

# RBC Policy Symposium & Celebration



16 SEPTEMBER, 2022 • DELTA INNOVATION HUB  
Day One Schedule

Welcome

## DAY ONE • ADVANCING EQUITY IN WATER POLICY

### WELCOME

8:30. Welcome from the deans

8:50. Overview and logistics

### MORNING SESSION

9:00. "One Water: Operationalizing Equity in Water Management and Protection." Dr. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks, *Spelman College*

10:00. Break

10:15. "Reforms Without Transformation: How Incumbent Regimes Survive Change." Dr. Linda Mendez-Barrientos, *University of Denver* (virtual)

11:00. "Advancing Racial Equity & Conservation in Coastal Georgia." Josiah Watts, *One Hundred Miles*

11:45. Lunch, RBC Special Appreciation Awards, and Acknowledgement of Jim Hooks

### AFTERNOON SESSION

1:00. Address by Laurie Fowler

2:00. Break

2:15. The Ethics of Advocacy (Session for 1 ethics CLE credit)

**Speakers:** John Sheesley, "Working With Government Attorneys: An Ethics Perspective," *US Environmental Protection Agency*. Hal Robison, "Ethical Considerations for Attorneys of Charitable (Nonprofit) Organizations and Attorneys Interacting With Nonprofit Organizations," *Georgia Alabama Land Trust*.

3:30. Break

3:45. Using Infrastructure Projects to Advance Equity—projects at UGA

**Speakers:** Don Nelson, "Advancing Equity with Natural Infrastructure." Cydney Seigerman, "Toward Equity Across the Infrastructure Lifecycle in Ceará, Northeast Brazil." Haley Selsor, "Recognizing Flood Risk Inequities Across Flood Frequencies." Marshall Shepherd, "Racialized Heat Islands."

### CLOSING

4:45. Networking and social

See the next page for parking information.



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## DAY TWO • THE FUTURE OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICUM AT UGA

9:00. Background and goals for the day

9:15. Panel and Discussion: What was valuable about the Environmental Practicum?

**Panelists:** Paula Marcinek, Bianca Jaikaran, Katie Hill

9:45. Breakout Groups 1: The Most Valuable Aspects of the Practicum

10:15. Report-Outs

10:30. Break

10:40. Panel: Alternative Models for Future Practicum-Type Courses

**Panelists:** Seth Wenger, Adam Orford, Tim Carter

11:00. Next Steps for the Practicum

11:15. Breakout Groups 2: Beyond the Practicum—Fostering Interdisciplinary Alumni Engagement and Mentoring

11:45. Report-Outs

12:15. Wrap-up, thank you, and plans for follow-up

*Day One will take place at the Delta Innovation Hub. Parking is available for \$10 at the [North Campus Parking Deck](#), located on South Jackson Street. North Campus Parking Deck is situated nearby to Bishop, and close to Thomas Street South. A map is linked and pictured below.*

*Day Two will take place in the auditorium of the Ecology Building on South Campus. There is free [adjacent parking](#) accessible on Green Street off of East Campus Road. A map is linked and pictured below.*



17 SEPTEMBER, 2022 • ODUM BUILDING AUDITORIUM

Day Two Schedule

# Laurie

# Fowler



# K E Y N O T E

Laurie Fowler is a rare bird—she went to law school knowing exactly what she wanted to do upon graduation—use legal tools to help Georgia communities protect the state's remarkable biodiversity and beauty. She clerked for environmental law firms in Seattle, San Francisco and D.C. during law school; there were no opportunities for similar clerkships in Georgia at the time. She and a classmate opened the Georgia office of the Southeast's first public interest environmental law firm, the Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation, immediately upon graduation from Georgia Law in 1983. Their law professors paid their first year's rent at the ancient Healey Building in downtown Atlanta and REM played an early benefit concert for LEAF at the Moonshadow in Atlanta that kept the office afloat in its early days. Laurie's focus at LEAF was on litigation and administrative law; she represented env'l NGOs challenging the initial licensing of Plant Vogtle, communities of color in stopping the construction of a state-owned hazardous waste incinerator in their backyards, neighbors halting the aerial spraying of paraquat by the Drug Enforcement Administration in the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River, a number of environmental whistle-blowers, etc.

