



The Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment  
presents ...



# CONGRESS

# 2019 *Sustainability Justice*

Sept. 24-25, 2019  
Illini Union Rooms B-C  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign





# Welcome

Environmental justice, the theme of the 2019 iSEE Congress, began as a social movement two decades ago, and is now a keystone concept driving the broader sustainability project.

Simultaneously representing a field of scholarship, political agenda, and framework for understanding our fast-changing world, the marriage of social justice and sustainability has moved beyond its initial focus on the inequitable distribution of environmental burdens to incorporate a range of pressing social and ecological issues — Black Lives Matter, indigenous rights, climate change, and biodiversity loss, to name just a few — within a unifying framework that strives to realize sustainable justice for all.



But as human rights advocates know, the concept of justice can be defined in multiple ways, and its implementation into policy, environmental law, ecological design and planning, not to mention global trade, faces great challenges.

For example: which social dimension to prioritize — race, class, gender, or age? How to balance the costs of conservation and resilience with poverty alleviation? And what is the role of biophysical sciences, engineering, law, and other academic disciplines in advancing the goals of sustainability justice?

Over two days, “Sustainability Justice” will bring together a diverse group of researchers, educators, journalists, and activists to discuss these urgent questions. The goals of this Congress are to introduce the Illinois campus and community to cutting-edge issues surrounding sustainability and social justice, to build bridges across different approaches, disciplines, and geographies, and to chart new directions toward a sustainable — and just — future.

Our panelists and keynote speakers will help generate a lively conversation, and we welcome you all to Congress 2019!

Gillen D’Arcy Wood  
 iSEE Associate Director for Education & Outreach  
 Professor of English  
 University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

# Congress Schedule

*Conference attendees, please note: You are invited to join us for coffee breaks and lunch (if you have signed up for lunch). However, dinner is by invitation only.*

## TUESDAY, SEPT. 24

### 3-3:15 p.m. — Welcome, Opening Remarks

- Susan Martinis, Vice Chancellor for Research, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- McKenzie Johnson, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### 3:15-4:45 p.m. — Panel 1: “What is Sustainability Justice, and Who Decides?”

*Moderator McKenzie Johnson, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Jaskiran Dhillon, Associate Professor of Global Studies and Anthropology, The New School: “Indigenous Resistance, Planetary Dystopia, and the Politics of Environmental Justice”
- Samuel Bagg, Prize Postdoctoral Fellow in Politics, Nuffield College, Oxford: “Beyond Deliberation and Participation: Power and Democratization in Sustainability Justice”
- Shanondora Billiot, Assistant Professor of Social Work, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: “Interconnectedness of Environmental Justice, Land Loss, and Shared Cultural Experiences: Participation and Transmission of Indigenous Knowledge”

### 4:45-5 p.m. — Coffee Break

### 5-6:30 p.m. — Roundtable: “Flint and Beyond: Sustainable Water”

*Moderator Ann-Perry Witmer, Teaching Associate in Grainger College of Engineering, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Michael Mascarenhas, Associate Professor of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management, University of California at Berkeley
- Danielle Purifoy, Carolina Postdoctoral Fellow of Geography, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
- Mary Pat McGuire, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

### 6:30-7:15 p.m. — Reception

### 7:30-9 p.m. — Dinner by Invitation

## WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 25

### 8:15-8:45 a.m. — Coffee & Pastries

### 8:45-10:15 a.m. — Panel 2: “Green Spaces, Just Places”

*Moderator Ken Salo, Clinical Assistant Professor of Urban & Regional Planning, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Frances ‘Ming’ Kuo, Associate Professor of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: “Greater Justice via Greater Sustainability? How Greening Inner Cities Can Sustain Both People and the Environment”
- William Stewart, Professor of Recreation, Sport & Tourism, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: “All Urban Greening is Not Equal: Resident-Led Beautification of Vacant Lots”
- Winifred Curran, Professor and Chair of Geography, DePaul University: “Just Green Enough: Contesting Environmental Gentrification”



**10:15-10:45 a.m. — Coffee Break****10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. — Panel 3: “Climate Justice”**

*Moderator Daniel Miller, Assistant Professor of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Summer Gray, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies, University of California at Santa Barbara: “Climate Justice or Just Adaptation?”
- Tony Reames, Assistant Professor in School for Environment and Sustainability, University of Michigan: “The Intersection of Energy & Climate Justice: Spatial, Racial, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies”
- John Daigle, Professor of Forest Recreation Management, University of Maine at Orono: “The Importance of Indigenous Voices in the Face of Climate and Large-Scale Environmental Changes”

**12:15-1 p.m. — Lunch****1-2 p.m. — Keynote Address**

*Introduction by Pollyanna Rhee, Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in Environmental Humanities, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Kimberly Wasserman, Executive Director, Little Village Environmental Justice Organization, Chicago: “Environmental Justice: Communities of Resistance”

**2-2:15 p.m. — Coffee Break****2:15-4 p.m. — Panel 4: “Race, Housing, Pollution”**

*Moderator Natalie Koster, Levenick Resident Scholar in Sustainability Leadership, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Peter Christensen, Assistant Professor of Agricultural & Consumer Economics, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: “Housing Discrimination and the Pollution Exposure Gap in the United States”
- Spencer Banzhaf, Professor of Economics, Georgia State University: “Environmental Justice: A View from Economics”
- Rachel Morello-Frosch, Professor of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management and Public Health, University of California at Berkeley: “Harmonizing Sustainability and Environmental Justice Goals in Climate Change Policies — the Case of California”
- Brentin Mock, Staff Writer, CityLab, Washington, D.C.: “When Local Narratives Control the Narrative: Why Your Sustainability Solution Won’t Work”

