THE COASTAL SOCIETY

In partnership with the North Carolina Coastal Federation's Summit
Ripple Effect: Enhancing Oysters, Salt Marsh & Water Quality

North Carolina Coastal Federation
Working Together for a Healthy Coast

Presents

The Margaret A. Davidson (MAD) Coastal Careers Workshop

April 9, 2025 · 12:30pm-4:20pm
Marbles Kids Museum - Venture Hall
201 E Hargett St, Raleigh, NC 27601

Combined Speaker Bios, Headshots, & Contact Information

Aranzazu Lascurain arrived at NOAA's Office for Coastal Management in 2022. She carries out partnerships and regional coordination and implementation for OCM as the Southeast and Caribbean Regional Lead. This also includes identification of programmatic challenges, co-production of coastal conservation strategies, and coastal program evaluation. She formerly worked at the Southeast Climate Adaptation Science Center for 10 years out of NC State University where she focused on mentorship of the Global Change Fellows and devoted her time to partnership building and tribal engagement. She believes that listening to and elevating community voices is one of the best chances we have for successful climate adaptation. She has a B.A in Geography and Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley and an M.S. in Environmental Studies from University of Oregon. She is originally from central Mexico and is a native Spanish speaker. Her coasts include the Salish Sea, the Gulf of Mexico (near where she was born), the South Atlantic and the Rappahannock Estuary where she raises the eastern oyster for personal consumption and water quality benefits. She is based out of Raleigh, NC with an office in the NC State Climate Office and NOAA Carolina's CAP program. Aranzazu can be reached at aranzazu.lascurain@noaa.gov.

Christy Perrin is the Sustainable Waters and Communities Coordinator with NC Water Resources Research Institute and NC Sea Grant, two institutes housed together at NC State University. Christy provides leadership to initiatives that involve people in sustainable planning, protecting and restoring natural resources. She works collaboratively with partners to coordinate and support local watershed

improvement efforts, and to educate K-12 students about water. She has worked in coastal and piedmont cities to identify, design, and install green stormwater infrastructure such as rain gardens and rain water harvesting. She earned her Bachelors of Science degree in Animal Science with a Wildlife Biology minor from University of Vermont, and a Master's in Public Administration from NC State. She has extensive training and experience in facilitating group discussions and engaging public audiences. Christy is on a life-long journey to understand and advance racial equity in all of our society's systems. She enjoys raising a child with her partner and tending a mini urban farm with gardens and chickens. Christy can be reached at christy_perrin@ncsu.edu.

Katie Balaze is an experienced Assistant Project Manager on the Green Stormwater Infrastructure team, who has served at McAdams since April 2023. Katie's career that includes similar roles at WithersRavenel from May 2019 to April 2023 and various engineering and research positions starting in 2009. Previous roles also include a Research Assistant at North Carolina State University and various lab technician positions focused on water testing and algae research. Katie Balaze earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biosystems Engineering from Michigan State University in 2012. Katie can be reached at balaze@mcadamsco.com.

Cayla Cothron is North Carolina Sea Grant's coastal planning specialist, located in Raleigh on NC State's Centennial Campus. In her role, she works collaboratively to support planning, policy, and decision-making that improves resilience and sustainability of coastal communities and ecosystems to climate impacts and other changing conditions. Cothron has a bachelor's degree in environmental studies from Florida State University and a master's degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Colorado Denver.

Prior to joining Sea Grant, Cothron worked in long range community planning in both the private and public sectors in the western U.S. She has experience working with communities, government agencies, decision-makers, and other stakeholders to collaboratively address local needs across a wide variety of land use and environmental topics. Cayla can be reached at cdcothro@ncsu.edu.

Brayden Gordy is an Environmental Compliance Specialist with Lynker Technologies, currently contracted to NOAA's Office for Coastal Management. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science with a concentration in Conservation and a minor in Oceanography from the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) in 2017. In 2023, he completed his Master of Science in Coastal and Ocean Policy from UNCW. In his current role, Gordy supports NOAA's Office for Coastal Management by preparing National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation and providing legal compliance assistance for coastal protection projects funded through initiatives such as BIL, IRA, and CRRC. He is responsible for preparing Categorical Exclusion (CE) documents, Environmental Assessments (EA), and Environmental Impact Statements (EIS). His primary focus is to coordinate with grant recipients and resource agencies to produce environmental compliance memos, analyzing project impacts under key environmental regulations, including the Magnuson-Stevens Act, Endangered Species Act, Coastal Barrier Resources Act, Marine Mammal Protection Act, and Tribal considerations under Executive Order 13175. Through his work, Gordy helps ensure the effective and sustainable management of coastal and ocean resources, supporting NOAA's mission to protect and conserve the nation’s coastal ecosystems. Brayden can be reached at bgordy99@gmail.com.

