

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Friday, November 13 | 1:30 - 3:00 PM | Session A

FRI-A.1: Strategic Questions Workshop: Lead Better Discussions

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Joy Jackson, *Institute for Conservation Leadership*

The quality of your questions can drive the quality of your conversations, and the quality of your conversations can drive the quality of your outcomes. That's true in meetings, in stakeholder engagements, and in the collaborative work that moves people and the planet forward. To that end, this workshop builds on last year's "Strategic Questions and Collaborative Discussions" session by going deeper with more time to practice skills and get real feedback from colleagues. Participants will leave with practical tools to craft questions that open dialogue, invite real engagement, and turn routine gatherings into engaging, productive conversations.

FRI-A.2: Exploring Chesapeake Climate Education & Resilience

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Jennifer Peglow, *Chesapeake Bay Foundation*

Come join us in an interactive exploration of climate change investigations and actions that can be incorporated into your program. Over the last three years, Chesapeake Bay Foundation has worked with schools across the watershed looking for ways to connect our watershed investigation programs to the global climate challenge in a way that makes students and teachers feel motivated and empowered. We want to share our approach and tools with you and discuss how to elevate the climate change education conversation.

FRI-A.3: Culture as Infrastructure: Joy, Community, Conservation

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Teria Powell, *11th Street Bridge Park*

This session explores how culturally rooted events can serve as critical infrastructure for advancing environmental awareness and community engagement. Drawing from the work of 11th Street Bridge Park in Washington, D.C., participants will learn how festivals like the Anacostia River Festival and Taste of the Harvest are designed as platforms where community partners lead conservation-focused programming in culturally relevant ways. Rather than positioning event producers as subject-matter experts, this approach centers their role as connectors and designers of inclusive spaces. Attendees will leave with practical strategies to leverage partnerships, culture, and joy to support deeper, community-driven environmental engagement.

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FRI-A.4: Decision-Support Tools for Resilient Stormwater Management

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

David Wood, *Chesapeake Stormwater Network*
Michele Berry, *Chesapeake Stormwater Network*

This interactive session will introduce participants to two new tools that guide users through the process of utilizing climate projection data in stormwater planning, design, and policy decisions. First, participants will learn about resilient design paradigms, such as climate-informed sizing, system redundancies, and adaptive designs. Then, participants will have the opportunity to apply example scenarios or their own work to the Climate Data Decision Support Tool, which uses intuitive decision trees and helpful case studies to walk users through how to select future precipitation datasets and communicate them to stakeholders based on their own risk orientations and local objectives.

FRI-A.5: Private Foundations 101

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Morgan Goad, *Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*

This session is an introduction to the three main types of private foundations - family, corporate, and community - with a special focus on family foundations. We will cover both foundational (pun intended) information on what foundations are, how they function, what they fund, and what motivates them, as well as practical advice on how to conduct research, determine if your project is a good fit, and write a compelling proposal.

FRI-A.6: Voces de la Cuenca Rising

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Advanced

Abel Olivo, *Defensores de la Cuenca*
J. Abraham López Trejo, *Defensores de la Cuenca*
Svetlana Reyes, *Defensores de la Cuenca*

Experience the Chesapeake Watershed Forum's first all-Spanish session, led by Defensores de la Cuenca. Participants will explore culturally grounded strategies for engaging Spanish-speaking communities across the Chesapeake Bay watershed while experiencing the dynamics of navigating a non-dominant language space. Through case studies, demographic context, and facilitated dialogue, this interactive session will highlight why language justice is essential for environmental engagement and offer practical approaches for building authentic, inclusive partnerships.

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FRI-A.7: NFWF's 30-Year Plan for the Chesapeake

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Advanced

Jake Reilly, *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*

Oleksandr Faryga, *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*

Dianne Russell, *Institute for Conservation Leadership*

Nick Staten, *National Fish and Wildlife Foundation*

In 2026 and 2027, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will embark on a comprehensive update to its Chesapeake Bay Business Plan. These business plans represent NFWF's long-term strategic goals and priorities for NFWF's major conservation landscape, and the next-gen Chesapeake Bay Business Plan will guide NFWF investments in the Bay watershed for the next 30 years. In this session, participants will learn about NFWF's next generation business planning processes, emerging conservation priorities and focus areas, and opportunities to engage with and provide input to NFWF as it crafts its long-term plans for the Bay watershed.