**4-4:15 p.m. — Coffee Break****4:15- 5:30 p.m. — Panel 5: “Sustainability Justice: Thinking Globally”**

*Moderator Zsuzsa Gille, Professor of Sociology, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- Kim Suiseeya, Assistant Professor of Political Science, Northwestern University: “The Justice Gap in Global Forest Governance”
- Debarati Sen, Associate Professor of Anthropology, Kennesaw State University: “Situating Aspiration in the Quest for Sustainability and Global Justice”
- Giovanna Di Chiro, Professor of Environmental Studies, Swarthmore College: “Whose House is on Fire? Rethinking the Global Commons”

**5:30-6:15 p.m. — Reception****6:15-7:30 p.m. — Keynote Address**

*Introduction by Colleen Murphy, Professor of Law, Philosophy, and Political Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign*

- John Knox, Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law, Wake Forest University: “The Human Right to a Healthy Environment”

**7:30 p.m. — Close**

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 1 — “What is Sustainability Justice, and Who Decides?” 3:15-4:45 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24

### Jaskiran Dhillon



**Presentation Title:** “Indigenous Resistance, Planetary Dystopia, and the Politics of Environmental Justice”

**Abstract:** This presentation examines the critical interplay among settler colonialism, Indigenous resurgence, and the politics of climate justice. In the wake of a planetwide movement riddled with idioms about “saving our home,” where the ground is fast-shifting and the fate of humanity’s collective future is at stake, there has been a tidal wave of interest in Indigenous knowledge(s) about the land, water, and sky — a desire to “capture and store” the intergenerational wisdom that speaks to the unpredictable path lying ahead. Still, limited attempts have been made to theorize how conquest and persistent settler colonial violence necessarily factor into debates over the environmental crisis — this, despite the creation of territories of material and psychic abandonment largely fueled by settlers and “settlement.” Critical questions need to be asked: How are Indigenous political demands for decolonization taken up within the broader scope of impending planetary dystopia? How might “environmental justice” work to (re)inscribe hegemonies of settler colonial power by foregrounding settler interests? Ultimately, I argue that an anti-colonial indictment of environmental justice compels us to (re)imagine tactical strategies for decolonial praxis around environmental crisis, Indigenous futurity, and challenges to settler sovereignty.

**Bio:** Dhillon is a first-generation anti-colonial scholar and organizer who grew up on Treaty Six Cree Territory in Saskatchewan, Canada. Committed to the tenets of public intellectualism, her scholarship is intimately connected to, and informed by, on-the-ground advocacy and direct action. Her work spans the fields of settler colonialism, anthropology of the state, anti-racist and Indigenous feminism, youth studies, colonial violence, political ecology, and critical Indigenous studies and has been published in *The Guardian*, *Cultural Anthropology*, *Truthout*, *Public Seminar*, *Feminist Formations*, *Environment and Society*, *Social Texts*, and *Decolonization* among other venues. Her first book, *Prairie Rising: Indigenous Youth, Decolonization, and the Politics of Intervention* (2017), provides a critical, ethnographic account of state interventions in the lives of urban Indigenous youth. Her research focuses on developing an anti-colonial critique of the environmental justice movement by examining Indigenous political movements working against extractivism. She is guest editor of a special issue of *Environment and Society* (2018) that foregrounds Indigenous resistance to, and theorizing of, climate change and is co-editor, along with Nick Estes, of *Standing with Standing Rock: Voices from the #NoDAPL Movement* (2019). Dhillon is an Associate Professor of Global Studies and Anthropology at The New School and a founding member of the New York City Stands with Standing Rock Collective.

**More about Dhillon:** [www.newschool.edu/lang/faculty/jaskiran-dhillon/](http://www.newschool.edu/lang/faculty/jaskiran-dhillon/)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 1 — “What is Sustainability Justice, and Who Decides?” 3:15-4:45 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24

### Samuel Bagg

**Presentation Title:** “Beyond Deliberation and Participation: Power and Democratization in Sustainability Justice”



**Abstract:** For decades, well-intentioned reformers placed their faith in the transformative potential of public participation in decision-making processes. Deliberative forums open to all perspectives, it was hoped, would make use of dispersed knowledge to produce better decisions while enabling a more democratic form of control. On both counts, however, these projects have yielded mixed results at best, and in the face of increasingly dire political and environmental developments, many are becoming frustrated with these methods. This presentation considers why these ideas were attractive, why they failed to achieve transformative goals, and how we might think about democratization instead. First, we may salvage what is valuable from deliberative and participatory models by deploying these tools to block specific mechanisms of elite capture rather than attempting to implement a generalized popular will. Second, we must focus much more on building effective countervailing power through movement organizing. Together, these recommendations represent a more oppositional conception of democracy. Rather than aiming for compromise or consensus with extremely powerful actors whose interests are intimately linked to environmental destruction, the goal of democratization in environmental matters must be explicitly to contest their capture of public institutions — by whatever means necessary.

**Bio:** As of September 2019, Bagg is a Prize Postdoctoral Fellow in Politics at Nuffield College, Oxford. He received his Ph.D. in Political Science from Duke University and served as a Postdoctoral Fellow at McGill University (2017-19). His work in democratic theory has appeared in the *American Political Science Review*, *Perspectives on Politics*, and several other scholarly venues. He is completing a book manuscript entitled *The Dispersion of Power: A Critical Realist Theory of Democracy*.

