



2023 CHESAPEAKE WATERSHED FORUM CALL FOR SESSION PROPOSALS

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 11:59 PM on Sunday, June 11, 2023

BACKGROUND AND THEME

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay will hold the 18th Annual Chesapeake Watershed Forum on November 3 - 5, 2023 at the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) in Shepherdstown, WV. This watershed-wide event reaches up to 400 restoration and conservation practitioners annually to inspire and empower local action towards clean water. We do this by:

- Sharing successful tools and techniques,
- Offering lessons and learnings from on-the-ground work,
- Building the capacity of local organizations,
- Fostering partnerships,
- Educating on new initiatives and emerging practices,
- Facilitating networking with each other, and
- Celebrating our successes.

Our theme for 2023 is “Private Investment in Sustainable Partnerships to Achieve Clean Water Goals.”

Consumer demand and preference help drive private sector priorities and investments. An increasing number of consumers seek to lead an ethical and sustainable lifestyle reflected in the products they consume and economies they support. As a result, an increasing number of partnerships between the private and the non-profit, governmental, academic and other sectors have formed to respond to consumer demands around sustainability, conservation, and local community investment. In the Chesapeake Bay watershed, we see these partnerships act by adopting and promoting clean water and climate-resilient best practices, greening supply chains, investing in green economies in marginalized communities, reducing carbon footprints, and more.

This year's Forum will highlight examples of successful, sustainable, and equitable examples of such partnerships. We are particularly interested in partnerships where there is investment of corporate resources, private dollars, and/or impactful business policy changes. We are further interested in how these partnerships reckon with and address historic injustices and are proactively working with under-resourced stakeholders.



We will showcase pathways for accessing new or existing partnerships of different sizes and scales, from landscape-scale restoration efforts with international corporations to local, community-based systems and endeavors. Additionally, we will feature innovative solutions and new scientific approaches that drive these partnership efforts towards achieving ambitious sustainability goals.

The Alliance is committed to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in all partnerships and recognizes that systems have historically left out underrepresented communities. Therefore, we will emphasize partnerships that prioritize equity and justice in their decision-making processes, and showcase examples of partnerships that are committed to creating equitable and sustainable solutions for all.

A NOTE ON COVID-19

The Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay and the National Conservation Training Center (NCTC) are committed to the safety of the staff, speakers, and all conference attendees. All staff, presenters, and attendees must abide by the Alliance's and NCTC's COVID-related policies. The following policies and procedures are in place to ensure all who visit the campus understand how we manage operations with your safety in mind.

- Please read the [NCTC COVID-19 information page](#) in its entirety.
- Please do not travel to NCTC if you are currently experiencing COVID-19 symptoms; if you have been exposed to COVID-19; or you have been ill within 10 days of the Forum.
- Indoor mask wearing requirements will depend on COVID-19 [Community Transmission levels](#) in Jefferson County, WV.
- If you develop symptoms at the Forum, there is a nurse on site that can conduct a covid test.

All COVID policies are subject to change based on local, state, and federal regulations or CDC recommended best practices.

FORUM SESSION GUIDELINES

Proposal Evaluation:

- We will evaluate each proposal using the rubric provided at the end of this document. A maximum possible score is 30 points for 90 and 180 minute sessions, 25 points for 60 minute sessions.



- We aim to serve our entire Forum audience by offering balanced content tailored to three different knowledge/experience levels:
 - Introductory or Early Career: 100 college course level or less than 5 year professional experience;
 - Intermediate or Mid-Career: 200 – 400 college course level or 5+ years professional experience; or
 - Advanced or Late Career: Graduate level or 10+ years professional experience.

Please select the knowledge/experience level that best reflects your target audience when submitting your proposal. If you feel strongly that your session transcends a specific experience level, you may submit your proposal without selecting one.

- More than one session proposal may be submitted, but each proposal must be submitted separately.
- The Forum Planning Team may ask speakers to condense more than one proposal into a single session based on shared themes or topics. Please note in your application your willingness to do so.

Presenter Expectations:

- The Chesapeake Watershed Forum is an in person conference. All presenters will be present on-site at NCTC in Shepherdstown, WV.
- One presenter per session will receive free registration to the conference for the day they are presenting. All other presenters must pay their own registration or may apply for a scholarship.
- Speakers are expected to attend a webinar on giving effective and meaningful presentations in September 2023. In the two weeks leading up to the Forum, presenters giving 90- or 180-minute sessions must also participate in a virtual run-through of their session with Alliance staff or planning team members in preparation for the event.
- The Alliance may consider offering honorariums for speakers on a limited basis. If you or a co-presenter will require an honorarium in order to speak at this year's event, please note this request in your application.

Specific Guidelines Related to Session Length:

- Sessions are scheduled for 60 minutes, 90 minutes or 180 minutes.
 - **60 minute sessions** spotlight a case study(s) or introduce new, innovative, and/or hot topics.
 - No more than two presenters per 60 minute session will be accepted.

