



MET TRUSTEE BIOS

Megan Benjamin (CHAIR) is a Planner in Baltimore County. She graduated from St. Mary's College of Maryland and earned a master's degree in Geography and Environmental Planning from Towson University. She began her career as an Americorps Volunteer through the Maine Conservation Corps working with a land trust/watershed organization in the mid-coast area of Maine. She has worked for several environmental non-profits in program management and administration. While in graduate school, Megan interned at the Critical Area Commission and served as Volunteer Coordinator at Maryland Environmental Trust (MET). She was later hired as the Western Region Planner at MET, a role she served in for 12 years with the addition of the Central Region during that time. Megan is now with Baltimore County in the Department of Planning as a Planner and Land Preservation Specialist.

Lori Lynch (VICE-CHAIR) is a Professor and Chair of the Department of Agricultural and Resource Economics at the University of Maryland. She examines various issues related to land preservation and land conservation as well as providing advice to farmland program managers and legislative bodies. She has worked with policy managers at the county, state, and federal level on issues such as compensation, taxation, change in land values due to conservation easements, characteristics of landowners in preservation programs and post- preservation activities on conserved properties. Her PhD was from the University of California, Berkeley and her MS from University of California, Davis.

Julia King, Ph.D. (TREASURER) is a Professor of Anthropology at St. Mary's College of Maryland. Doctor King has 30 years' experience studying, writing, and teaching historical archaeology and Chesapeake history and culture. She has held fellowships with Harvard University's Dumbarton Oaks, the Virginia Historical Society, and Winterthur Museum and has received six major grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities. From 2003 until 2011, King served as an Expert Member on the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, a federal agency that advises the president and Congress on matters of national historic preservation policy. Her book, *Archaeology, Narrative, and the Politics of the Past: The View from Southern Maryland*, received a Book Award from the American Association of State and Local History in 2013. In 2018, the Society for Historical Archaeology presented King with the J.C. Harrington Award in recognition of her scholarly contributions to the discipline. King is one of the youngest members to have received the Harrington. She has also received awards from the Register for Professional Archaeologists and the Archaeological Society of Virginia. Her current research focus includes Indigenous history and colonialism in the Chesapeake region.

Keith Colston (SECRETARY) is Tuscarora and an enrolled member of the Lumbee Tribe. Mr. Colston serves as the Administrative Director of the Maryland Commission on Indian Affairs (MCIA), within the Governor's Office of Community Initiatives (GOCI). The MCIA initiates and supports a wide range of activities that promote the welfare of Maryland's Indian people and furthers the understanding of

American Indian history and culture. The MCIA provides a forum for the concerns of Maryland's American Indian communities and serves as a vital liaison between these communities and the local, state, and federal entities. At GOCI, Mr. Colston also serves as the Director of Ethnic Commissions. Working with the seven ethnic commissions, the Maryland Department of Emergency Management (MDEM) and the MD250 Commission, just to name a few of the responsibilities.

Major Gary S. Burnett has 29 years of experience with the Maryland State Park Service, holding positions at various operational levels ranging from park ranger major to ranger trustee. Major Burnett has recently accepted a position as the North Region Operations Manager for the Maryland National Capitol Park and Planning Commission Montgomery Parks. Previously, Major Burnett held positions as chief of mission support and sustainability as well as director of support services for the Maryland State Park Service. Major Burnett began his career as a park ranger at Gunpowder Falls State Park in Harford County. He serves on the boards of the Snow Hill Chamber of Commerce, DNR Black Officers Association, Northeast Chamber of Commerce, Cecil County Tourism Board, Howard County Environmental Alliance, and is the founder and president of the Friends of Carrie Murray Nature Center. Major Burnett holds a B.S. in Conservation and Resource Development from the University of Maryland.

Megan D'Arcy has focused her life's work on land conservation, resource stewardship, and an understanding that the relationships between people and their environment can influence culture and positively shape the future. She has spent the last 15 years of her career in the land trust community with an intense focus on working with landowners to navigate complexities associated with conservation easement stewardship and the preservation of agricultural land. In 2009, Megan moved to the beautiful Eastern Shore of Maryland for a position with Eastern Shore Land Conservancy, her accomplishments include building a robust land protection and easement stewardship program with a portfolio consisting of 299 properties on 58,000 acres of land throughout a six-county region. Accomplishments include managing relationships with stakeholders, creating a volunteer land steward monitoring program, and the development and implementation of a practical farmer friendly best management practices initiative for rural easement landowners.

Most recently, Ms. D'Arcy accepted a position with the Rural Maryland Council, an independent state agency located within the Maryland Department of Agriculture. The mission of the Council is to improve the quality of life of people living in rural Maryland. Megan is excited about this new opportunity as it allows her to explore solutions for those human challenges found in rural areas and how they can be improved. Megan's collegiate background includes a Bachelor of Arts in cultural anthropology from Kutztown University and a master's degree in resource management from The University of Pennsylvania. Megan is the recipient of the 2016 Aileen Hughes Award for her outstanding work in the conservation field and is a Shore Leadership graduate. She enjoys life to the fullest, living in Easton with her husband Dan and two wonderful children, Wyatt and Ben.