**More about Bagg:** [www.samuelbagg.com/](http://www.samuelbagg.com/)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 1 — “What is Sustainability Justice, and Who Decides?” 3:15-4:45 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24

### Shanondora Billiot



**Presentation Title:** “Interconnectedness of Environmental Justice, Land Loss, and Shared Cultural Experiences: Participation and Transmission of Indigenous Knowledge”

**Abstract:** Indigenous peoples’ relationship with the environment is spiritual, cultural, and place-specific. Indigenous coastal communities are vulnerable to environmental changes of repeated disasters, chronic land loss, and climate changes that disrupt culture, continuity, and livelihood. The purpose of this study was to elucidate meaning from shared cultural perceptions of experiencing repeated disasters and other environmental changes among an Indigenous coastal community in the United States. This presentation will report results from phenomenological semi-structured in-depth qualitative interviews (n=19) that were part of a larger community-engaged research project. Participants were enrolled tribal members with a strong ethnic identity and earned a majority of their income from subsistence activities. The results highlight that discrimination, which is part of the broader context of historical oppression, has set the stage for heightened lack of agency in decision making regarding federal and state coastal protections. In addition, environmental changes create barriers for Elders to pass on their traditional knowledge and lifeways to their grandchildren and future generations. Interruption of Indigenous Peoples’ ability to interact with the land, acculturation, lack of self-determination and discrimination are contemporary forms of trauma that (re)create environmental injustices.

**Bio:** Billiot (United Houma Nation) is an Assistant Professor of Social Work at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Prior to assuming this role, she was a pre-doctoral Henry Roe Cloud dissertation-writing fellow at Yale University. She earned a Ph.D. in Social Work from Washington University in St. Louis and holds a Master’s of Social Work from the University of Michigan and both Bachelor of Arts and Bachelor of Science degrees from Louisiana State University. Her research explores the intersection of health, environment, and culture among Indigenous peoples. This work is informed by post-MSW practice experience in disaster recovery, community development, and national policy analysis. Her current research uses mixed methods to explore indigenous-specific sensitivities to global environmental change exposure and pathways to health outcomes within vulnerable Indigenous populations with the goal to develop mitigation and adaptation activities and inform communities, policymakers, and researchers.

**More about Billiot:** [socialwork.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/shanondora-billiot/](http://socialwork.illinois.edu/faculty-staff/shanondora-billiot/)





## Our Expert Speakers

Roundtable — “Flint and Beyond: Sustainable Water,” 5-6:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 24

### Michael Mascarenhas

**Bio:** Mascarenhas is an Associate Professor of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management at the University of California at Berkeley. His research expertise is in postcolonial theory and development studies, environmental justice and critical race theory, and science and technology studies. He is the author of *Where the Waters Divide*, and *New Humanitarianism and the Crisis of Charity: Good Intentions on the Road to Help*. Mascarenhas holds a Ph.D. in Sociology from Michigan State University. His current research examines water access in Flint and Detroit, Mich., and he was an expert witness at the Michigan Civil Rights Commission in 2017 on the Flint Water Crisis.



**More about Mascarenhas:** [ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/people/michael-mascarenhas](http://ourenvironment.berkeley.edu/people/michael-mascarenhas)

### Danielle Purifoy

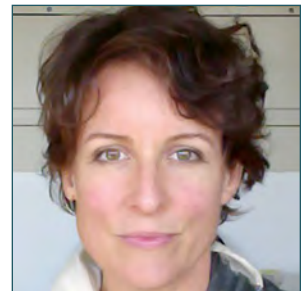
**Bio:** Purifoy is a writer, lawyer, and current Carolina Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Geography at The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She received her J.D. from Harvard Law School and Ph.D. in Environmental Politics and African American Studies from Duke University. Her research traces the roots of contemporary environmental inequality in the U.S. South, particularly in the development of Black towns and settlements. Purifoy is an editor for *Scalawag*, a magazine devoted to Southern politics and culture, and a board member of the North Carolina Environmental Justice Network.



**More about Purifoy:** [www.daniellepurifoy.com/](http://www.daniellepurifoy.com/)

### Mary Pat McGuire

**Bio:** McGuire is a professional landscape architect, principal designer at The Water Lab, and Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Her work is focused on the redesign of underperforming urban surfaces as landscape infrastructure for rainwater. She leads a Sea Grant, with geologists, engineers, and an outreach specialist on this topic, for communities in the Chicago-Calumet region and is co-editor of *FRESH WATER: Design Research for Inland Water Territories*.



**More about McGuire:** [landarch.illinois.edu/faculty-member/mary-pat-mcguire-rla/](http://landarch.illinois.edu/faculty-member/mary-pat-mcguire-rla/)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 2 — “Green Spaces, Just Places,” 8:45-10:15 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Frances ‘Ming’ Kuo



**Presentation Title:** “Greater Justice via Greater Sustainability? How Greening Inner Cities Can Sustain Both People and the Environment”

**Abstract:** The litany of challenges cities face is daunting: climate change, crime, poverty, and inequities in health and academic achievement. Choosing among these pressing priorities is no easy task. Happily, the latest scientific evidence suggests we might be able to kill all these birds with one stone: urban greening. This talk offers a sampling of some of the latest exciting findings on how greening cities can fight poverty, crime, disease, and academic underachievement.

**Bio:** Kuo is a nationally and internationally recognized scientist examining the impacts of the urban forest on human health. Her work has appeared on CNN, NPR’s *Fresh Air*, *The Today Show*, and *Good Morning, America*, as well as the *Washington Post*, *Boston Globe*, *New York Times*, *LA Times*, and other magazines and newspapers. Of the top 30 most read articles in her field, Kuo is an author on six. Her two most recent papers are among the highest impact articles at the most cited journal in *Multidisciplinary Psychology*. Kuo’s research focuses on how “green space” supports healthy human functioning, in both individuals and communities. Her work has convincingly linked healthy urban ecosystems to stronger, safer neighborhoods, lower crime, reduced AD/HD symptoms, reduced aggression, and an array of other mental health indicators. Her current work examines the effects of contact with nature on physical health — especially immune function — and academic achievement. In 2018, she was awarded the Heinz award for the Environment for these and other discoveries. Kuo, an Associate Professor of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences, leads the Landscape and Human Health Laboratory at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. She has degrees in Psychology and Biomedical Science from the University of Michigan and the University of California at Berkeley.

