staff attorney for Indian Pueblo Legal Services and as a public defender for the Jicarilla Apache Tribe. She also ran a legal program that provided free legal services to the HIV/AIDS community.



### **John Koefler**

*President, Citizens Against Widening the Industrial Canal*

John Koefler has been a community leader in the Lower Ninth Ward of New Orleans. He is president of CAWIC (Citizens Against Widening the Industrial Canal), an environmental group working for years to stop the Inner Harbor Navigation Canal New Lock project. Beginning as a regional planner, John then did carpentry for many years and was an activist in the Holy Cross Neighborhood. He received the 2019 Louisiana Landmark Society's Harnett

Kane Award for lifetime achievement in historic and environmental preservation, largely for work to "Stop the Lock."



### **Helen Light**

*Retired Wetland Scientist, US Geological Survey*

Helen began researching floodplain forests as an FSU master's student studying the Apalachicola River in 1976. Her thesis work led to a career as a wetland scientist with the U.S. Geological Survey focusing on the importance of river flow to forested floodplains of the Apalachicola, Suwannee, and other north Florida rivers. In numerous USGS publications, she and her team defined and mapped wetland forest types, quantified floodplain habitat areas in relation to flow, documented long-term water-level declines from multiple causes, and described drying of tupelo swamps over a 30-year period. She retired from USGS in 2007, but continued work until 2017 as a scientific advisor to Florida Department of Environmental Protection in their ongoing efforts to protect the Apalachicola River and Bay.





### **Jill Mastrototaro**

*Policy Director, Audubon Mississippi*

Jill joined Audubon Mississippi as Policy Director in 2017. In this role, she shapes and leads a dynamic policy agenda to advance conservation priorities and to safeguard special places across Mississippi, the Gulf Coast, and the Mississippi River Flyway. Previously, Jill led the National Wildlife Federation's policy efforts in Mississippi and Alabama, striving to guide billions of recovery dollars from the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil disaster to projects that restore the Gulf. In earlier roles, she catalyzed renewable energy wins in the wake of Hurricane Katrina and secured landmark federal protections for wetlands and public health.

A Connecticut native, her love for the Gulf began after earning a Master's in Environmental Policy from the State University of New York - College of Environmental Science and Forestry, and a B.S. in Environmental Science from the University of Rochester. She co-founded the Land Trust for Louisiana, which has protected 6,000+ acres of valuable lands and waters.



### **Suzanne Ozment**

*Senior Associate, Natural Infrastructure Initiative, World Resources Institute*

Suzanne is an Associate II with World Resources Institute's (WRI) Global Water Program, where she researches the design of profitable strategies to protect and restore watersheds. As member of WRI's Natural Infrastructure for Water team, she works with businesses, financial institutions, and conservation organizations to scope out smart investment opportunities to protect and restore watersheds, and to advance policies that enable strategic watershed management.

Previously at WRI, Suzanne managed WRI's Business and Ecosystem Services Project. In this capacity she implemented ecosystem services projects across six continents, producing research on the interconnections between corporate performance and ecosystem change. She has trained and advised dozens of companies to use The Corporate Ecosystem Services Review, one of the most widely used ecosystem service assessment tools in the world.

Outside WRI, Suzanne has worked in sustainability research at the University of Arkansas Walton College of Business and environmental advocacy at the Ecological Society of America. She has served as a Teaching Fellow at the Yale School of Management and a Consultant for NatureServices Peru, the first certified B Corp in Peru. Suzanne earned her Master of Environmental Management degree from Yale University and her B.A. in Environmental Science and Government from Lawrence University. She is a Yale Fox International Fellow and a Kinship Conservation Fellow.



### **Dr. Jonathan Remo**

*Associate Professor in the School of Earth Science and Sustainability and Director of the Environmental Resources and Policy Program at Southern Illinois University*

Dr. Jonathan Remo is an Associate Professor in the School of Earth Science and Sustainability and Director of the Environmental Resources and Policy Program at Southern Illinois University. Dr. Remo is an interdisciplinary scientist who has over 20 years of professional and academic experience. His professional employment includes five years as an environmental consultant and an additional five years as a disaster mitigation planner. Dr. Remo's academic work includes over a decade of research and instruction in the areas of water resources, natural hazards, and environmental management. As director of the ERP program, he oversees the training and mentoring of Ph.D. students engaged in interdisciplinary research focused natural resource and environmental challenges facing society. Dr. Remo is internationally recognized for his policy-oriented research on large rivers, flooding, and flood mitigation. He has substantial experience working with local- to international- level decision makers, managers, and non-governmental stakeholders on water resource and disaster management issues. Dr. Remo has worked with, consulted for, or received research support from several federal agencies including the Federal Emergency Management Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Geological Survey, Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the National Science Foundation.