Friday, November 13 | 3:30 - 4:30 PM | Session B

FRI-B.1: Building a Community-based Climate Stewards Academy

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Kristin Mielcarek, *University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center*

Monet Paredes, *University of Maryland Environmental Finance Center*

While the scale of action required to address climate change seems daunting, it is also an opportunity to build community capacity. The Climate Stewards Academy (CSA/the Academy) is a community-based climate education and stewardship program that equips residents and municipal staff to lead on-the-ground climate adaptation and resilience efforts. Developed by the University of Maryland (UMD) Environmental Finance Center (EFC), CSA builds knowledge of climate risks, community engagement, and stewardship strategies. CSA supports stewards in identifying local vulnerabilities, strengthening community connections, and developing projects that advance climate action. By training community members as climate stewards, the Academy expands local capacity for climate solutions in communities.

FRI-B.2: Making the Case: Ecosystem Service Valuation

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Edwin Pinero, *EcoMetrics LLC*

The ability to identify, quantify, and value in monetary terms, the various benefits associated with nature-based solutions helps strengthen the business case and storytelling. Investment in nature-based solutions enhances ecosystem services and increases social return on investment. The enhancements can not only be identified and quantified, but the value created for a multitude of stakeholders can be determined. This valuation allows more informed investment decisions and more complete communications on impact. A

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reforestation case study will be highlighted that demonstrates how such an evaluation helped a project secure support and investment.

FRI-B.3: GSI Maintenance: It Takes a Village!

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Kristen Parsons, *Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*

After four years, the Anacostia Maintenance Small Watershed Grant has concluded, but we aren't done making progress on maintaining existing and new practices & partnerships! Join us for a reflection on the results of this pilot program and our hopes for future maintenance efforts – What lessons were learned in how to best engage and educate residential property owners on the maintenance and long-term functionality of their stormwater practices? Which program components (free inspections, discounted maintenance, hands-on training, etc.) were most utilized? How can this project be a model for other entities to replicate throughout the Chesapeake watershed and beyond?

FRI-B.4: Freshwater Mussel Reintroduction to the Potomac

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Evan Quinter, *Potomac Riverkeeper Network*

Lesley Oot, *Potomac Riverkeeper Network*

The Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN) is investing in an all-natural, ecosystem-building water-quality management practice that can be modeled on other waterways: freshwater mussels. Inspired by Chesapeake Bay oyster programs, the PRKN 50 Million Mussel (50MM) program will reintroduce over 50 million freshwater mussels back into the Potomac River through a combination of academic/agency partnerships, in-situ river Upwellers, and community science initiatives. This session will introduce PRKN's 50MM program, highlight our success and the construction of our new Upweller system, and explore the future of freshwater mussels in the Potomac River and around the Chesapeake Bay.

FRI-B.5: Trees for Shade: Virginia Silvopasture Establishment

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Erik Norell, *Friends of the Rappahannock*

Integrating trees into livestock production offers an adaptive strategy for climate resilience, animal welfare, and watershed stewardship. This session highlights Friends of the Rappahannock's "Trees for Shade" program, a regional pilot providing technical and financial assistance to establish planted silvopasture systems in the Rappahannock and York watersheds. We explore program applications and ongoing partnerships supporting outreach, education, and assistance. This collaboration includes Appalachian Sustainable Development, the York River Steward, Trees for Graziers, and the Virginia Department of Forestry collectively working to implement pilots, deliver training, and adopt a silvopasture practice standard into the Virginia Agricultural Cost-Share program.

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FRI-B.6: Algal Turf Scrubbers: Kidney for Watersheds

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Larry Davis, *Green Mechanics*

Algal Turf Scrubbers (ATS) harness controlled algal growth to pull nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and carbon from polluted waterways, then recycle the harvested biomass. Drawing on Green Mechanics' pilot ATS at Bladensburg Waterfront Park and peer-reviewed research coauthored by Dr. Peter May, this session shows how flow-way systems work, the nutrient loads they capture, and how digested algae can yield circular applications. Attendees will see real performance data, learn how ATS earns recognition as a Chesapeake Bay best management practice, and explore siting, harvesting, and scale-up for nutrient hot-spots—a practical look at turning a water-quality problem into a community asset.