**More about Kuo:** [nres.illinois.edu/directory/fekuo](http://nres.illinois.edu/directory/fekuo)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 2 — “Green Spaces, Just Places,” 8:45-10:15 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### William Stewart

**Presentation Title:** “All Urban Greening is Not Equal: Resident-Led Beautification of Vacant Lots”

**Abstract:** Urban vacancy is a pressing issue in many cities across the U.S. and globally. While a number of urban greening strategies have been proposed and implemented for repurposing vacant lots, their success depends upon the extent to which greening goals address the social needs of residents. This presentation explores the relationship between place and community within the context of resident-led beautification of vacant lots in Chicago. An important factor in the success of the Chicago program is the transfer of ownership of land parcels from the city to residents. Whereas some municipal policies encourage urban greening using a top-down framework (e.g., city tree planting, smart growth, large-scale flood prevention), the social meaning of such greening projects would not be associated with the residents’ sense of place nor would they necessarily foster social interaction with fellow residents on the block. This presentation builds a relational place-making framework in which simple acts of cleaning, mowing, and planting fulfill personal goals in ownership, strengthen interpersonal relationships with one’s neighbors, and connect urban greening to a larger socio-spatial system of meaning. A conclusion is that all urban greening is not equal in terms of its capacity to empower individuals to work for positive change.



**Bio:** Stewart, a Professor of Recreation, Sport, and Tourism at Illinois, conducts research associated with park and natural resources development and teaches courses in the universitywide environment program. His research facilitates landscape change to improve quality of life and enhance a public sense of place, and the work builds relationships with stakeholders and community leaders to facilitate conservation planning in mixed-use landscapes. His research program incorporates experts from many disciplines, including landscape architects, conservation psychologists, agricultural economists, agricultural engineers, fisheries biologists, planners, and ecologists. Stewart co-authored and co-edited *Place-Based Conservation: Perspectives from the Social Sciences* (2013). He received his Ph.D. in Watershed Management and Forestry in 1987 from the University of Arizona.

**More about Stewart:** [stewart.rst.illinois.edu/](http://stewart.rst.illinois.edu/)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 2 — “Green Spaces, Just Places,” 8:45-10:15 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Winifred Curran



**Presentation Title:** “Just Green Enough: Contesting Environmental Gentrification”

**Abstract:** This talk explores the potential for a just green enough strategy to contest environmental gentrification. A just green enough strategy focuses explicitly on social justice and environmental goals as defined by local communities, those people who have been most negatively affected by environmental disamenities, with the goal of keeping those people in place to enjoy any environmental improvements. It is not about shortchanging communities but about challenging the veneer of green that accompanies many projects with questionable ecological and social justice impacts. Drawing on examples from New York and Chicago, I will explore how different visions for the green city are enacted through activism and policy making and interrogate how urban sustainability can be used to open up a space for diversity and democracy in the neoliberal city.

**Bio:** Curran is Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography at DePaul University. Her research focuses on understanding the effects of gentrification on the urban landscape, looking at labor, policing, environmental gentrification, and the gendering of urban policy. She is the author of *Gender and Gentrification* (Routledge 2018) and co-editor, with Trina Hamilton, of *Just Green Enough: Urban Development and Environmental Gentrification* (Routledge 2018). Her work has appeared in *Urban Studies*, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, *Environment and Planning A*, *Urban Geography*, and *Local Environment*. She was a Public Voices Fellow with the Op-Ed Project, with op-eds published in *The New York Times*, *Daily Beast*, and *The Conversation*. She received her Ph.D. from Clark University.

**More about Curran:** [las.depaul.edu/academics/geography/faculty/Pages/winifred-curran.aspx](http://las.depaul.edu/academics/geography/faculty/Pages/winifred-curran.aspx)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 3 — “Climate Justice,” 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Summer Gray

**Presentation Title:** “Climate Justice or Just Adaptation?”

**Abstract:** By all accounts, climate change threatens to undo the world that humans have made. Each year, new predictions paint a more dire picture of the future, making it abundantly clear that those who have contributed least to the problem will be impacted first and worst. While climate justice activists focus on preventing climate disruption through mitigation and systemic change, others focus on resilience, signaling a seemingly hopeful turn for adaptation. Yet some caution that policies touting resiliency gloss over inequity, avoiding questions concerning what is being sustained, and for whom, while shifting responsibility onto those who are most vulnerable. As projects of resiliency-building are being played out in the real world, in real time, there is a need to question who these projects really serve. This presentation draws on research from the Maldives and the interconnected stories of Montecito and Goleta following a deadly debris flow to illustrate how relationships of power operate in the context of resiliency-building. It offers a critical climate adaptation lens that bridges climate justice with localized efforts to foster “just adaptation,” stressing the need to adopt more inclusive and relational processes of adaptation planning.



**Bio:** Gray is an Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at the University of California at Santa Barbara, where she teaches courses on community resilience, adaptation, infrastructure, and the environment. She is a member of the Environmental Justice and Climate Justice Research Hub (EJ/CJ) at UCSB and a DIY filmmaker. She has written about climate justice in *The Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, *Interface: A Journal About Social Movements*, *Transformations: The Journal of Inclusive Scholarship and Pedagogy*, and *The Journal of Environmental Studies and Science*. Gray’s current research is focused on connecting practices of shoreline stabilization with the emerging and uneven geographies of sea change, especially in low-lying countries and vulnerable island nations. Her work highlights the lived experiences of coastal communities throughout the world facing the threat of sea change and the unintended consequences of coastal development.

