

WSA's 13th
Annual Conference



SPRING INTO ACTION!

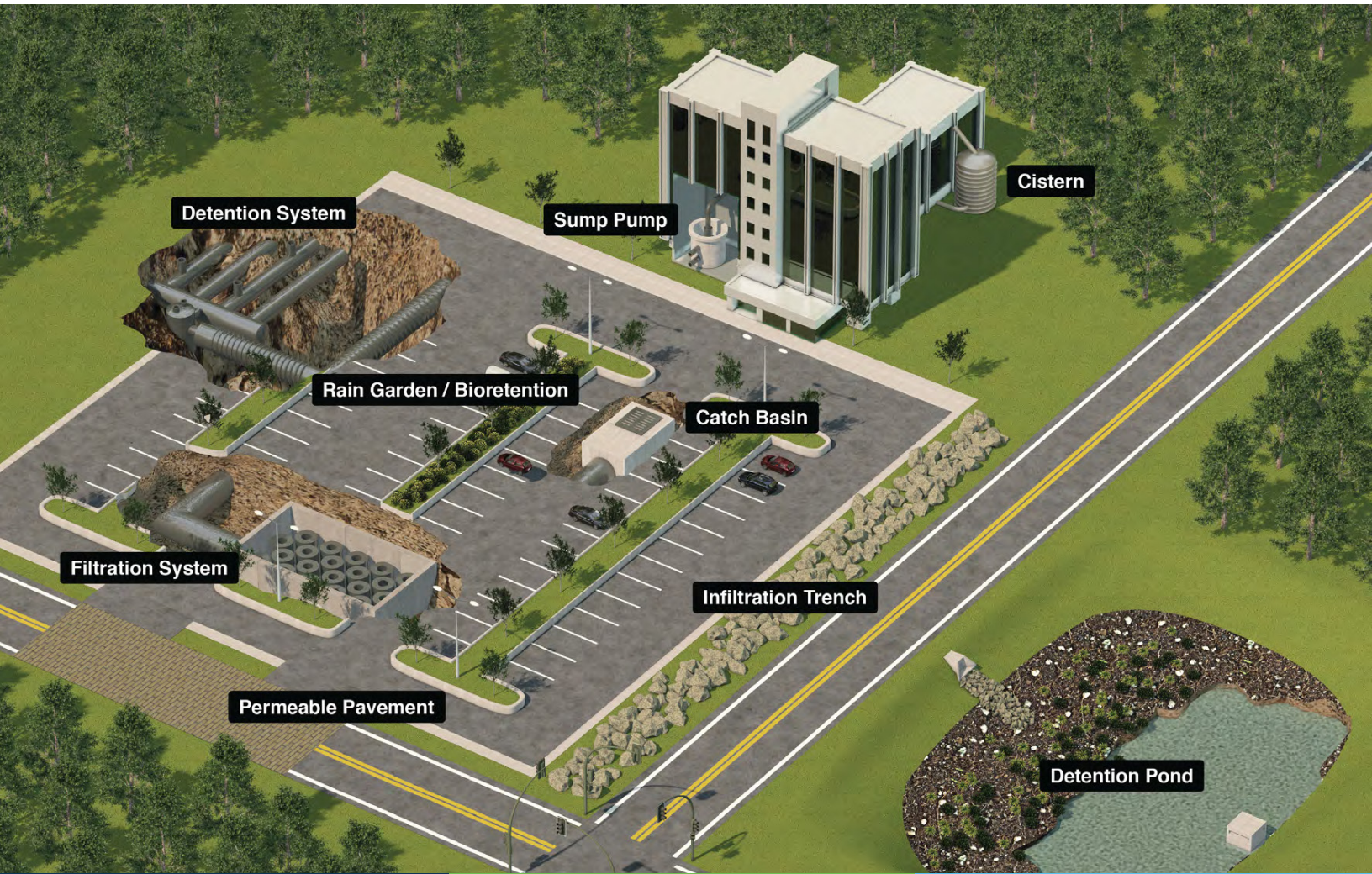


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Saturday
March 9, 2024



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Spring Into Action

CONFERENCE AGENDA

8:00
am

STEWARD ACTION BREAKFAST
for Anne Arundel County Watershed Stewards only

8:15
am

REGISTRATION

9:00
am

CONFERENCE WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS
Ron Bowen Environmental Legacy Award presented to Ginger Ellis