- An exception to this rule will be made if the proposal is for a series of lightning round presentations (10-12 minutes each - three presenters). Please note who will be organizing the lightning round, theme for the session, and topics covered.
 - 60 minute sessions will not be graded by the participant engagement criteria in the rubric.
- **90 minute sessions** are in-depth presentations that facilitate discussion and application to activities and organizations at the local level. Panel presentations are discouraged.
 - We strongly encourage no more than three presenters per 90 minute session. Lodging at NCTC is limited, and we do not guarantee presenters will be housed on site. The more presenters in your session, the more likely some will be housed off-site during the Forum.
 - Panel presentations are discouraged.
- **180 minute sessions** are an opportunity to lead a deeper discussion into a topic of choice about which the presenter(s) have special experience, knowledge, or expertise. 180 minute sessions are well-suited for workshops or field trips.
 - The 180 minute sessions must be held on Saturday, November 4.
 - The 180 minute sessions may occur on or off the NCTC campus. Classroom space, computer labs, and an extensive paved and unpaved trail system are available on the NCTC campus to incorporate into your session. If off campus, travel should be included in the 180 minutes.
 - Please be specific in your proposal about any expected costs (e.g., materials, entrance fees, bus rentals, boat rentals, etc.). The Alliance will work with you to either cover all of the costs associated with your activity or to build in an additional fee for participants to cover remaining expenses.
 - Please consider if your session is accessible to people of all abilities and specify in the proposal if there will be any restrictions or limitations (e.g., farm tour requires walking on rough terrain).

SESSION TOPICS TO CONSIDER

The following list includes priority topics for sessions under the key focal areas of the Forum. We also encourage unrelated submissions, especially if the topic is theme-related and creative. However, proposals that relate to the priority topics identified below by the Forum Planning Committee likely will receive a higher ranking than others (see evaluation rubric).

| Focal Area | Priority Topics | |
|--|---|--|
| Restoration | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture (rural/urban/suburban) • Riparian forest buffers • Urban tree canopy • Emerging green technologies • Permaculture • Forest gardening | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soil health and climate • Practice maintenance • Wetlands • Green stormwater infrastructure • New Best Management Practices • Conservation landscaping/design • Green energy |
| Conservation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and urban woodland management • Policies and laws • Climate resiliency • Landscape-scale | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife research/identification • Chesapeake Bay 101 • Native plants research/identification • Agriculture (rural/urban/suburban) |
| Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging diverse community partnerships • Workforce development • Environmental justice | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Traditional ecological knowledge • Policy change/advocacy • Collective Impact • Trauma-informed care |
| Education and Engagement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art and the Environment • Behavior change • Organizing grassroots campaigns • Water quality monitoring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging rural landowners OR absentee landowners OR non-traditional audiences • Youth engagement • Ecotherapy |
| Organizational Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diversifying funding • Fundraising • Introductory grant writing • Large event planning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Navigating multi-generational workspaces • Volunteer management • Expanding from sponsorship to sponsorship and community engagement. |
| Personal Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced leadership training • Volunteer skill development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young professional skill development |
| Communications | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic graphic design • Data interpretation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Media engagement • Social media and marketing for small nonprofits |
| Holistic Wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-care • Connect with nature | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Connection |

ONLINE PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Each proposal must include/answer the following:

- Title of proposed session (6 words or less).
- Under which focal area (see page 3) does your session fall? Which topic will your session focus on?
- A short summary/abstract (100 words or less).
- Describe your target audience, their knowledge and experience level.
- List the practical lessons and/or skills your target audience will take away from this session. Please be specific as to why these are practical lessons and/or skills best suited for the target audience's knowledge/skill level. Are these lessons and/or skills relevant and transferable across sectors? If so, how?
- 90 and 180 minute sessions only: How will you engage participants in your session? Do you intend to share your content beyond the traditional lecture format? If so, how?
- How does your session relate to the theme?
- Does your session address diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice (DEIJ) issues in the environmental sector? If so, how?
 - Please note, while we ask all presenters to consider their project through a DEIJ lens, we acknowledge that this can be a challenge for some to do so authentically given their proposed session's content. We encourage you to address these questions as best as you are able.
- Does your presentation include underrepresented voices? If so, how? Including, but is not limited to, underrepresented communities, unique partnerships, farming/agriculture sector, community groups, etc.
- Is this a 60, 90 or 180 minute session?
 - 60 minute sessions only: Is this a lightning round session? If so, please note who will be organizing the lightning round, theme for the session, and topics covered.



- 180 minute sessions only: logistics of session that must include length, maximum number of attendees, cost, accessibility, and any specific equipment/clothing the participants should bring.
- Biography for each presenter (100 words or less).
- Have you presented at the Forum before? If so, how many times?
- Do you or another speaker need an honorarium in order to present at the Forum?
- Are you willing to combine your proposed session with one or more others into a single session at the discretion of the Forum planning team? Please note, we will only offer one one-day scholarship for the combine session, with the other co-presenters able to apply for scholarships.

