

*Environmental Business Council of New England, Inc.  
Sustainable Solutions Lab at the University of Massachusetts Boston*

## **Climate Adaptation at the Regional Scale: From Planning to Implementation**

Friday, March 15, 2024

**Hosted by:**

**Foley Hoag LLP**

155 Seaport Boulevard  
Boston MA 02210

**and**

Streaming virtually on Zoom



EBC & Sustainable Solutions Lab at UMass Boston – Quarterly Climate Adaptation Forum

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[www.climateadaptationforum.org](http://www.climateadaptationforum.org)

## AGENDA

**9:00 a.m. Registration & Networking**

**9:30 a.m. Welcome**

- Kelly Knee, Forum Organizer, Executive Director, RPS – A Tetra Tech Company

**Welcome from Sponsor**

- Indrani Ghosh, PhD., Member, Climate Adaptation Forum Steering Committee  
Resiliency Senior Technical Leader, Weston & Sampson

**Welcome from Host**

- Kathleen Brill, Member, Climate Adaptation Forum Steering Committee  
Partner, Foley Hoag LLP

**Program Introduction**

- Melanie Gárate, Forum Co-Chair  
Senior Associate, Consensus Building Institute

**9:50 a.m. Climate Resilience: What do Political Boundaries Have to Do with It?**

- Violeta Duncan, Principal, Duncan Núñez Consulting, LLC

**10:10 a.m. Oregon's Approach to Watershed Restoration – *Virtual Speaker***

- Stephanie Page, Acting Director, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board

**10:30 a.m. Preparing Streams and Communities for Climate Change: The Berkshire Clean, Cold and Connected Restoration Partnership – *Virtual Speakers***

- Kate Bednaz, Restoration Coordinator  
Berkshires Clean Cold Connected Partnership
- Michael Jastremski, Watershed Conservation Director  
Housatonic Valley Association
- Erik Reardon, Berkshire Watershed Director, Housatonic Valley Association

**10:50 a.m. Break**

**11:10 a.m. Opportunities and Challenges: Climate Adaptation in an Indigenous Community**

- Jason Steiding, Director, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe  
Natural Resources Department

**11:30 a.m. ResilientCoasts Strategy – Managing Impacts of Sea Level Rise and Coastal Storms Across the Massachusetts Coast**

- Julia Knisel, Coastal Shoreline and Floodplain Manager  
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)

**11:50 a.m. Moderated Discussion**

**Panel Moderator:** Beth Lambert, Forum Co-Chair  
Director, Division of Ecological Restoration  
Department of Fish and Game  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

**Panelists:**

- Kate Bednaz, Berkshires Clean Cold Connected Partnership
- Violeta Duncan, Duncan Núñez Consulting, LLC
- Michael Jastremski, Housatonic Valley Association
- Julia Knisel, CZM
- Stephanie Page, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
- Erik Reardon, Housatonic Valley Association
- Jason Steiding, Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Natural Resources Department

**12:30 a.m. Adjourn**

**FORUM CO-CHAIRS**

**Mark Costa**, Senior Water Resources Engineer  
VHB  
101 Walnut Street, Watertown, MA  
617-607-1083 | markcosta@vhb.com

Mark is a water resources engineer and project manager in VHB's Watertown office with 15 years of professional experience. Mark focuses on surface hydrology, riverine and coastal hydraulics, stormwater, climate change adaptation, resilient design, and permitting for a wide range of land development, energy, municipal, and transportation improvement projects.

Mark's experience includes innovative coastal and riverine flood modeling that incorporates future climate conditions to evaluate flood impacts. This modeling is used to support his engineering design projects that focus on infrastructure improvements, nature-based solutions, and hybrid solutions to increase flood resilience. Some examples of his work include the design of the Rumney Marsh salt marsh restoration in Saugus, the restoration of Sweetwater Brook in Woburn, the Philadelphia Airport Resiliency study, and the Suffolk Downs Climate Adaptation Study that studied regional flood protection to the communities of Boston and Revere.

**Melanie Gárate**, Senior Associate  
Consensus Building Institute  
2067 Massachusetts Ave., Ste 570, Cambridge, MA 02140  
617-492-1414 | mgarate@cbi.org

Melanie Gárate, a Senior Associate at the Consensus Building Institute, is an experienced bilingual facilitator and mediator primarily focused on oceans & coasts, climate adaptation & mitigation, and environmental injustices. She designs and facilitates complex public participation and multi-stakeholder engagement processes to address socio-environmental conflicts in the U.S. and Latin America. Her work focuses on the intersection of climate change, social justice, racial justice, community organizing, and advocacy. Melanie has extensive experience facilitating government agencies, local organizations, and community groups. She is a trained mediator, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 233 § 23C.

Prior to CBI, Melanie worked at the Stone Living Lab & Boston Harbor Now, focusing on nature-based approaches to climate resilience. She has also been the Climate Resiliency Manager at the Mystic River Watershed Association, and she has worked at Mass Audubon and the New England Aquarium. Melanie holds an M.S. in Marine Ecology and Climate Change from the University of Rhode Island, where she obtained an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship to study mangrove ecology and perform community outreach in Puerto Rico.