FRI-B.7: Evaluating and Defining Watershed Stream Restoration

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

John Cox, *Lancaster Clean Water Partners*

Dave Goerman, *Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection*

This session focuses on how to identify and categorize watershed alterations, distinguish between treating symptoms and addressing root causes of degradation, evaluate historical and physical drivers of watershed change, and incorporate modern constraints such as infrastructure, funding, and landowner considerations into project planning. Participants will hear how these evidence-based approaches were implemented at the Little Conestoga Creek Blue Green Connector to develop a general understanding and ability to classify projects and communicate watershed improvement goals using consistent terminology. The lessons learned can be applied to feasibility decision-making, project development, permitting, and stakeholder communication.

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Saturday, November 14 | 9:00 AM - 11:30 PM | Session C

SAT-C.1: Nature-Informed Resilience for Environmental Professionals

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All | Maximum Capacity: 20

Kathy Martin, *Center for Nature-Informed Therapy*

Marie Burgess, *Center for Nature-Informed Therapy*

Environmental professionals often experience cumulative stress, emotional fatigue, cognitive overload and burnout while working to support ecosystems and communities. This experiential workshop introduces practical, nature-informed strategies to support resilience and sustainability for the humans doing the work. Grounded in Attention Restoration Theory and Psychoevolutionary Theory, participants will explore how natural environments can support stress recovery, cognitive restoration, and emotional regulation through didactic learning, reflective discussion, and outdoor experiential practices

SAT-C.2: Retrofit Assessment 101

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate | Maximum Capacity: 30

Kristen Bisom, *Center for Watershed Protection*

Alexandria Wilkins, *Center for Watershed Protection*

This workshop will help participants understand the process of preliminary site evaluation for potential green infrastructure retrofits and identify what may be feasible in different settings. Attendees will learn the key preliminary assessment considerations necessary for narrowing down potential green infrastructure projects. The session will start with a classroom overview of how to prepare for assessments, followed by breakout groups for hands-on practice with field assessments. We will then reconvene as a group to debrief and share insights from the fieldwork.

SAT-C.3: Create Interactive Maps for Watershed Action

Room: Computer Lab G24 | Workshop Level: Intermediate | Maximum Capacity: 24

Wansoo Im, *Meharry Medical College*

This hands-on workshop introduces Mapper Lite as a simple, community-friendly tool for creating interactive maps that support watershed education, planning, and action. Participants will learn how to organize local data, design map categories, add photos and descriptions, and share interactive maps with community members, partners, and decision-makers. Using Chesapeake watershed examples, the session will show how residents, students, nonprofits, and agencies can document environmental concerns, community assets, access barriers, and restoration opportunities. Participants will leave with practical steps to create and use their own interactive community mapping project.

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Saturday, November 14 | 9:00 - 10:00 AM | Session D

SAT-D.1: Darling Blight-Tolerant American Chestnut Restoration

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Andrew Newhouse, PhD, *SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry*
John Dougherty, *American Chestnut Restoration, Inc.*

American Chestnut Restoration, Inc. (ACR) and SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry (ESF) will jointly present the Federal regulatory approval status to plant the Darling Blight-Tolerant American Chestnut. The American Chestnut was eliminated from the Chesapeake Bay Upland watershed by a Chinese blight in the first decades of the 20th century. In the upland watershed, the American chestnut tree was approximately 20% of the Chesapeake Bay tree population. ACR and ESF will be introducing the Darling tree starting in 2027. This presentation covers the biotechnology science behind this invention, the production scale-up, and the restoration plans.

SAT-D.2: You (Yes, You!) Are Part of the Donor Cycle

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Rebekah Hock, *Shore Rivers*
Courtney Leigh, *Shore Rivers*

Successful nonprofits rely on diverse fundraising strategies for both stability and flexibility. A staff culture that connects impact with fundraising and prioritizes cultivating relationships with real people must be paramount. Building trust and understanding within your whole team – not just development professionals – about the necessity and enjoyment of bringing people into your mission authentically will create meaningful bonds. The Donor Cycle is much more robust and strategic than just asking for a check. We'll talk about how organizing a personalized rhythm of Awareness, Engagement, Solicitation, and Stewardship strategies can help you attract and retain your most generous supporters.

SAT-D.3: Birding: Gateway to a Better World

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Jack Turner, *Jack Wildlife*

Across the Chesapeake Bay watershed, birding is having a moment, and that moment is here to stay. What was once a hobby reserved for the retired, birding has seen a surge in participation across age groups and diverse demographics. The act of birding is simple, yet its impact can ripple throughout society, changing the way we treat nature and how we steward the environment. Join Jack Wildlife to explore how bird watching can lead us into a better world through careful observation, connection, and community. Learn about important services that birds provide and how YOU can be a 'Bird Champion'.