Her work stopping the proposed hazardous waste incinerator involved policy research and legislative drafting which she loved; her clients in that case subsequently helped her found the Georgia Environmental Policy Institute to continue that work. The initial focus was on developing policies to reduce the production of hazardous and solid waste at the source, to protect low-income communities of color from the disproportionate impact of disposal facility siting, to prevent water pollution and protect biodiversity through local and regional land use plans and controls, to promote the use of conservation easements to protect critical lands in perpetuity and to grow the land trust community in terms of both numbers and strength. She served on advisory boards to the Georgia Department of Community Affairs and the Environmental Protection Division and in that capacity helped develop the concept for the Institute for Georgia Environmental Leadership (IGEL) and model land use ordinances. During this time she was a frequent guest speaker and lecturer at the UGA Law School and the Institute of Ecology and sponsored student interns from those programs. In 1997 she moved full-time to the University Georgia to continue her policy work through the nation's first interdisciplinary environmental law clinic and the work of the Institute's Office of Public Service and Outreach and later the River Basin Center. She served as loaned staff to Governor Roy Barnes in the development of his Community Greenspace Program/Act and served on the advisory committee to Governor Purdue in drafting the Georgia Land Conservation Program/Act. Her students' work developing model laws to charge variable-rate-garbage fees to encourage waste reduction and recycling, to incentivize the use of conservation subdivisions and transferable development rights to protect strategic green space, and to require wetlands and riparian buffer protection have literally been used by communities around the world.

Laurie never intended to be an academic but has immensely enjoyed her partnerships with bright and creative young people to develop new strategies to communicate about and protect our environment. She remains in touch w/ many of the Ecology graduate students she's advised and Environmental Law Practicum alumni and she enjoys hearing about their current work (and families!). Upon retiring to her family's tiny farm in Scaly Mountain she has become a Master Gardener and is a brand new member of the Sky Valley (GA)/Scaly Mountain (NC) Volunteer Fire and Rescue Team; to that end she is enrolled in a (very challenging) course to become an Emergency Medical Technician. She is enjoying long-distance cycling trips, visits from friends and family, and especially her grandchildren, Cora and Connor.

# Linda

# Mendez-Barrientos

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Born and raised in Nicaragua, Mendez-Barrientos earned her Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of California Davis, and holds two master's degrees, one on Water Management from Wageningen University in the Netherlands, and the other on Tropical Agrarian Systems from Montpellier SupAgro in France. She is also the recipient of a number of prestigious and competitive awards, including the National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship (2016–2021), NSF Integrative Graduate Education & Research Traineeship (2015–2017), and European Commission Agris Mundus Scholarship (2008–2010). To date, her work has been published in *Society & Natural Resources*, *Ecology & Society*, *Water Policy*, and the *International Journal of Water Resources Development*. Before academia, she also served as an environmental policy analyst for several years with the Environmental Defense Fund.

# Don

# Nelson



Don Nelson is an ecological anthropologist who works at the intersection of social and environmental change and human well-being. He holds a PhD from the University of Arizona, Department of Anthropology, with a minor in Remote Sensing and Spatial Analysis and has been a UGA faculty member since 2009. He has over 25 years of national and international experience in drought and flood risk management, social vulnerability, and participatory approaches to natural resource management and climate adaptation.

# Na'Taki

# Osborne Jelks



Dr. Na'Taki Osborne Jelks is an Assistant Professor in the Environmental and Health Sciences Program at Spelman College in Atlanta, GA. Jelks investigates urban environmental health disparities; the role that place, race, and social factors play in influencing health; cumulative risk assessment; the impact of climate change on vulnerable populations, and the connection between urban watersheds, pollution, the built environment, and health. Jelks also develops and leads community-engaged research projects and is particularly interested in participatory research approaches that engage environmentally overburdened communities in monitoring local environmental conditions, generating actionable data for community change, and developing effective community-based interventions that revitalize toxic, degraded spaces into healthy places. Jelks co-founded the West Atlanta Watershed Alliance (WAWA), a community-based environmental justice organization that works to grow a cleaner, greener, healthier, more sustainable West Atlanta through authentic community engagement, organizing, education, community science, and participatory research. Since 2018 she has served on the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council (NEJAC), a federal advisory committee that works to integrate environmental justice into the Environmental Protection Agency's programs, policies and activities as well as to improve the environment and public health in communities disproportionately burdened by environmental harms and risks. In 2021 Jelks was named an Excellence in Ecology Scholar by the Ecological Society of America.



# Hal

# Robinson

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Hal Robinson joined GALT in 2013 as the Army Compatible Use Buffer (ACUB) Program Director for Fort Stewart and advises GALT on a variety of matters, including land conservation and corporate governance. Hal earned his undergraduate degree from the University of Georgia's Terry College of Business and, subsequently, gained sales-management experience in both the automotive and pharmaceutical industries. Hal later returned to school and earned his J.D., summa cum laude, from the Charleston School of Law, and his Master of Laws in Environmental Law and Energy Policy, summa cum laude, from the Vermont Law School. He is also a former judicial law clerk at the South Carolina Court of Appeals. Hal enjoys gardening, biking, and spending time with his wife Rebecca, daughter, Sadye, and son, Jonah.