**Beth Lambert**, Director  
Division of Ecological Restoration  
Department of Fish and Game  
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
100 Cambridge Street, Floor 6, Boston, MA 02114  
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Beth Lambert is the Director of the Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER), part of the Department of Fish and Game. Beth joined the Riverways Program, one of DER's antecedent organizations, in 2007. She continued with DER when it formed in 2009. She began as river restoration scientist and dam removal project manager, then took on program management roles. In 2018, she became Director of the agency. She is currently leading DER through a period of growth. Beth has worked in watershed restoration in Oregon, Alaska, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. She has an MS in fluvial geomorphology from Oregon State University and a BA in Geology from Carleton College.

**Carolyn Norkiewicz**, Regional Coordinator for Greater Boston, Municipal Vulnerability Program  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114  
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Carolyn Norkiewicz is the Greater Boston Regional Coordinator for the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Grant Program. She works with municipalities on local climate change adaptation planning and implementation projects that are funded by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In addition to assisting communities with grant management, she connects MVP grantees with resources and local partners to support an equitable and holistic approach to building climate resilience.

Prior to her current role, Carolyn most recently worked with the City of Medford's Office of Energy & Environment on their climate change vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning process, while earning her M.A. in Urban & Environmental Planning & Policy from Tufts University. Her thesis work focused on the opportunities and challenges of collaborating at a watershed scale on climate adaptation planning. Before graduate school, Carolyn worked for an urban conservation organization in Lowell, MA (Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust) and, prior to that, served with AmeriCorps Cape Cod. She graduated from Stonehill College with a B.A. in English, and currently resides in Boston.

## SPEAKERS

**Kate Bednaz**, Restoration Coordinator  
Berkshire Clean, Cold and Connected Restoration Partnership  
P.O. Box 496, 14 Main Street, Stockbridge, MA 01262  
413-298-7024 | kbednaz@hvatoday.org

Kate comes to HVA with over 20 years' experience as a consulting wetland and soil scientist for private and public clients, primarily in Massachusetts and Connecticut. She has a wide range of experience with ecological permitting, wetland and watercourse evaluations, and coordinating construction and other processes to aid in ecological protection and accountability. Kate has worked on all different types of permitting and construction projects small and large, from residential, commercial, and industrial development, utility line maintenance, golf courses, railroads, airports, landfills, roadways, culverts and bridges. Kate has worked for decades as a mediator for the regulatory process, private and public interests, and ecological preservation.

Her love for the outdoors started at a very young age exploring, gardening, fishing, and playing outside every chance she could get with a furry friend. The lifetime she has spent connecting and discovering our ecological landscape continues to drive her to promote conservation strategies and environmentally responsible development and mitigation, now with HVA! Kate also works as a Biodynamic Craniosacral Therapist, which helps her, and her clients come from a space of balance in all life experiences. She is excited to work in the Berkshires with HVA as the Berkshire BCCC Restoration Coordinator.

**Violeta Duncan**, Principal  
Duncan Núñez Consulting, LLC  
504-230-4394 | violeta@duncannunezconsulting.com

Violeta, M.S. in Urban Planning (Columbia University in New York, 2013), has worked across community development, resilience, and design fields. She began her career at The Democracy Collaborative, where she helped to develop community wealth building models for low-income communities in Rochester, New York and Dayton, Ohio. She also co-lead the 10-Minute Walk Campaign, a partnership amongst the Urban Land Institute (ULI), The Trust for Public Land (TPL), and National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA), to ensure park access for all. She notes her time amongst park and recreation leaders, real estate professionals, and land use planners as a key moment in her career. "Being able to work with people who were personally and professionally committed to play and green spaces showed me the importance of bringing levity and curiosity to climate and sustainability work."

In 2020, Violeta traveled to Berlin, Germany for the Alexander von Humboldt German Chancellor Fellowship, through which she studied youth participation in local and regional climate governance. She returned to the United States (New Orleans, LA) in 2022, starting her firm Duncan Núñez Consulting, where she supports community-serving institutions and networks in collaborative visioning and planning and facilitates processes for coordinated socio-environmental action. The firm has worked with leading resilience groups such as the American Flood Coalition, the Charles River Climate Compact, and the Resilient Mystic Collaborative.

**Michael Jastremski**, CFM - Watershed Conservation Director  
Housatonic Valley Association  
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Under Mike's direction, HVA's Watershed Conservation team manages a variety of projects related to watershed and stream corridor management, water quality conservation, aquatic habitat restoration and public river access. All of this work is part of HVA's Clean, Cold and Connected initiative, which is aimed at building climate

resilience in the built and natural environments through ecological restoration and public engagement. Durable partnerships with municipalities, regional, state and federal agencies and other non-profit organizations are essential to the success of HVA's Clean, Cold and Connected work.