10:05
am

BREAK

10:15
am

SESSION 1

1A | SPOTLIGHT

Fantastic Fungi and Where to Find Them
Serenella Linares | Mount Rainier Nature Center

1B | LIMELIGHT

Innovation Meets Mitigation: Local Strategies for Climate Resilience*
Matt Fleming | Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County
David Herring | NOAA Communication, Education, and Engagement Division (CEE)
Michael Stringer | Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning

1C | FEATURE

Putting Our Minds Together: Using Mindfulness to Engage New Communities
Terryl Acker-Carter | WSA
Ren Grumbles | Watershed Steward
Amira Westenburger | The Judy Center at Belle Grove

11:30
am

LUNCH & NETWORKING

Meet your local watershed organization, attend funders office hours, network with sponsors, restoration professionals, and more!

PRESENTATION OF AWARDS | 12:00–12:15 PM

Ann Jackson Steward of the Year Award
Consortium Member of the Year Award

12:45
pm

SESSION 2

2A | FEATURE

Maintenance at Maryland: How UMD Manages 100 BMPs
Michael Carmichael | University of Maryland

**Includes advanced content for restoration professionals.*

2B | LIMELIGHT

Streams, Trees, Ponds, & BMPs: An Inside Look at Local Government Restoration Priorities

Erik Michelsen | *Anne Arundel County Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration*
Betsy McKeown, Mike Rossberg and Jasmine Wilding | *City of Annapolis*

2C | SPOTLIGHT

This is Bliss: Communities Connected to Nature

Atiya Wells | *Backyard Basecamp*

2:00
pm

BREAK

2:15
pm

SESSION 3

3A | LIMELIGHT

Integrated Vegetation Management: Controlling Invasives to Promote Biodiversity*

Rick Johnstone | *Integrated Vegetation Management*

3B | SPOTLIGHT

Chesapeake Behavior Change: The Game Show

Steve Raabe | *OpinionWorks*

3C: | FEATURE

Putting Our Minds Together: Using Mindfulness to Engage New Communities

Terryl Acker-Carter | *WSA*
Ren Grumbles | *Watershed Steward*
Amira Westenburger | *The Judy Center at Belle Grove*

3:30-5
pm

CONFERENCE AFTER PARTY

EXHIBIT HALL

After a fantastic day of learning and growing, stick around to connect with others and grow your network! Join us just outside the session doors for light appetizers and a cash bar.

**Includes advanced content for restoration professionals.*



1-800-368-9318
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2024 WSA AWARD HONOREES

RON BOWEN ENVIRONMENTAL LEGACY AWARD

The Ron Bowen Environmental Legacy Award was initiated in 2018 as part of WSA's 10th Anniversary Celebration. The intent is to honor the legacy of Ron's contributions, which have lived on as a model of government leadership, and continues to be a critical foundation for the success of WSA. The Award recognizes and honors the efforts of an individual who comes from a local, state, or federal government agency or a non-profit organization. The purpose of the Award is to honor Ron and the awardee, and to encourage the continuation of Ron Bowen's vision of agency and citizen partnership to make Anne Arundel County a cleaner and healthier place to live.



OUR 2024 AWARD HONOREE

GINGER ELLIS

Planning Administrator, Anne Arundel County Department of Public Works, Ecological Assessment & Evaluation

WSA is thrilled to honor WSA Co-founder and long time environmental leader, Ginger Klingelhoef Ellis as this year's Ron Bowen Environmental Legacy Award Honoree. With over 30 years of experience in natural resource management in the Chesapeake Bay region, Ginger has been the backbone of many initiatives to restore our local environment. From co-chairing the Patuxent River Commission and leading Tributary Strategy Teams earlier in her career, to advising the County's Stop POOlution pet waste campaign in recent months, Ginger's wise advice and strategic vision helps focus restoration efforts. Her deft and steady leadership of numerous programs, spanning decades, has ensured that good ideas become reality. While we think co-founding WSA is one of the best things she has done in her career, her contributions to environmental action extend far beyond WSA.