Riley Lewis is the White Oak Waterkeeper with Coastal Carolina Riverwatch. Riley spends her time researching and advocating for local water quality. She received her BS in Marine Science from the University of South Carolina and her MS in Coastal and Ocean Policy from UNCW. During her time at UNCW she re-established the TCS student chapter and today she continues to connect students with coastal professionals. Riley can be reached at rileyl@coastalcarolinariverwatch.org.

Dr. William N. Ferris serves as the Executive Director for the Duke RESILE Initiative and as the Executive Director for the Center for Innovation in Risk-analysis for Climate Adaptation and Decision-making (CIRCAD). His research interests focus on natural resource economics, climate resilience, and community sustainability. Dr. Ferris holds a Ph.D. in Economics from Virginia Tech, earned through the Department of Agricultural and Applied Economics, where his declared focuses were in environmental and resource economics and development economics. He was awarded and completed a four-year fellowship with the University's Institute for Critical Technology and Applied Science. While at Virginia Tech, William also engaged in economic development work through the University's Center for Economic and Community Engagement, where he served as project lead, co-lead, and team member on economic development projects focusing on agriculture, workforce development, small town revitalization, and other topics. Prior to his time at Virginia Tech, Dr. Ferris worked for the City of Williamsburg, Virginia in the field of economic development and earned a B.A. in Economics from William & Mary, as recipient of one of the University's Monroe Scholar scholarships. His research interests include investigating novel solutions to leverage community engagement to achieve climate resilience and economic development goals. He is a strong believer in mixed methods research as a tool to leverage grassroots perspective to validate and steer quantitative analysis and views his role as an economist, environmentalist, and economic development supporter as a 'force multiplier' for communities in their efforts to achieve their goals. Dr. Ferris is well-versed in topics like agriculture, stormwater management, coastal resiliency, and natural resource conservation, is a full-strength data analyst, and is skilled at navigating industry-academia collaborative work. Dr. Ferris can be reached at william.ferris@duke.edu.

Dr. Jennifer Biddle is an Associate Professor at the University of North Carolina Wilmington (UNCW) where she teaches courses in environmental governance and policy analysis. Jennifer earned her M.S. in Freshwater Ecology and Ph.D. in Public Policy from George Mason University. Her research lies at the confluence of science, public policy, and public administration, and her primary areas of interest include integrated collaborative governance, adaptive capacity and resilience, and environmental policy. Jennifer's scientific background and training in ecological processes combined with her policy expertise and public administration experience provides her the ability to recognize and understand complex interactions between human organizations and the built and natural environments. Her current research documents first person municipal water manager perceptions to leverage existing adaptive governance theory in the creation of both top-down and bottom-up policy approaches to preserve the integrity of our public water systems. Jennifer's early research and professional experience involved advising clients on Clean Water Act permitting and regulations at an environmental firm outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and assisting state agency programs aimed at reducing nonpoint source pollution at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) headquarters in Washington, D.C. These experiences, working in both private and public environmental sectors, awards Jennifer with a balanced perspective on the practical constraints and political challenges that arise when implementing policies to achieve sustainability goals. Her career goal is to apply her knowledge and training toward the betterment of coastal management practices. Dr. Biddle can be reached at biddlej@uncw.edu.

David Cerino is the Chair of the Aquaculture Technology Program at Carteret Community College (CCC) in Morehead City, NC. The primary focus of his work is on education, training, and workforce development. CCC carries out applied research to improve aquaculture productivity and sustainability. Collaboration with industry, academic partners, regulators, and NGOs offers opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning and support industry growth. To learn more about the CCC Aquaculture program visit http://www.carteret.edu/programs/aquaculture-technology. David can be reached at cerinod@carteret.edu.