Before coming to HVA, Mike was the Environmental Planner for Delaware County, NY. In this role and his concurrent volunteer service with the Delhi and Sidney Fire Departments, he was part of Delaware County's Response, Recovery, and Mitigation operations in the wake of four federally declared flood disasters that occurred over just three years. This experience gave Mike many opportunities to work closely with communities to understand their relationships with streams in the context of a changing climate.

**Julia Knisel**, Coastal Shoreline and Floodplain Manager  
Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management (CZM)  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900, Boston, MA 02114  
617-890-9126 | [julia.knisel@mass.gov](mailto:julia.knisel@mass.gov)

Julia leads the StormSmart Coasts program for the Massachusetts Office of Coastal Zone Management to help communities address coastal erosion and flooding while enhancing beach systems. She supports state hazard mitigation and climate adaptation and serves on the Resilient Massachusetts Action Team. Julia is a member of the Massachusetts Emergency Support Function Team to inform response and recovery from coastal storm events. Julia also collaborates with state, federal, and non-profit partners across New England on coastal hazards and resilience through the Coastal Hazards Resilience Committee of the Northeast Regional Ocean Council, which has been focused on advancing nature-based approaches to shoreline management.

**Stephanie Page**, Acting Director  
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board  
775 Summer St NE #360, Salem, OR 97301  
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Stephanie Page is currently serving as the Acting Executive Director of the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board, a small state agency that administers grants for watershed restoration work. She joined OWEB as the Deputy Director in December 2021. Prior to joining OWEB, she worked at the Oregon Department of Agriculture for 22 years in various roles, including in natural resources, food safety/animal health, and the director's office. She began her career at the Yamhill Soil and Water Conservation District. She has a bachelor's and master's degree in Earth Systems and grew up in Eugene Oregon. She loves animals, the outdoors, food, traveling, languages, and spending time with family and friends. She is a proud auntie of a niece and nephew who live in the Portland area.

**Erik Reardon**, Berkshire Watershed Director  
Housatonic Valley Association  
P.O. Box 496, 14 Main Street, Stockbridge, MA 01262  
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Erik Reardon recently joined the Housatonic Valley Association as Berkshire Watershed Director. Erik's work in the Berkshires focuses on building partnerships to develop watershed protection, restoration, and education programs that promote clean and healthy natural environments, but also prepare the region for the impacts of climate change. Erik studied environmental history at the University of Maine where, in 2016, he earned a PhD focused on the historic dimensions of dam removal and fisheries restoration in New England. He later served as a Visiting Assistant Professor of history and environmental studies at Colby College and Bates College in Maine. In July of 2021, his book, "Managing the River Commons: Fishing and New England's Rural Economy" was published by the University of Massachusetts Press. Within both academia and the environmental non-profit sector, Erik has experience with project management, program development, and public outreach. His work centers on a professional and personal commitment to land and water conservation, environmental stewardship,

and expanding access to outdoor recreation. In his spare time, Erik enjoys getting outside, running trails, and fly-fishing rivers and streams across the northeast.

**Jason Steiding**, Director  
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Natural Resources Department  
483 Great Neck Road South, Mashpee, MA 02649  
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Jason is a native Cape Codder and eagle clan member of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe. In his role as Natural Resources Director of the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe he strives to protect the natural resources that have ensured the survival and well-being of his People since time immemorial and to sustain these resources for the next seven generations.

Jason oversees all natural resource related activities for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe including fish and wildlife management, habitat protection and restoration, water resource management, food sovereignty, diadromous fish recovery, and Tribal development and environmental policy analysis and implementation.

Jason serves as the liaison between the Tribe and other tribal, local, state, university and federal agencies as well as the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe Natural Resources Commission.

Jason has forged partnerships that have helped to increased internal capacity for his Department, and that acknowledge the importance of Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Tribal community engagement.

Jason is focused on establishing co-stewardship relationships that respect Tribal sovereignty and the historical connections of the Mashpee Wampanoag to the land and waters of Massachusetts.

Jason is an active Environmental Leader throughout New England and has relationships with federally and state recognized Tribes from Maine to New York. Jason has organized and led the 2023 EPA Region 1 Tribal Leaders Summit, and is currently working to put together the EPA Region 1 Pesticide Conference and is helping to coordinate the first ever "Honor The Earth" Earth Day celebration with the Native Land Conservancy.

Jason is active on a wide range of committees, task forces and work groups. He finds it extremely important to educate the greater population on the history of his Tribe. To that end he has participated on a radio program panel to discuss the Tribe's Aboriginal Rights and moderated an Aboriginal Rights panel discussion. Jason has been a keynote speaker at the MIT Climate Community Collaborative Symposium and presented on his Water Quality efforts at the SNEP Network Symposium. Jason also has plans to speak to the challenges his community faces in combating climate change as a keynote speaker at the UMass Boston and Environmental Business Council of New England, and is working to organize a panel discussion of other Region 1 Tribes during Climate Action Week at Harvard University Salata Institute.

Jason's efforts have not gone unnoticed, as he was nominated by MassLive in November of 2023 as an Indigenous Leader of Massachusetts.