

Shrimp Aid Panels & Presentation Speaker Bios

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 18TH

Panel 1: Shrimper Stories & Solutions

Kindra Arnesen

Kindra Arnesen is a self-described bayou girl raised in Southeast Louisiana and a licensed boat captain. Captain Arnesen, together with her husband, runs their family fishing business in both state and federal waters. Deeply rooted in her coastal community, she serves as president of the Women's Southern Fisheries Alliance and is now in her eighth year as the commercial fisheries representative on the Plaquemines Parish Coastal Zone Management Program's advisory committee.

Kindra brings decades of on-the-water experience and leadership to her advocacy for fishers and families across the Gulf. She's also a proud mother of two and grandmother of two.

"Advocating for small family fishers has been the greatest and most challenging experience of my life. Fisheries are vital for the food security of our nation. There has been a very successful effort to eliminate the harvesting of the bounty of the sea. Management has managed America's access to wild harvested seafood to the brink of becoming lost, possibly permanently. This is why for the last 17 years, I've participated in advisory panels, senate briefings, countless meetings with elected officials, state and federal, all to help ensure our fisheries continue with what we do have access to and to educate officials in an attempt to hopefully see some growth in access to harvest. Our oceans possess more than enough resources for responsible sustainable harvest of wild seafood. Generational harvesters of the sea "fishermen and fisherwomen" are our access to this vital food source. As a nation we must consider burdensome regulations that caused harvest of many species to completely shut down or become a very small fraction in comparison to what those fisheries produced prior to decades of destructive regulations throughout coastal communities nationwide. Ask, how does a nation remove its own access to the bounty of its waters? Our fisheries haven't been destroyed by harvesters, but have been crippled and slowly eroded through decades of harmful management practices. This must change."

George Barisich

George Barisich is a third-generation Croatian commercial fisherman from St. Bernard Parish and one of Louisiana's most outspoken advocates for the state's shrimping and fishing communities. A lifelong shrimper and president of the United Commercial Fishermen's Association, George has spent decades fighting for fair markets, strong coastal protections, and policies that sustain both the environment and the livelihoods of working fishers. He is a St. Bernard Parish Board Member and member of the Louisiana Shrimp Association, as well as the longest serving member of the Governor's Louisiana Shrimp Task Force. His firsthand knowledge of the Gulf—from hurricanes to habitat loss to the influx of cheap imports—has made him a vital voice in the ongoing effort to protect Louisiana's cultural and economic lifeblood: its local seafood industry.

Kim Chauvin

Kim Chauvin is a powerhouse leader, businesswoman, and advocate for Louisiana's seafood industry. As president and co-owner of David Chauvin's Seafood Company and Kim Chauvin's Seafood Company, she and her husband operate the largest warm-water shrimp docks in the United States—built through decades of hard work, innovation, and commitment to quality. A lifelong champion of Gulf fisheries, Kim founded Down the Bayou Shrimp Tours to educate visitors on the state's working coast and continues to fight for fair markets, domestic seafood, and the future of Louisiana shrimping. She also serves as Terrebonne Parish Councilwoman for District 8, where her servant-leadership approach reflects her deep dedication to family, faith, and community.

Sandy Nguyen

Sandy Ha Nguyen has over 36 years of experience supporting coast- dependent businesses. As the daughter of a first-generation Vietnamese fisherman, she is fluent in Vietnamese and English and has deep roots in the fishing industry. In response to the 2010 BP Oil Spill, she co-founded Coastal Communities Consulting, Inc. (CCC) to extend and increase her work to provide small business and disaster assistance to commercial fishermen and related rural/coastal businesses across Southeast Louisiana, particularly immigrant and generational American fishermen with limited formal education. Under her leadership, CCC has assisted over 2,200 clients, securing more than \$50 million in disaster recovery aid at no cost to them. A Tulane School of Business graduate and proud New Orleans East resident, Sandy has earned numerous accolades, including City Business Woman of the Year (2007), ASBDC State Star (2012), and the City of New Orleans "Notable Vietnamese Women" Award. Her most cherished honor was meeting President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama in recognition of her work during Hurricane Katrina.