# Cydney

# Seigerman



Cydney K. Seigerman is a Ph.D. candidate in the Integrative Conservation & Anthropology program at the University of Georgia (UGA), where they work with Dr. Don Nelson and are a member of the Human Environmental Change Lab (HECL). Cydney is an NSF Graduate Research Fellow and a research scholar at the Cearense Meteorological and Water Resources Research Institute (Funceme) in Ceará, Brazil. They are currently integrating methods across anthropology, hydrology, and performance/theatre in their dissertation fieldwork on the lived experience of water (in)security in the semi-arid region of Ceará, northeast Brazil. Cydney is also working with Dr. Nelson, HECL members, and collaborators at the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) through the Network for Engineering with Nature (N-EWN) to develop and apply an equity framework for water resources infrastructure projects and management.

# Haley

# Selsor



Haley Selsor is a PhD student in the College of Engineering at the University of Georgia. Her research focuses on flood risk equity in urban areas and investigating the complex relationships between disadvantaged populations and flood exposure. Her other research interests include flood modeling, green infrastructure, and how both of these can be used to further understand and improve equity. In her free time, Haley enjoys spending time outdoors and the live music scene in Athens.

# John

# Sheesley



John Sheesley is an Associate Regional Counsel and Assistant Deputy Ethics Official with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 4, in Atlanta. Prior to joining the EPA in 2010, he was a litigator for Arnold & Porter in Washington, D.C. and King & Spalding in Atlanta. He earned a bachelor's degree from Emory University and a law degree cum laude from Harvard Law School. He is also a volunteer with the Boy Scouts of America, Catholic Charities, Emory University, and Delta Tau Delta Fraternity.

# Marshall

# Shepherd



Dr. Marshall Shepherd is the Georgia Athletic Association Distinguished Professor of Geography and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Georgia and Director of its Atmospheric Sciences Program. Dr. Shepherd was the 2013 President of American Meteorological Society (AMS). Prior to academia, he spent 12 years as a scientist at NASA Goddard Space Flight Center and was Deputy Project Scientist of the Global Precipitation Measurement Mission. Dr. Shepherd is the host of The Weather Channel's Weather Geeks Podcast and a senior contributor to Forbes Magazine. In 2022, he was selected SEC Professor of the Year. In 2021, Dr. Shepherd was elected to the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The only member of the University of Georgia faculty to ever achieve this trifecta. He has received numerous awards including the 2004 White House PECASE Award, the Captain Planet Foundation Protector of the Earth Award, the 2019 AGU Climate Communication Prize, the 2020 Mani L. Bhaumik Award for Public Engagement with Science and the 2018 AMS Helmut Landsberg Award. He received his B.S., M.S. and PhD in meteorology from Florida State University. He has two TEDx talks on climate science and communication that collectively exceed two million viewers. He is routinely asked to brief the media, Congress, and the White House on weather-climate-science related topics. Dr. Shepherd has almost 100 peer-reviewed publications on various topics.

# Josiah

# Watts



Josiah 'Jazz' Watts has worked as an Equal Justice Works Georgia Housing Corps Urban Community Advocate under a fellowship through the Georgia Bar Foundation with the Georgia Heirs Property Law Center in Atlanta. He spearheaded conducting the first-ever Wills clinic with Georgia Heirs Property Law Center in the historic Saltwater Geechee community of Hogg Hummock on Sapelo Island, from which he is a direct descendant. He serves as a co-facilitator for the Nobis Project, a social-justice globally-focused service-learning organization that focuses on cultural responsiveness, social justice, global citizenship, service-learning, and domestic and national civic engagement. He helps Gullah Geechee organizations and communities alike address issues of racial equity in regards to land rights, economic development, and revitalization. He is a certified mediator with the Georgia Office of Dispute Resolution. Jazz holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech Communication and Theater from the University of Georgia and a Master of Arts Degree in Mass Communication from the University of Florida. He is the author and curator of 'The Sapelo Project'. In addition to his advocacy work, he serves on the Board of the Nobis Project and the Hogg Hummock Public Library on Sapelo Island, is a consultant with Vulnerable Communities Initiative, and a member of the Butler Island Coalition in Darien, Ga. He is a Gullah Geechee Heritage Corridor Commissioner, a Land Retention Advisor to the Sapelo Island Cultural & Revitalization Society (SICARS) and a co-founder of I Run With Maud Movement; a national movement founded in the wake of the brutal lynching of Ahmaud Arbery in Brunswick, Georgia. He is a direct descendant of the Saltwater Geechee community of Sapelo Island. Josiah currently works as a Justice Strategist with the coastal nonprofit One Hundred Miles

**Thank  
you for  
attending.**

**The  
RBC  
thanks...**

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To learn more about the River Basin Center's mission, events and research, visit [rivercenter.uga.edu](http://rivercenter.uga.edu).

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Every donation supports our dual goals of solving the region's challenging water problems while training the next generation of conservationists

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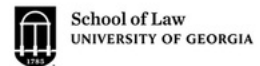
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