**More about Gray:** [www.es.ucsb.edu/people/summer-gray](http://www.es.ucsb.edu/people/summer-gray)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 3 — “Climate Justice,” 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Tony Reames



**Presentation Title:** “The Intersection of Energy & Climate Justice: Spatial, Racial, and Socioeconomic Disparities in Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies”

**Abstract:** Although access to affordable energy is “a foundational pillar of our American Way of life,” the U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates that 37 million households experience at least one form of energy insecurity (e.g., reducing or forgoing food or medicine to pay energy costs, keeping home at an unhealthy temperature, receiving a disconnect notice, or being unable to use heating or cooling equipment because of inability to afford repair or energy is shut off). The effects of climate change and extreme weather events are already exacerbating conditions for these struggling households. Improving residential energy efficiency and access to renewable energy have long been viewed as primary interventions to enhance energy affordability and are also seen as both mitigation and adaptation strategies. However, participation in this energy transition has not occurred equitably. This presentation first presents the current status in spatial, racial and socioeconomic disparities in residential energy transition, then discusses several cases where actions to address these inequities are occurring.

**Bio:** Reames is an Assistant Professor at the University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability, Director of the Urban Energy Justice Lab, a JPB Environmental Health Fellow at Harvard University School of Public Health, and a 2019 Grist 50 Fixer. His research investigates fair and equitable access to affordable, reliable, efficient, and clean energy. His research employs energy analysis, geographic information systems (GIS), and policy analysis tools to investigate disparities in residential energy dynamics focusing on the production and persistence of spatial, racial, and socioeconomic inequality. He is a multidisciplinary scholar with degrees in Civil Engineering, Engineering Management, and Public Administration.

**More about Reames:** [seas.umich.edu/research/faculty/tony\\_reames](https://seas.umich.edu/research/faculty/tony_reames)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 3 — “Climate Justice,” 10:45 a.m.-12:15 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### John Daigle

**Presentation Title:** “The Importance of Indigenous Voices in the Face of Climate and Large-Scale Environmental Changes”

**Abstract:** The recognition of climate change and large-scale environmental changes facing tribal communities and indigenous peoples in the United States is growing, and understanding its impacts is rooted in indigenous ethical perspectives and systems of ecological knowledge. This foundation presents a context and guide for contemporary indigenous approaches to address climate change impacts that are comprehensive and holistic. Tribal communities and indigenous peoples are re-envisioning the role of science and traditional ecological knowledge; working to strengthen government-to-government relationships in climate change initiatives; and leading climate change research, mitigation, and adaptation plans. Unique adaptive capacities of tribal communities stem from their ethics and knowledge, and help frame and guide successful adaptation. As documented in the Special Issue of the *Climatic Change Journal* on the impacts of climate change to U.S. indigenous communities, these issues include the loss of traditional knowledge; impacts to forests, ecosystems, traditional foods, and water; thawing of Arctic sea ice and permafrost; and relocation of communities. Climate change is expected to affect animal and plant species that indigenous people depend on for their livelihoods and cultural practices — and the impacts on forests and other ecosystems require tribal engagement in climate change research, assessments, and adaptation efforts. This presentation synthesizes key issues and the challenges and opportunities moving forward with government programs and partners.



**Bio:** Daigle is a tribal member of the Penobscot Indian Nation and Professor of Forest Recreation Management in the School of Forest Resources at the University of Maine at Orono. He received his Ph.D. in Forestry from the University of Massachusetts with an emphasis on application of social science concepts and methods to outdoor recreation and natural resource planning and management. In 2008, he became part of an interdisciplinary team of faculty at the University of Maine to identify potential climate scenarios, and their probabilities, for Maine for the remainder of the 21st century. He led a team that explored the meaning of a changed environment as it relates to the Indigenous peoples of Maine. He has continued work with efforts to understand the implications of large-scale environmental changes to cultural practices and identity. Daigle served as a review editor for a first ever Tribal, Indigenous, and Native chapter in the *3rd National Climate Change Assessment* report and has published numerous papers with other co-authors on climate change and its impacts on indigenous communities.

**More about Daigle:** [forest.umaine.edu/faculty-staff/john-daigle/](http://forest.umaine.edu/faculty-staff/john-daigle/)



## Our Expert Speakers

*Keynote — 1-2 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25*

# Kimberly Wasserman



**Presentation Title:** “Environmental Justice: Communities of Resistance”

**Abstract:** The Midwest is often overlooked as a central location to understand Environmental Justice and a Just Transition. As the site of long-standing struggles for indigenous sovereignty, powerful movements of Black militancy, and the birthplace of the labor movement, the region exemplifies the historical alignment of U.S. colonialism, economic development based on extreme energy and labor exploitation, and racial domination. Having survived several unjust transitions, our communities currently face intense pressures of displacement, ongoing attacks on public education and collective bargaining, and a paternalistic regime of progressive white supremacy that manages police brutality, urban violence, mass incarceration, and environmental racism. Despite serious challenges to community- and movement-building, low-income residents and people of color across the Midwest are cultivating communities of resistance, developing significant analysis of oppression, pushing policy, and advancing local grassroots solutions that are meeting real community needs.

**Bio:** Wasserman is Executive Director of the Little Village Environmental Justice Organization (LVEJO) near Chicago, where she has worked since 1998. She joined LVEJO as an organizer and helped to organize community leaders to successfully build a new playground and community gardens, remodeling a local school park, and force a local polluter to upgrade its facilities to meet current laws. Her work as Executive Director of LVEJO oversaw the successful reinstatement of a job access bus line and a new 23-acre park to be built in Little Village on the largest brownfield conversion to a park in the U.S. Wasserman also continued the 10-plus-year campaign that won the closure of the two local coal power plants and fought for the proper remediation and equitable redevelopment of the sites. She is Chair of the Illinois EJ Commission, and in 2013, she was the recipient of the Goldman Prize for North America.