James Mitchell

James Mitchell serves as Legislative Director for Don't Cage Our Oceans, a national coalition working to protect marine ecosystems and coastal communities from the expansion of industrial ocean fish farming. Based in Washington, D.C., James leads the organization's federal policy efforts, engaging lawmakers, agencies, and grassroots partners to advance sustainable fisheries and equitable ocean policy. With a background in marine conservation and environmental justice, he focuses on ensuring that ocean policy decisions prioritize people, place, and planet over corporate interests—advocating for a healthy, thriving future for America's working waterfronts.

Margee Green

Margee Green is the Executive Director of the Louisiana Food Policy Action Council (FPAC), where she works to build equitable, resilient food systems that support local producers and strengthen coastal communities. A lifelong advocate for farmers, fishers, and food workers, Margee brings years of experience in grassroots organizing and policy development to her leadership at FPAC. She has been instrumental in shaping statewide initiatives that connect food access, climate resilience, and economic opportunity—bridging the gap between policy makers and the people who feed Louisiana. Passionate, pragmatic, and deeply community-focused, Margee is helping redefine what sustainable food policy looks like in the Gulf South.

Moderator: John Fallon

John Fallon is Director of Sustainability and Coastal Conservation Initiatives at the Audubon Nature Institute, where he leads Audubon's Gulf United for Lasting Fisheries (G.U.L.F.) work to strengthen sustainable seafood supply chains across the Gulf. Since joining Audubon in 2008, John has helped build chef and restaurant partnerships, advance third-party certifications like Responsible Fisheries Management, and translate science and policy into practical tools for fishers, buyers, and the public. Based in New Orleans, he brings more than 15 years of hands-on experience in fisheries outreach and conservation—making him a natural fit to moderate this panel and connect working-waterfront perspectives with policy and market realities.

Presentation: SeaD Testing Updates**Dave Williams**

Dave Williams is a commercial fishery scientist and founder of SeaD Consulting, a Houston-based firm specializing in innovative, data-driven solutions for the seafood industry. With over four decades of experience spanning the United Kingdom and the Americas, Dave has pioneered advancements in seafood processing, aquaculture economics, and sustainable supply chain development. His work has ranged from automating shrimp production lines and expanding international seafood trade to leading multimillion-dollar operations in shrimp and shellfish farming. Most recently, through SeaD Consulting, Dave spearheaded the RIGHTTest™ Shrimp Authenticity Study, an eight-state genetic testing project conducted in partnership with Florida State University. This landmark study revealed widespread mislabeling of imported shrimp as domestic wild-caught and quantified the economic harm to Gulf Coast fisheries—estimating up to \$299 million in lost annual revenue. A longtime advocate for fair trade, traceability, and domestic seafood integrity, Dave continues to bridge science, policy, and industry practice to protect the future of America's wild-caught shrimpers.

Glenda Beasley

Glenda has many viewpoints on the communications business, serving in roles as a marketing agency owner, media rep, marketing director, producer and media relations contact. Her unique perspective offers an ability to see many sides of an equation with a clear understanding of what it takes to deliver complex goals and objectives. She has also worked in multiple industries, from consumer packaged goods to media publishers, ad agencies, retail, manufacturers, distributors, government, associations and nonprofits. Her recent work with SeaD Consulting has been focused on developing content and media coverage for genetic shrimp testing at festivals and restaurants across the U.S., in eight targeted states including Louisiana. In the past year, SeaD's media coverage valuation exceeded \$2M, delivering high consumer awareness and engagement about shrimp mislabeling, while helping American wild-caught shrimp pricing to increase significantly.

Panel 2: The FACTS on SWLA

Sky Leger

Fisherfamily Advisory Council for Tradition and Stewardship (FACTS) Sky Leger has been shrimping and oystering in Cameron for 15 years. He recently experienced extreme catch loss from a dredge disaster from construction for Venture Global's CP2 that left oyster reefs and estuaries covered in dredge sludge. Sky is leading hydrophone deployment in Habitat Recovery Project's Community Science effort to track underwater noise pollution and its effects on shrimp.

Solomon Williams

Fisherfamily Advisory Council for Tradition and Stewardship (FACTS) Multigenerational, small-scale commercial oysterman, shrimp dock hand, and parent to six children. Solomon is particularly interested in advocating for the safety and rights of elder fishermen, and the heritage of the Cameron community, once the seafood capital of the United States, and now the epicenter of one of the biggest fossil fuel build-out in the world.