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SAT-D.4: When the Backyard Becomes the Basin

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Patrick Moran, *Tactical Land Care LLC/TLC Design*

Small urban lots often carry more stormwater responsibility than their size suggests. This case study follows an Old Town Alexandria townhome project where a backyard at the lowest point of the block was receiving runoff from neighboring downspouts and an alley. The retrofit combined site diagnosis, permeable hardscape, rain garden function, retention capacity, upcycled raised beds, edible planting, and client education. Participants will learn how to identify hidden drainage inputs, communicate constraints, phase practical interventions, and turn small residential sites into maintainable watershed assets.

Saturday, November 14 | 10:30 AM - 12:00 PM | Session E

SAT-E.1: Culinary Experiences Advancing Habitat Stewardship

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

David Sikorski, *Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland*
Mollie Rudow, *Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland*

The Great Chesapeake Invasives Count and “I Caught This, Now What?” programs innovatively tackle challenges presented by invasive fish species by providing unique opportunities for prospective and existing recreational anglers to engage in citizen science and build meaningful connections to Chesapeake waterways. In this session, we will explore how utilizing citizen science and culinary experiences enhance angler stewardship potential and create engagement pipelines.

SAT-E.2: Creative Community Engagement for Impact

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Dianne Russell, *Institute for Conservation Leadership*
Emily Smedley, *Berks County Community Foundation*
Liadel Lichty, *Community Foundation for the Alleghenies*

How can groups and collaborations understand the needs within the communities they serve and use engagement strategies to create lasting impact? This session will present three different examples of community engagement – featuring work done with Berks County Community Foundation and the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies. The session will discuss engagement methods like future visioning, one-on-one relationship development, interviews with experts outside the community, engaging meeting processes, the use of advisory groups, and reports to support decision-making. The session will also use engagement methods throughout as a demonstration. Additional tools for community engagement will also be provided.

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SAT-E.3: Baltimore Social-Environmental Collaborative: Lessons Learned for Climate-Ready Communities

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

James Hunter, Morgan State University

Khalia Young, Morgan State University

DJ Carter, Morgan State University

Shamara Collins, Morgan State University

Xin Zhou, Morgan State University

This session explores lessons from the Department of Energy-sponsored urban integrated field laboratory, Baltimore Social-Environmental Collaborative (BSEC), and its urban climate science fieldwork and community engagement. We'll showcase how university researchers and community stakeholders collaborated to co-design climate solutions, from weather stations to understanding green infrastructure impacts. Participants will learn how community priorities shaped research outcomes and how we engaged neighborhoods before, during, and after. We'll highlight tools like story maps and citizen science programs that informed both community decisions and future research directions.

SAT-E.4: Stewarding Data: Practical Organizational Strategies

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Erin Hofmann, The Commons

Successful reporting, evaluation, storytelling, and fundraising require a blend of organizational culture, community connection, and durable data. That data piece is valuable, but finicky. Like conservation work, data needs stewardship. Data's usefulness and value either depreciate through one-time use or appreciate through stewardship. Using a pragmatic data stewardship framework, participants will identify where data workflows break down and design a plan tailored to their mission, programs, and systems. This session is for people who know they need stronger data management practices but rarely have time to start. The next time a funder asks for a report, you'll be ready.

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Saturday, November 14 | 1:30 - 3:00 PM | Session F

SAT-F.1: Ethical & Intentional AI for Practitioners

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Michael Lynn, *AI and Ecology*

Most conservation practitioners are already using AI in some form. Few are using it intentionally. This session closes that gap. We briefly address the ethical concerns most practitioners know and give them a framework to mitigate many of the negative impacts to produce a net positive impact. Then we move into how to make AI work for your specific workflows. Every participant leaves with a personal context document, several real prompts tied to their own work, and a practical implementation plan they can act on immediately. No technical background required.

SAT-F.2: Building School Partnerships for Real-World Impact

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Angela Whittaker, *Institute for Humane Education*

Dr. Julie Meltzer, *Institute for Humane Education*

Participants will learn specific actions to build and strengthen partnerships with K-12 teachers and administrators. Presenters will share key steps for communicating with educators, understanding school requirements, and designing outdoor learning experiences that address environmental literacy, academic standards, and workforce-readiness competencies. Participants will develop an action plan to connect with schools and create high-quality, academically enriching experiences for students throughout the year. All attendees will leave with access to curated resources and lesson plans.