Scan here to read more about
RON & GINGER



STACEY WILDBERGER


**2024 Ann Jackson Steward
of the Year**



BILL BOWER

**2024 Consortium Member
of the Year**

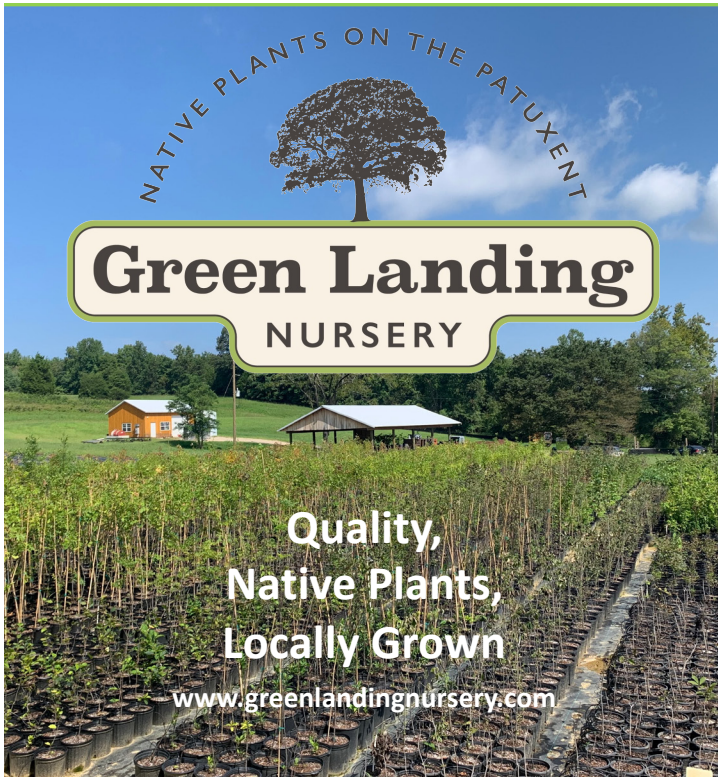
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HELP CLEAN UP OUR COMMUNITIES THIS SPRING!

Join thousands of volunteers to pick up trash from local creeks, rivers, parks, & neighborhoods.

Project Clean Stream kicks off on Friday, April 12. Additional community cleanups will be hosted throughout the watershed during the spring season. Learn more about Project Clean Stream, **find a cleanup in your community, or sign up to host your own cleanup at the link below!**

ALLIANCE
for the Chesapeake Bay



ALLIANCEFORTHEBAY.ORG/PCS

SESSION 1

10:15 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

1A | SPOTLIGHT

Fantastic Fungi and Where to Find Them

Serenella Linares | *Mount Rainier Nature Center*

From 8-meter mushrooms to zombie ants, we will explore the mysteries of the kingdom Fungi and their importance to us all. Learn about the natural history of these fascinating creatures, their ecological roles, their amazing diversity, and how these organisms intersect with different environments. Discover how crucial fungi are to human life and the unexpected places fungi grow near you. You'll even learn about local spots that are host to two of the most brilliant bioluminescent species of fungi in the Mid-Atlantic!

1B | LIMELIGHT

Innovation Meets Mitigation: Local Strategies for Climate Resilience*

Matt Fleming | *Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County*

David Herring | *NOAA Communication, Education, and Engagement Division (CEE)*

Michael Stringer | *Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning*

It's no secret that climate change is already affecting communities across Anne Arundel County. This session will unpack the policies and programs driving climate resilience work and introduce tools and resources to help communities rise to this great challenge. You'll hear from local and national climate experts: Matt Fleming is the Director of the Resilience Authority of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, a new and innovative organization that will develop, finance, and support infrastructure, and Michael Stringer is a Senior Planner with the Anne Arundel County Office of Planning and Zoning. David Herring is the award winning Division Chief of NOAA's CEE - the federal government's largest team dedicated to climate communication, education and engagement. David will provide an overview of the tools available to help restoration professionals and communities like yours make informed decisions when planning for resilience.

**Includes advanced content for restoration professionals.*

1C | FEATURE

Putting Our Minds Together: Using Mindfulness to Engage New Communities

Terryl Acker-Carter | *WSA*

Ren Grumbles | *Watershed Steward*

Amira Westenburger | *The Judy Center at Belle Grove*

ONE environmental literacy lesson, **TWO** Watershed Stewards, **THREE** community partners, **FOUR** years, and the **FIVE** senses. What started as one Watershed Steward resource has grown into a thriving community partnership with a sensory garden path that has connected children and families from The Judy Center and Belle Grove Elementary School to nature. Join this session to learn about this unique program that uses nature and native plants to develop mindfulness and promote mental well-being.