James Hiatt

Director of For a Better Bayou A former oil and gas worker turned community advocate, James Hiatt is committed to building people power across Southwest Louisiana by inviting others to remember our shared dignity, the sacredness of every life, and our responsibility to care for our common home. Through watchdogging industry, engaging in public discourse, and empowering civic engagement, For a Better Bayou helps restore the rightful voice of the people in shaping the region's future. By helping neighbors turn frustration into action and amplifying voices too often overlooked, we remind the world that love of neighbor and the sacredness of every life are more powerful than backroom deals and the machinery of money.

Alyssa Portaro

Founder and Executive Director of Habitat Recovery Project (HRP) Alyssa Portaro is a dynamic environmentalist and activist known for her extensive work in sustainability, nonprofit development, and socially beneficial consultancy. Alyssa has spent the past 2 years meeting with and organizing Cameron Parish shrimpers, from hosting cookouts and community teach-ins to suing the industries that harm them. Alyssa is dedicated to understanding what is negatively affecting our fisheries and building people power to effect positive change for them.

Moderator: Misha Mayeur

Director of Communications and Partnerships for Habitat Recovery Project (HRP) Creator and Host of the Gulf Rising Podcast that has detailed environmental issues across the state, Misha is an advocate for the health of Louisiana's ecosystems. She has been working with the fishermen of Cameron Parish for the past year and a half to amplify their stories through social media, press, and even a giant puppet show. You may hear Misha's voice again on

Saturday night as she performs in *The Little Shrimp and the Terrible Noise*, which details the harm experienced by Cameron Fishermen. *Due to the nature of the shrimping season, several shrimpers are waiting to make the call to attend Shrimpfest based on the climate for catching. The potential to catch several thousand dollars' worth of shrimp in a day cannot be overlooked. We are hopeful that timing will work out for more SWLA shrimpers to attend LA Shrimpfest.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 19TH

Pre-festival Discussion

Neuro-Inclusion and Neuro-Accessibility in Festival-Making in the Gulf South

Participants:

Chiara Latimer, MFT – Director, Center for Neurodiversity at Rowan University
Georgia Majka – Interdisciplinary artist and assistant director, Rowan University
Bridgette Hamstead, MS – Founding Director, Fish in a Tree; Chair, Neurodiversity Coalition of America

Panel 3: Shrimping Forward: Innovation & Opportunity in a Changing Gulf

Dave Williams

Dave Williams is a commercial fishery scientist and founder of Houston-based SeaD Consulting, with over 40 years of global experience in seafood processing, bioeconomics, and sustainable supply chain development. His work has advanced automation in shrimp production, expanded international seafood trade, and guided the technical development of major aquaculture operations. Most recently, through SeaD Consulting, he led the RIGHTTest™ Shrimp Authenticity Study with Florida State University—an eight-state genetic testing initiative exposing widespread mislabeling of imported shrimp as domestic and estimating up to \$1 billion in annual losses to Gulf Coast fisheries. A longtime advocate for traceability and fair trade, Dave continues to bridge science, policy, and industry to protect America's wild-caught seafood.

Lance Nacio

Lance Nacio is the owner, captain, and visionary behind Anna Marie Seafood, a family-run Gulf shrimping enterprise rooted in southern Louisiana tradition. Growing up in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes, Lance learned the rhythms of the bayou life—fishing, hunting, trapping—before taking to the seas full time in 1997. Since then, he has invested in innovation—equipping his 55-foot F/V Anna Marie with onboard plate-freezing technology, wider mesh nets, and turtle-excluder devices—to ensure quality, sustainability, and efficiency. He also oversees a micro-processing facility for vacuum-packing fish products and expanding his catch portfolio beyond shrimp to finfish and local bycatch. Lance continues to champion local seafood, directly connecting his harvest to chefs, consumers, and markets across Louisiana.