### **Jessie Ritter**

*Director of Water Resources and Coastal Policy, National Wildlife Federation*

As Director of Water Resources and Coastal Policy, Jessie leads the development and execution of the National Wildlife Federation's national water resources and coastal policy priorities. She oversees federal campaigns to protect clean water and wetlands and increase the resilience of communities and wildlife in the face of climate change and natural disaster events. Jessie also works to coordinate and steer the National Wildlife Federation's federal advocacy work to restore the Gulf of Mexico region, from the Everglades in South Florida, to the Mississippi River Delta, to Texas estuaries.

Ritter came to the National Wildlife Federation from the U.S. Senate Commerce Committee, where she covered the oceans and atmosphere portfolio under the leadership of Senators Rockefeller and Nelson. She has also worked for a number of national non-profits on federal and state policy issues ranging from fisheries management to water resources to coastal community resilience. She holds a Master of Environmental Management degree from Duke University's Nicholas School, and a B.S. in Zoology from North Carolina State University. Ritter enjoys the amazing food, art, and culture in her home of Washington, D.C, but also loves to escape the city to hike and camp in the many treasured natural places around our country.



**Ilana Rubin**

*Senior Coordinator, Water Resources & Water Protection Network, National Wildlife Federation*

Ilana manages the Water Protection Network, engaging a coalition of more than 250 national, regional, and local organizations to protect and restore the nation's waters. She helps drive large-scale advocacy efforts for the network and the National Wildlife Federation to defend critical environmental laws and to stop the pollution and degradation of natural and human communities.

Ilana is on the Mississippi River Network Steering Committee and partners with other regional water networks and coalitions.

Previously, Ilana worked in disability services, fighting for desegregation and leading a growing program supporting people living with disabilities to find meaningful work in their communities. She also consulted for IUCN and Inspiring Capital during her graduate studies, worked in human resources and education, and served as an AmeriCorps member. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree in Environmental Science & Policy from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs and The Earth Institute, a graduate certificate in Nonprofit Human Services Management from Suffolk University, and a Bachelor's degree in Anthropology from SUNY Plattsburgh. Ilana's favorite bodies of water are Lake Champlain, Horn Pond, and Deception Pass.



**Melissa Samet**

*Senior Water Resources Counsel, National Wildlife Federation*

Melissa Samet is Senior Water Resources Counsel for the National Wildlife Federation where she directs and advises water resources campaigns focused on floodplain protection and improving the projects and programs of the Army Corps of Engineers. Samet has been instrumental in protecting hundreds of thousands of acres of wetlands and other sensitive habitats and in obtaining key water resources planning reforms. She has testified before

Congress and the National Academies, authored numerous articles and reports on water resources policy, and was appointed to a Clean Water Act Federal Advisory Committee. She was awarded a 2009 National Wetlands Award from the Environmental Law Institute. Samet also directed water resources and ocean protection campaigns for American Rivers and Earthjustice, and worked as a litigation attorney in private practice. Samet received her J.D. from the New York University School of Law, and her B.S. in Wildlife Biology from the University of Vermont.

**Eileen Shader**

*Director, River Restoration, American Rivers*

Eileen is Director of River Restoration with American Rivers. Since 2015 she has led American Rivers' national floodplain restoration program from her home state of Pennsylvania. Previously, Eileen worked for American Rivers in Washington, DC advocating to Congress and the federal government to support sound floodplain management policies. Eileen works with partners including the Water Protection Network, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, Natural Floodplain Functions Alliance, and Mississippi River Network to promote floodplain restoration. She holds a B.S. in Environmental Science from Elizabethtown College in Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania, an M.A. in Environmental and Natural Resource Policy from The George Washington University, and a Certificate in Floodplain Management.