**More about Wasserman:** [www.lvejo.org/about-us/staff/](http://www.lvejo.org/about-us/staff/)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 4 — “Race, Housing, Pollution,” 2:15-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Peter Christensen

**Presentation Title:** “Housing Discrimination and the Pollution Exposure Gap in the United States”

**Abstract:** Neighborhood pollution exposures can have significant effects on health outcomes, disproportionately affecting minority households. In this study, we combine experimental evidence on discrimination from a correspondence design in the rental housing market with observational evidence from a panel detailing the movements of 1.9 million renter households to study the extent to which discrimination constrains the housing choices of minorities in ways that contribute to a race gap in pollution exposures. We find that renters with African American and Hispanic/LatinX names receive the exact same response rates to inquiries made for housing within a tight radius of plants that emit toxic pollutants (high exposure locations), while receiving 19% and 26% lower response rates at lower exposure locations in the same markets. We find that African American and Hispanic/LatinX renters in these markets move into high-exposure neighborhoods at higher rates and move out at lower rates than similar white households, resulting in higher exposures to toxins and particularly during periods of pregnancy. These differences result in a 23% higher likelihood of in utero exposures to toxic emissions for children born in Hispanic/LatinX households and 14.4% higher likelihoods for children born in African American households.



**Bio:** Christensen is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural and Consumer Economics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. His research focuses on environmental economics, particularly as related to public goods provision in cities in the United States and around the world. Christensen is also a core faculty member at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), where he leads a team of economists and computer scientists that are integrating new forms of data, machine learning algorithms, and large-scale field experiments in economic and policy research. His work has been supported by the National Science Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Sloan Foundation, the Russell Sage Foundation, and Uber Technologies. He received a Ph.D. in Environmental and Resource Economics from Yale University, a M.E.Sc. from Yale, and a B.A. from the University of California at Davis.

**More about Christensen:** [ace.illinois.edu/directory/pchrist](http://ace.illinois.edu/directory/pchrist)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 4 — “Race, Housing, Pollution,” 2:15-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

# Spencer Banzhaf



**Presentation Title:** “Environmental Justice: A View from Economics”

**Abstract:** Correlations between pollution burdens and poor and/or minority populations are well documented. As we move from documentation of a correlation between pollution and demographics to policy remedies, we are pressed to ask why such correlations arise. The question of why (or how) is important because it bears on the interpretation of injustice in the distribution of pollution. It also bears on the efficacy of particular remedies. This presentation will briefly highlight various socio-economic mechanisms that might give rise to the observed patterns, evaluate the evidence for each, and discuss the policy implications.

**Bio:** Banzhaf is Professor of Economics at Georgia State University. He received his Ph.D. in Economics from Duke University in 2001. He specializes in estimating households’ values (or demand) for nonmarket goods such as environmental quality. Two themes in Banzhaf’s work are the distributional welfare effects of environmental policies and the effects on welfare measures of interactions among local environmental amenities, local real estate markets, and the demographic composition and structure of cities. In particular, he has studied the way these social mechanisms interact to drive the correlations between pollution and poor households, as described by the environmental justice movement.

**More about Banzhaf:** [aysps.gsu.edu/profile/spencer-banzhaf/](https://aysps.gsu.edu/profile/spencer-banzhaf/)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 4 — “Race, Housing, Pollution,” 2:15-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Rachel Morello-Frosch

**Presentation Title:** “Harmonizing Sustainability and Environmental Justice Goals in Climate Change Policies — the Case of California”

**Abstract:** Climate change is a critical environmental justice issue because of both its overall consequences and its disparate impact on vulnerable and socially marginalized populations. The term climate gap refers to the disproportionate effects of climate change on people of color and the poor, due to discriminatory processes that undermine community capacity to anticipate, cope with, resist, and recover from the direct and indirect impacts of extreme weather events and geophysical shifts, including sea level rise, hurricanes and floods, heat waves, air pollution, and infectious diseases. California has taken unprecedented steps to address climate change through enactment of the Global Warming Solutions Act, which established a timetable for ambitious reductions of greenhouse gases (GHG) — and mandates consideration of procedural, geographic, and social equity in the law’s implementation. This talk examines how GHG reduction strategies have the potential to maximize the ancillary health benefits of addressing inequalities in exposure to air pollutants that have persisted despite decades of regulation. The health and equity impacts of power plant closures as well as the environmental justice implications of market-based GHG reduction strategies such as California’s cap-and-trade program highlight the benefits and challenges harmonizing sustainability and equity goals in climate policy.



**Bio:** Morello-Frosch is Professor in the Department of Environmental Science, Policy, and Management and the School of Public Health at the University of California at Berkeley. As an environmental health scientist and epidemiologist, her research examines race and class determinants of environmental health disparities among diverse communities in the U.S. with a focus on environmental chemicals, climate change, drinking water, and linkages between environmental sustainability and social equity. In collaboration with researchers, regulatory scientists, and community partners, Morello-Frosch has developed scientifically valid and transparent tools for assessing the cumulative impacts of chemical and nonchemical stressors to improve regulatory decision-making and advance environmental justice. She has applied these methods to inform the implementation of climate change policies in California.