SAT-F.3: Unpacking Capacity Building for Watershed Groups

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Emily Vail, *Hudson River Watershed Alliance*

This session will dive deep into how the Hudson River Watershed Alliance (HRWA) and River Network have worked to understand watershed groups' needs and develop targeted programming to support their critical, but often under-resourced, mission-driven work. Through thoughtful needs assessments and creative program development, this partnership deployed a multi-pronged approach to increasing tangible work outcomes, relational infrastructure, and realized capacity with watershed groups of all kinds. Join us for a discussion to unpack that eyebrow-raising buzz phrase, "capacity building," and workshop ways to address the real needs of local groups wherever you work!

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SAT-F.4: Unexpected Conflict Skills

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Sharon Kniss, *Cooperative by Design*

Mismanaged conflict can threaten even our best-designed practical solutions. Preparing for and navigating conflict well is therefore a foundational skill – and practical solution in itself – for watershed success. This session goes beyond traditional listening skills, perspective-taking, and negotiation techniques to explore some “unexpected” conflict skills to reduce reactivity, deepen insight, expand our options, and deal with perennial tensions. Participants will leave this practical and interactive session with new skills and tools to apply to transform their approach to conflict – whether dealing with complex multiparty conflicts, organizational change, or interpersonal challenges.

SAT-F.5: Connect, Monitor, Act: A Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative Volunteer Toolkit

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Matthew Kierce, *Izaak Walton League of America*

Alex Fries, *Integration and Application Network, University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science*

Volunteer water monitors generate invaluable data, but many are unsure what their measurements mean or where their data ultimately goes. The Chesapeake Monitoring Cooperative (CMC) developed Getting Started: A CMC Volunteer Toolkit to connect volunteers and coordinators to the full arc of community science, from parameters in the field to decisions in the watershed. This session introduces toolkit resources connecting community concerns to measurable parameters, explaining how to measure and interpret results, showing where data goes once uploaded, and highlighting real-world volunteer impact. Participants will then apply these resources through a hands-on group activity.

SAT-F.6: Conservation Speed-Dating: Connecting Landowners with Conservation

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

October Greenfield, *The Piedmont Environmental Council*

Linnea Sherman, *The Piedmont Environmental Council*

The Virginia Grassland Bird Initiative developed "Conservation Speed-Dating Workshops" to accelerate the adoption of conservation practices by providing farmers and landowners with a fun, engaging way to meet local technical service providers. This innovative format streamlines the connection between landowners and the specific people, programs, and resources that best suit their conservation goals. These workshops have been adopted by organizations in other states, including Vermont, Maryland, and Wisconsin. This session will include the evolution and successes of these workshops, how to replicate and adapt them for any community, and an interactive mock speed-dating component to teach the concept to participants.

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SAT-F.7: Chesapeake Bay Watershed Strategic Plan (Draft)

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: All

Sarah Brzezinski, *Environmental Protection Agency, Chesapeake Bay Program Office*
Julie Lawson, *District Department of Energy and Environment*

The Chesapeake Bay Watershed Agreement defines the goals and outcomes that the Chesapeake Bay Program has committed to implement to restore, conserve, and protect the Chesapeake Bay and its watershed. This dynamic federal-state partnership coordinates science, restoration, and conservation activities in support of thriving habitats, fisheries and wildlife, clean water, healthy landscapes, and engaged communities. Partners are currently developing a Strategic Plan, which will outline the means for accomplishing each goal and outcome. Join Goal Team Chairs and Chesapeake Bay Program Coordinators to learn about the key challenges and management approaches being proposed, and how you can provide input.

Saturday, November 14 | 3:30 - 4:30 PM | Session G

SAT-G.1: Practical Solutions for Agricultural Nutrient Loss

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Quirine Ketterings, *Cornell University*
Ray Weil, *University of Maryland*

A large majority of the remaining nitrogen reductions needed to meet Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) goals are expected to come from agriculture—yet many farmers already use nutrient management, no-till, and cover crops. So what's next? Quirine Ketterings and Ray Weil will share practical, field-tested strategies and evaluation tools to improve manure and nutrient utilization and maximize nitrogen capture, including manure injection and early-planted, high-biomass cover crops. Participants will explore how these approaches reduce input costs and nutrient loss while identifying barriers and actionable strategies to advance adoption through programs, policy, and watershed restoration efforts.