Diana Edensword Conway has been a resident of Montgomery County, Maryland, for over 30 years. She grew up in a Foreign Service family posted to Martinique, Haiti, Liberia, Jordan and France. She holds a BA in public policy from Brown University, and a JD from the University of Virginia.

Her community service includes:

- Co-founder, Montgomery Countryside Alliance
- Co-founder, C&O Canal Trust
- President, Safe Healthy Playing Fields, Inc.

- Member of several County-appointed boards—Sustainability Working Group, Zoning Advisory Panel, County Executive Transition Team, Master Plan Advisory Group, Citizens Advisory Board for western Montgomery County; and
- Civic activist on numerous water quality and environmental protection issues.

She and her husband Bill have three grown children and live in Potomac with three beehives, two mutts and a 20-lb cat. Diana is fluent in French, and decent in Spanish.

Nathan Volke is a lifelong resident of Anne Arundel County. Professionally, he works as an attorney and practices family law in Annapolis, MD. Since 2018, he has served on the Anne Arundel County Council representing District 3. He resides in Pasadena with his wife and two children.

Craig Highfield is the director of Forest Programs for the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay. The mission is to pursue innovative strategies and collaborations that improve the health of the region's forests, create new forests in places important to water quality and promote the benefits of forests and resource management to private landowners, decisionmakers, and the general population of the six-state bay watershed. Craig leads a team that is in the Alliance's state offices in Maryland, Virginia, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. He holds a master's degree in environmental science from Johns Hopkins University and is an ISA Certified Arborist.

Crystal Chissell is a Senior Advisor at Second Nature providing strategic advice and support to Second Nature's Climate Leadership Network. Crystal is a collaborative leader who brings rich experience from the non-profit, government, and academic sectors. Prior to joining Second Nature, GCSE, Crystal served as Executive Director of the Global Council for Science and the Environment. She has also previously served as Vice President of Operations for two climate solutions nonprofits, Project Drawdown and Project Regeneration, and served as Senior Director of Partnerships for Project Drawdown. In those roles she has worked with government, business, and academic organizations to identify, analyze, and implement a diverse portfolio of effective strategies for reversing climate change, at local to global scales. Her state and local government experience includes serving as Chief Solicitor of the Baltimore City Law Department, as Assistant Attorney General for the Maryland Environmental Service, and as Mayor of Highland Beach, Maryland. Crystal earned a B.A. from Howard University, an M.S. in Environmental Science from Johns Hopkins University, an M.B.A. from the University of San Francisco, and a Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law

Alice Chalmers started her career in business working in Finance and Consulting with Big Four Accounting and Consulting firms, focusing on global companies across Europe and the US. In the mid 2000's she founded North County Preservation and raised funding to study the economic viability of farming in Northern Baltimore County. After serving as Executive Director of Future Harvest CASA and on several land preservation and agricultural boards including the Maryland Agricultural Resource Council, in 2015, she founded a local food distribution company. The company quickly expanded to serve multiple cities and states, supporting hundreds of local family farms and selling exclusively local food to schools, universities, hospitals, and restaurants. She merged the company with a large food distributor in December 2019, and then led the efforts of the larger company in replicating the local food sourcing model in several more states in the Midwest and the Rockies. She now works as a Local Food Systems Advisor, providing advice to public and private entities working on rebuilding regional food systems across the East Coast. She also serves on the Board of Valleys Planning Council and Land Preservation Trust. Ms. Chalmers holds a BA in Mathematics from Columbia University, and an MBA from Wharton School, University of Pennsylvania.

Kristen Maneval is the Senior Transactions Counsel at the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission. She assists Prince George's County's Department of Parks and Recreation with acquiring land for trails, urban parks, agricultural reserve easements, and buffers to the Patuxent River at Jug Bay. She holds a Bachelor's in Urban and Environmental Planning from the University of Virginia, and a J.D. from the University of Baltimore. She has concentrated her legal career on land use, affordable housing, and real estate and natural resources issues with a focus on the nonprofit and government sectors. Her experience includes three years at a boutique zoning and real estate law firm outside of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; 11 years as Assistant General Counsel at Enterprise Community Partners in Columbia, Maryland; and 10 years as Assistant Attorney General and Senior Counsel at Maryland's Office of the Attorney General representing the Maryland Environmental Trust. She served four years as a commissioner on the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission and previously served six years on the board of Scenic Rivers Land Trust in Anne Arundel County, Maryland. Kristen is admitted to the bar in Maryland. She lives near the Severn River in Crownsville, Maryland with her husband.

Ex-Officio Trustees:

Governor of Maryland, represented by Hilary Bell, Director of Land Acquisition and Planning, Maryland Department of Natural Resources.

President of the Maryland Senate (or representative)

Speaker of the Maryland House of Delegates, represented by Delegate Natalie A. Ziegler.

Trustees Emeriti:

K. King Burnett
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