**More about Morello-Frosch:** [nature.berkeley.edu/morellofroschlab/](http://nature.berkeley.edu/morellofroschlab/)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 4 — “Race, Housing, Pollution,” 2:15-4 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Brentin Mock



**Presentation Title:** “When Local Narratives Control the Narrative: Why Your Sustainability Solution Won’t Work”

**Abstract:** There are narratives that circulate through neighborhoods that serve as gatekeepers for who and what can come into that neighborhood. Those narratives aren’t always aligned with the facts, or science, or the law, but it doesn’t matter — they dominate and they have to be contended with, if not resolved, in order to make any kind of advance or propose any kind of solution for the neighborhood. This holds especially true in neighborhoods where legacies exist of people in power treating people of color and low-income as disposable, or as an experiment. This holds especially true in when seeking to install or implement environmental justice, climate justice, and sustainability provisions in a historically marginalized community. Throughout my career of reporting on environmental justice issues I’ve encountered time and again how an environmental organization or government agency has met resistance or rejection from a black, Latino, or working-class community when attempting to offer an ostensibly useful program or opportunity for addressing pollution and/or climate change impacts. The resistance/rejection is often propelled by stories, myths, lore, or actual factual accounts of environmental organizations and government agencies duping these communities in the past under the auspices of performing a service sold as “good for the community.” For my presentation, I’ll go over several cases I’ve learned about in my reporting travels, and engage with the audience about scenarios they know about as well. I’ll be drawing from some of the recent research from the University of Vermont researcher Christine E. Carmichael on “heritage narratives,” which seeks to explain these community-story driven conflicts and how they’ve impacted policies.

**Bio:** Mock is a staff writer in the Washington, D.C., area for Citylab.com, a division of *The Atlantic* magazine that focuses on the ideas and challenges that drive urban life, where he covers issues of environmental/climate justice, economic justice, criminal justice, and civil rights. Prior to this he served as the Justice Editor for Grist.org; senior voting rights fellow for Voting Rights Watch, a collaboration between *Colorlines* and *The Nation*; and as part of the founding team that launched *The Lens*, an investigative news nonprofit in New Orleans. He is also an alumni of the Metcalf Institute’s 2008 Environmental Reporting Fellowship offered by the University of Rhode Island.

**More about Mock:** [www.citylab.com/authors/brentin-mock/](http://www.citylab.com/authors/brentin-mock/)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 5 — “Sustainability Justice: Thinking Globally,” 4:15-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Kim Suiseeya

**Presentation Title:** “The Justice Gap in Global Forest Governance”

**Abstract:** Conservation practitioners have long recognized the dispossession, marginalization, and violence that forest peoples experience through various biodiversity and forest conservation initiatives. In their efforts to mitigate these injustices, policy makers and practitioners have developed a variety of tools and practices such as participatory processes, safeguards, and benefits-sharing mechanisms. Yet, injustices persist and, in some cases, have become further entrenched. What explains the persistence of injustice in global forest governance? I approach this question through a multi-sited, multi-method investigation that draws from nearly two years of fieldwork in Laos and Southeast Asia, as well as ethnographic field work at the 10th Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the 2014 World Parks Congress, the 21st Conference of Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, and the World Conservation Congress. The analysis blends an extended case study of Laos with the innovative methodology collaborative event ethnography to trace how ideas, norms, and principles of justice emerge, diffuse, and evolve across multiple scales of governance, from global policy arenas to forest peoples’ households. In doing so, I draw attention to the roles that norms and institutions play in prescribing and limiting justice for forest peoples.



**Bio:** Suiseeya is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Northwestern University. Her research examines the interactions between norms, institutions, and justice in global forest governance. Her areas of expertise include environmental justice, global environmental governance, political ecology, and the politics of biodiversity conservation in Laos and mainland Southeast Asia. Her current work includes her collaborative, interdisciplinary project “From Presence to Influence: Examining the Politics of Indigenous Representation in Global Environmental Governance” as well as an ongoing exploration of the justice gap in forest governance in Southeast Asia. Suiseeya received her B.A. in International Relations & Politics from Scripps College, her M.A. in International Environmental Policy from Monterey Institute of International Studies, and her Ph.D. in Environment from Duke University.

**More about Suiseeya:** [www.polisci.northwestern.edu/people/core-faculty/kimberly-suiseeya.html](http://www.polisci.northwestern.edu/people/core-faculty/kimberly-suiseeya.html)

## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 5 — “Sustainability Justice: Thinking Globally,” 4:15-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Debarati Sen



**Presentation Title:** “Situating Aspiration in the Quest for Sustainability and Global Justice”

**Abstract:** How do global justice movements and sustainability initiatives translate into lifestyle aspirations for the poor in the global south? I ask this question to underscore the linkages between global social justice initiatives and the increasing popularity of Hindu conservative politics. I explore how small tea farmers imagine and construct entrepreneurial selves/identities by blending locally produced nativist narratives of belonging with globally disseminated narratives of sustainable small farming and self-sufficiency. These associations are critical to understanding the cohabitation of right-wing populism and sustainability initiatives. Such cohabitations are made possible by the complexity of aspirations for overcoming marginalities. I propose de-essentialized intersectionality as a framework to understand gendered structural inequities by demonstrating connections between contemporary sustainability practices, gendered militarized labor, everyday entrepreneurialism. My analysis and reflections are based on a longitudinal ethnography (spanning 15 years) of small-scale organic tea farmers’ livelihood practices in India’s North East centering their narratives on sustainable farming and related practices of cultural belonging (as Nepali linguistic and ethnic minorities in India).

**Bio:** Sen is an Associate Professor with a dual appointment in the School of Conflict Management, Peacebuilding and Development and the Anthropology Program at Kennesaw State University in Atlanta. Her research is at the confluence of cultural anthropology, development studies, gender studies and conflict studies. For 15 years she has examined gendered mobilizations around sustainable development in rural India, specifically North East India’s border areas among the diasporic Nepali community. This work culminated in her first monograph *Everyday Sustainability: Gender Justice and Fair Trade Tea in Darjeeling* (Albany: SUNY Press, 2017), which earned awards from the International Studies Association and the National Women’s Studies Association. Wenner-Gren Foundation, the National Science Foundation, Princeton University, and Columbia University have supported her research in India. Sen is working on her second book project that explores gendered entrepreneurialism, violence and issues of consent in post-conflict reconstruction, with particular reference to protracted subnational ethnic conflicts. She serves pro-bono on the American Association of University Women’s (AAUW’s) national fellowship review team, as Executive Council member of the Association of Nepal and Himalayan Studies. In January 2020, she will become co-editor of the journal *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment*.