SAT-G.2: The Case for "In-Situ" Rain Gardens

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Katie Scott, *Coastal Resources, Inc*
Adam Stoumen, *Coastal Resources, Inc*
Mike Clar, PE, *Ecosite LLC*
Megan Diehl, *Chesapeake Bay Trust*

Conventional bioretention and stormwater retrofit practices often rely on extensive excavation, soil disposal, underdrain systems, and engineered media replacement that increase project costs, carbon footprint, timelines, and long-term maintenance demands while reducing water quality benefits. The emerging "in-situ" soil approach instead works with nature to use the existing soil function through ecological engineering principles, simple

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soil rejuvenation techniques, and native vegetation. The session will highlight how deep tilling, sub-soiling, adding well-aged compost, preservation of existing healthy soils, and using native plants can improve infiltration capacity, reduce compaction, support biological activity, and restore hydrologic function in disturbed urban and suburban sites.

SAT-G.3: Piloting Community Forestry in Frederick, MD

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Kylie Baker, *Mobilize Frederick*

Launching a community forestry and workforce development pilot program isn't easy, but it's worth the work! Hear from Mobilize Frederick about their experience introducing the "Cooler Neighborhoods project" to the Frederick, MD community and how they combatted each challenge with a fruitful solution. Cooler Neighborhoods united local residents, community stakeholders, and young adult workers to plant and maintain free trees across the City, moving closer towards the City's tree canopy goal and cultivating a path for youth interested in working in the environmental field.

SAT-G.4: Biochar Implementation Opportunities in the Chesapeake

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Intermediate

Alexandria Wilkins, *Center for Watershed Protection*
Kristen Bisom, *Center for Watershed Protection*

This presentation will provide an introduction and overview of Phase I and Phase II of the Biochar Partnership for the Chesapeake projects. Our discussion will share how biochar amendment can be beneficial to stormwater best management practices (BMPs). Project implementation case studies from Phase I show how biochar was implemented into different types of stormwater BMPs. Our discussion will focus on lessons learned and the impacts observed over time when compared to unamended BMPs. The session will conclude with how attendees can learn more about the potential to include biochar in their future projects as a part of the Phase II project.

SAT-G.5: Science-Based Storytelling That Moves People

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Stephen Heverly, *The Hatcher Group*

We all got into this work because something moved us: a place, a person, a moment on the water. But when it's time to communicate our impact, we often default to reports and data points. There's good news: brain science shows that pairing data with narrative makes messages stickier, more memorable, and more likely to inspire action. This session bridges the gap between data and human connection by exploring what stories resonate. Whether you are writing grants, engaging landowners, or sharing restoration wins with your community, you'll leave with a proven, repeatable framework to translate complex watershed data into audience-centered narratives.

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SAT-G.6: State & Local Governments Shape Restoration

Room: 114 IE | Workshop Level: Introductory

Maggie Woodward, *Chesapeake Bay Commission*
Laura Cattell Noll, *Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay*

We all share the goal of a vibrant watershed and a restored Chesapeake Bay, but why are our approaches so varied? Focusing on Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia, this session will look at how differences in state and local government structures and culture shape how leaders tackle Bay restoration. We will discuss where policy starts, how state- and local-level policy interact, and how government priorities flow into implementation using illustrative examples of contrasting approaches to common problems across jurisdictions. We hope to develop an interactive exercise that will help attendees understand opportunities and limitations at each level.

SAT-G.7: Troubleshooting Recirculating Aquaculture Systems (RAS) for Sustainable Food Production

Room: TBD | Workshop Level: Introductory

Kayla Fairfield, *Freshwater Institute*

Aquatic foods play an important role in human diets, yet reliance on wild fisheries can strain aquatic ecosystems. Recirculating aquaculture systems (RAS) offer a practical solution for food production, utilizing less freshwater and discharging fewer nutrients than other forms of aquaculture or terrestrial agriculture. However, RAS is not a perfect industry; it faces ongoing challenges with high energy demands, waste management, and steep initial costs. Addressing these hurdles requires continuous technological and operational refinement. This presentation highlights how collaborative, interdisciplinary advancements are tackling these challenges, driving efficient resource utilization to ensure long-term food security and genuine environmental health.