Where do I go to submit my session proposal?

[Click here](#) to submit your proposal. Please plan to prepare your proposal ahead of submitting your session via the online portal.

Forum Proposal Office Hours

The Alliance and our planning team are offering office hours to anyone who wants feedback on a proposal concept prior to submission. Office hour availability and sign up can be found [here](#).

For further information or questions about the guidelines, please contact Jenny McGarvey at jmccgarvey@allianceforthebay.org or (804) 977-1657.

| Evaluation Criteria | Poor (1 Point) | Fair (2 Points) | Good (3 Points) | Very Good (4 Points) | Excellent (5 Points) |
|--|--|--|--|---|--|
| 1. Timeliness, importance, and appropriateness of the topic to the field and participants' interests and priorities (based on abstract) | The topic is not current or appropriate to the field or to the Forum participants. I would not attend this session. | The topic is somewhat relevant to the field and/or the Forum participants, but is not current. I probably would not attend this session. | The topic may not be current, but is a priority topic to Forum participants (as noted in the RFP). I may attend this session. | The topic is current, immediately relevant, and important to the field, but it does not focus on a priority topic for Forum participants. I would probably attend this session. | The topic is cutting-edge, relevant, and groundbreaking to the field. It also is a priority topic for Forum participants. I would definitely attend or recommend this session. |
| 2A. Practical Application and Transferability (e.g., skill building, problem solving, action planning) <u>IF PROPOSAL TARGETS A SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE OR EXPERIENCE LEVEL</u> | No stated practical application in the proposal, or no attempt to connect practical applications to their target audience. | | The practical applications appear to be for the target audience, but lessons are too broad and/or self-evident to be valuable. | | The proposal content illustrates a clear practical application to the target audience. The learning outcomes are novel and important, and participants cannot find similar content elsewhere. It includes valuable resources that a specific set of attendees would highly appreciate. |
| 2B. Practical Application and Transferability <u>IF PROPOSAL IS FOR GENERAL AUDIENCE</u> | No stated practical application in the proposal or the practical applications appear to be for a subset of attendees, not a broad range of participants. | | The practical applications appear to be for a broad range of participants, but lessons are too broad and/or self-evident to be valuable. | | The proposal content illustrates a clear practical application to a broad range of participants. This content is novel and important, and participants cannot find similar content elsewhere. It includes valuable resources that many an attendee would highly appreciate. |
| 3. Participants' Engagement <u>FOR 90 OR 180 MINUTE SESSIONS ONLY</u> | There is no evidence of meaningful interaction with the participants beyond the traditional lecture format. | The proposal includes some vague or poorly defined activities to engage the participants beyond the traditional lecture format, and/or the activities proposed are inappropriate for the session type and use of time. | The proposal includes at least one clearly defined activity to engage the participants beyond the traditional lecture format, and is appropriate for the session type and use of time. | The proposal includes several clearly defined activities to engage the participants beyond the traditional lecture format, and are appropriate for the session type and use of time. | The proposal includes several clear, compelling, unique, and well-detailed activities to engage the participants, and are appropriate for the session type and use of time. |
| 4. Relevancy to the Forum theme | The topic is not relevant to the Forum theme. | The topic is related only tangentially to the Forum theme. | The topic may not be current or groundbreaking, but is relevant to the Forum theme. | The topic is current, important, and relevant to the Forum theme. | The topic is cutting-edge, relevant, and groundbreaking and relevant to the Forum theme. |
| 5. Proposal addresses DEI/J issues in the environmental sector. | There is no connection made to diversity, equity, inclusion and justice in the proposal. | Connections made to the topic of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice are vague and fail to provide examples, commitment or understanding of the concepts. | The proposal demonstrates some concepts of diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice. | The proposal indicates some experience, commitment, and/or understanding in working in the DEI/J space. | The proposal content clearly addresses one or more DEI/J issues in the environmental sector. It also provides examples of intentional engagement with underrepresented populations. |
| 6. Presentation uplifts underrepresented voices. This includes, but is not limited to underserved communities, unique partnership, farming/agriculture sector, etc. | There is no apparent representation of underrepresented voices within this proposed presentation. | The proposal is vague and fails to mention specific actions for incorporating underrepresented voices into the presentation. | The proposal makes an effort but lacks concrete examples and/or experiences including underrepresented voices. | The proposal demonstrates an understanding and acceptance of equity, inclusion, diversity and environmental justice concepts but it does not necessarily uplift or integrate those voices into the content. | The proposal details how the presentation will incorporate underrepresented voices. These voices are integrated well into the presentation content and format and/or share successful experiences working with underrepresented populations. |