SESSION 2

12:45 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

2A | FEATURE

Maintenance at Maryland: How UMD Manages 100 BMPs

Michael Carmichael | *University of Maryland*

We know maintaining a single project can be a tough job, but what would you do if you had to maintain a hundred of them? Michael Carmichael, UMD's Stormwater Management and Maintenance Inspector, will be sharing how he's gotten the maintenance under control for more than 100 best management practices at the College Park campus. From green roofs to conservation landscapes to stream restorations, Michael has seen them all--and had to monitor and maintain them, too! He'll share success stories, lessons learned, and cover the steps you need to take to get maintenance right in your community. Whether you're the person who designs projects, installs them, or wrangles the weeds, you won't want to miss Michael's talk!

2B | LIMELIGHT

Streams, Trees, Ponds, & BMPs: An Inside Look at Local Government Restoration Priorities

Erik Michelsen | *Anne Arundel County Bureau of Watershed Protection and Restoration*
Betsy McKeown, Mike Rossberg and Jasmine Wilding | *City of Annapolis*

In this yearly session, local government leaders join WSA to share insights and updates from both Anne Arundel County and the City of Annapolis. This year, Erik Michelsen will dive into stream restoration: What have we learned in the last decade of restoring streams across the County? What unexpected impact has stream restoration had on our rivers and surrounding lands, and how is the County adjusting its strategy? As if that's not enough, Erik will climb into tree canopy and unveil the new State of the Forests dashboard, a tool for tracking forest impacts in the County, from development, tree planting, harvest and conservation efforts, as it shifts from year to year.

The City of Annapolis stormwater team, Betsy McKeown, Mike Rossberg and Jasmine Wilding will showcase their outfall risk assessments and watershed plans and give insight into how they prioritize projects. You'll learn about the City's new focus on maintenance and hear the redemption story of one failing stormwater pond, from installation to retrofit.

2C | SPOTLIGHT

This is Bliss: Communities Connected to Nature

Atiya Wells | *Backyard Basecamp*

Learn about connecting communities to nature from Atiya Wells, Founder of Backyard Basecamp. You'll hear about how Atiya used her skills and expertise as a pediatric nurse to meet her community's needs, and where that journey has taken her. What started as nature walks for health, has led to BLISS, a 10 acre land-reclamation project - that's a lot of growth! Join this session for inspiration and practical steps on how to assess your skills and your communities needs, grow as a community leader and bring a vision to life.

SESSION 3

2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

3A | LIMELIGHT

Integrated Vegetation Management: Controlling Invasives to Promote Biodiversity*

Rick Johnstone | *Integrated Vegetation Management*

Rick Johnstone has been controlling invasives for over 5 decades and he has learned a thing or two about what works. Rick will discuss how integrated vegetation management (IVM), using a combination of techniques that promote biological controls, can reduce carbon emissions while restoring native habitat for pollinators, birds and other threatened or endangered species. The IVM approach can meet safety, access, and reliability standards while lowering costs. It can be applied to community spaces, parks, agriculture, and restoration projects. Rick will explain how the efficacy of these practices can be assessed using a Pollinator Site Value Index (PSVI).

**Includes advanced content for restoration professionals*

3B | SPOTLIGHT

Chesapeake Behavior Change: The Game Show

Steve Raabe | *OpinionWorks*

Attend this session for a unique take on behavior change, game show style! Steve Raabe, of OpinionWorks, will be your gameshow host and guide you through an interactive look at brand new survey results for the Chesapeake Watershed, with extra data for an in-depth look at Anne Arundel County. You'll have a ton of fun, all while learning about what the latest Stewardship survey data collected in fall 2023 says about what County residents are doing, or not doing, and what behaviors they are likely to adopt. Play along and learn the information you need to help your community Spring into Action. Survey Says: you'll love this session!

3C | FEATURE

Putting Our Minds Together: Using Mindfulness to Engage New Communities

Terryl Acker-Carter | *WSA*

Ren Grumbles | *Watershed Steward*

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Volunteer Days:

1st Fri and 3rd Thurs
9am, -noon every month.

Contact:

Rachel Carey
410-830-1405,
rcarey@providenceofmaryland.org



SPEAKER INFORMATION

TERRYL ACKER-CARTER

Watershed Stewards Academy
terryl@aawsa.org

MICHAEL CARMICHAEL

*Stormwater Management and Maintenance
Inspector at University of Maryland*
mmcarmic@umd.edu

MATT FLEMING

*Director for the Resilience Authority
of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County*
exflem23@aacounty.org

REN GRUMBLES

Watershed Steward
Kjgrumbles@gmail.com

DAVID HERRING

*NOAA Communication, Education,
and Engagement Division (CEE)*
david.herring@noaa.gov