**More about Sen:** [chss.kennesaw.edu/geoanth/about/news/posts/2018-08-31-debaratiaward.php](http://chss.kennesaw.edu/geoanth/about/news/posts/2018-08-31-debaratiaward.php)



## Our Expert Speakers

Panel 5 — “Sustainability Justice: Thinking Globally,” 4:15-5:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25

### Giovanna Di Chiro

**Presentation Title:** “Whose House is on Fire? Rethinking the Global Commons”

**Abstract:** In this talk I focus on environmental justice and climate justice scholarship and activism on re-conceiving of and caring for the “global commons” from “below.” I examine the location of commons care work in and through university-community partnerships. To do this, I draw on Moten and Harney’s (2004) imaginings of the “undercommons” — how to be in, but not of, the neoliberal university and resist its containment of the radical possibilities of the transition to a “caring” democracy and a more just sustainability. The undercommons approach to protecting the commons (the air, water, soil, climate, biological and cultural diversity of the planet) engages with concepts of care work long theorized by feminists of diverse backgrounds, including many ecofeminists. A genuine caring for climate would address the invisible, undervalued, and privatized work of social reproduction largely performed by women, and primarily marginalized, poor, and low-income women of color. Caring for climate through a caring economy framework (or a “solidarity economy” model) re-embeds the economy in social and ecological relationships and creates sustainability policies guided by the principles of cooperation, sharing, reciprocity, redistribution, and intersectional environmental justice.



**Bio:** Di Chiro is a Professor of Environmental Studies at Swarthmore College. She has published widely on the intersections of environmental science and policy, with a focus on racial, gender, and economic disparities and human rights. She is co-editor of the volume *Appropriating Technology: Vernacular Science and Social Power*. Her research, teaching, and activism engage with community-driven approaches to sustainability and the intersections of social justice and environmental change.

**More about Di Chiro:** [www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/giovanna-di-chiro-connecting-sustainability-and-environmental-justice](http://www.swarthmore.edu/news-events/giovanna-di-chiro-connecting-sustainability-and-environmental-justice)

## Our Expert Speakers

*Closing Keynote — 6:15-7:30 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 25*

# John Knox



**Presentation Title:** “The Human Right to a Healthy Environment”

**Abstract:** Human rights and the environment are interdependent: a healthy environment is necessary for the enjoyment of a vast range of human rights — including the rights to life and health — and the exercise of human rights such as freedom of expression and association helps to ensure protection of the environment. Both sides of this relationship are under attack. Climate change, air pollution, the global loss of biodiversity, and many other threats are degrading and destroying the environment; at the same time, those who try to defend the environment are often arrested, harassed, and even killed. Advocates increasingly bring environmental claims to international human rights tribunals, which have built a detailed, extensive body of law on the basis of widely recognized human rights. However, the United Nations has never recognized a free-standing human right to a healthy environment. Has the time come for it to do so? What would recognition of the right add to the rapidly evolving field of human rights and the environment?

**Bio:** Knox is the Henry C. Lauerman Professor of International Law at Wake Forest University. He has written widely in the fields of human rights law and international environmental law. In 2012, the U.N. Human Rights Council appointed him to be the first U.N. Independent Expert on Human Rights and the Environment, and in 2015, it renewed the mandate and changed his title to Special Rapporteur. In his final report to the Council in 2018, he presented Framework Principles on Human Rights and the Environment that summarize the human rights obligations relating to the enjoyment of a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment, and he called on the U.N. to recognize for the first time the human right to a healthy environment.

**More about Knox:** [web.law.wfu.edu/faculty/profile/knoxjh/](http://web.law.wfu.edu/faculty/profile/knoxjh/)



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## Some Local Dining Options ...

A variety of fare nearby — and some of the iSEE staff's favorites:

### MEXICAN

- **Maize Mexican Grill**, 116 N. Chestnut St., Champaign — 1.1 miles from the Union
- **El Toro**, 723 S. Neil St., Champaign — 1.1 miles from the Union

### ITALIAN

- **Nando Milano Trattoria**, 204 N. Neil St., Champaign — 1.3 miles from the Union

### ASIAN

- JAPANESE/SUSHI: **Sakanaya**, 403 E. Green St., Champaign — 0.3 miles from the Union
- JAPANESE/SUSHI: **Ko-Fusion**, 1 E. Main St., Champaign — 1.3 miles from the Union
- LAOTIAN/THAI/NOODLES: **Sticky Rice**, 415 N. Neil St., Champaign — 1.4 miles from the Union

### ASIAN-INSPIRED ITALIAN

- **NAYA**, 212 E. Green St., Champaign — 0.4 miles from the Union

### BARBECUE

- **Black Dog Smoke & Ale House**, 320 N. Chestnut St., Champaign — 1.1 miles from the Union

### PIZZA

- DEEP DISH: **Papa Del's Pizza**, 1201 S. Neil St., Champaign — 1.3 miles from the Union
- THIN CRUST: **Jupiter's Pizzeria & Billiards**, 39 E. Main St., Champaign — 1.2 miles from the Union

### AMERICAN/PUB

- **Big Grove Tavern**, 1 E. Main St., Champaign — 1.3 miles from the Union
- **Hamilton Walker's**, 201 N. Neil St., Champaign — 1.3 miles from the Union





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