RICK JOHNSTONE

*President of Integrated Vegetation
Management Partners, Inc.*
ivmpartners@gmail.com

SERENELLA LINARES

*Principal Park Naturalist,
Mount Rainier Nature Center (MRNC)*
serenella.linares@pgparks.com

BETSEY MCKEOWN

*Stormwater Program Manager,
City of Annapolis*
efmckeown@annapolis.gov

ERIK MICHELSEN

*Deputy Director, Anne Arundel County Bureau
of Watershed Protection and Restoration*
pwmich20@aacounty.org

STEVE RAABE

Owner, OpinionWorks
steve@opinionworks.com

MICHAEL ROSSBERG

*Stormwater Management Engineer,
City of Annapolis*
mjrossberg@annapolis.gov

MICHAEL STRINGER

*Planning Advisory Board Administrator,
Anne Arundel County Planning and Zoning*
pzstri20@aacounty.org

ATIYA WELLS

Founder, Backyard Basecamp
info@backyardbasecamp.org

AMIRA WESTENBURGER

*Family Services Support Specialist,
The Judy Center at Belle Grove Elementary*
awestenburger@aacps.org

JASMINE WILDING

City of Annapolis
jtwilding@annapolis.gov

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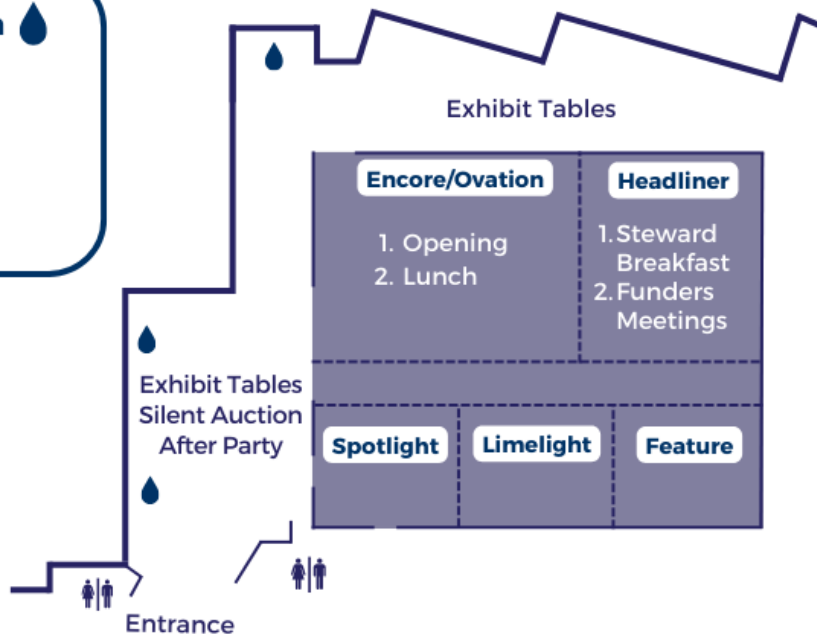


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WSA's 13th Annual Conference Maryland LIVE! Event Center Map

Beverage Station

Session Rooms:
 Spotlight: 1A, 2C, 3B
 Limelight: 1B, 2A, 3A
 Feature: 1C, 2B, 3C





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Plant Native Trees

Install a Backyard Buffer
aawsa.org/backyard-buffers

Maintain Existing Projects

Join us for the 2nd Annual Day of Maintenance on April 13th
aawsa.org/events

Remove Invasive Vines

Volunteer at an upcoming invasive removal event
aawsa.org/events

[learn more at aawsa.org](http://learnmoreataawsa.org)



Thank you for attending SPRING INTO ACTION! 2024

To improve the waterways in Anne Arundel County, it will take each one of us.

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conference here



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WSA Staff

Suzanne Etgen
Executive Director
suzanne@aawsa.org

Terryl Acker-Carter
Community Engagement
Specialist
terryl@aawsa.org

Jackie Baird
Communications
Associate
jackie@aawsa.org

Sara Ballesteros
Development &
Communications Manager
sara@aawsa.org

Noelle Chao
Director of Education
& Equity Initiatives
noelle@aawsa.org

Trish Hennessy-Webb
Systems Administrator
trish@aawsa.org

Francesca King
Steward Engagement
Manager
francesca@aawsa.org

Jeffrey Popp
Director of Restoration
jeff@aawsa.org

Faith Warramma
Chesapeake
Conservation and
Climate Corps Member
faith@aawsa.org