Mike Nelson

Chef Mike Nelson is the Executive Chef and Partner at GW Fins in New Orleans, where his commitment to sustainability and whole-fish utilization has made him one of the Gulf South's leading voices for responsible seafood. Known for his innovative "fin-to-tail" approach, Mike works closely with local fishers to ensure every part of the catch is celebrated, from collars to cheeks to roe and beyond. His work has helped redefine how chefs and diners think about waste, quality, and seasonality in the seafood world. A passionate educator and advocate, Chef Nelson continues to champion addressing the "greying of the fleet" through train transparency, traceability, and respect for the people and ecosystems that make Gulf seafood possible.

Thomas Hymel

Thomas Hymel is a marine extension agent with both the LSU AgCenter and Louisiana Sea Grant, where he serves as Executive Director of the Seafood Processing Demonstration Lab. He co-founded the facility in Jeanerette to provide hands-on training, value-added processing, packaging, freezing, and direct marketing tools aimed at helping commercial fishers and small processors maximize their catch and expand into new markets. Hymel also leads the educational program Louisiana Fisheries Forward, which supports fishers in improving profitability, navigating disasters, and building resilience for the state's commercial fishing

Moderator: Dana Honn

Dana Honn is a Chef and restaurant owner in New Orleans. For nearly two decades, he has been a vocal advocate for ocean conservation, coastal preservation and restoration, and the use of local ingredients – a passion that extends to his support of local farmers and fishers. Most recently, he has been engaged in co-founding and co-producing the Louisiana Shrimp Festival & Shrimp Aid in an effort to help Gulf shrimpers in their many challenges to stay afloat.

Panel 4: Shrimp, Culture and Community**Bruce Sunpie Barnes**

Bruce "Sunpie" Barnes is a New Orleans culture bearer, musician, composer, photographer, naturalist, and Big Chief of the historic Northside Skull and Bones Gang. A former National Park Service ranger and biologist, Barnes has spent more than three decades bridging ecology and culture through music and storytelling. Leader of *Sunpie and the Louisiana Sunspots*, he fuses zydeco, blues, gospel, Afro-Caribbean, and Creole traditions into a distinctly "Afro-Louisiana" sound, performing worldwide and touring with artists such as Paul Simon and Sting. His photography and writing document the living traditions of New Orleans; his book *Talk That Music Talk* chronicles brass band heritage through stories and images. As Big Chief, Barnes upholds the 200-year-old Mardi Gras morning ritual of the Skull and Bones Gang—honoring ancestry, mortality, and community resilience—while continuing to teach, perform, and advocate for the intertwined preservation of Louisiana's natural and cultural landscapes.

Marion Hoang Ngoc Hill

Marion Hoang Ngoc Hill is a Vietnamese-British-French film and music director and producer based in New Orleans. Her debut feature, *Ma Belle, My Beauty*, won the Audience Award at the 2021 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically worldwide. Supported by fellowships and grants from the Sundance Institute, Universal Pictures, the Gotham, and the New Orleans Film Society, she continues to create narrative, documentary, and music works across France, Vietnam, and the U.S., with projects appearing on Hulu, Starz, Amazon, Apple, and GagaOOLala. Her recent collaboration *Amongst the Disquiet* with artists Tuan Andrew Nguyen and Thao Nguyen premiered at the New Orleans Museum of Art and is now featured at the São Paulo Biennale. A former classical pianist and jazz-loving oboist, she currently serves as creative director of *Saigon Jazz Revival*, debuting in 2025, and brings a collaborative, immersive, and spiritually grounded approach to storytelling.

Ly "Leah" Chan

Leah Chan is a shrimper, chef, and cultural preservationist whose work bridges Louisiana's coastal traditions with her Cambodian heritage. A vendor at the Louisiana Shrimp Festival, she operates *Mama Chan's*, a beloved food truck known for its authentic Asian street foods—each dish crafted from scratch using high-quality local ingredients and house-made sauces. Drawing on family recipes and Gulf-sourced seafood, Leah celebrates the deep connections between land, water, and culture, honoring both her Southeast Asian roots and her adopted Louisiana community. Through her cooking and storytelling, she works to preserve and share the culinary traditions of Cambodian and coastal foodways, offering a taste of home that speaks across generations and geographies.

Eva Tesfaye

Eva Tesfaye covers the environment for WWNO's Coastal Desk. She is a host and reporter for the podcast *Sea Change*: focusing on environmental issues coastal communities, particularly along the Gulf Coast. Before joining WWNO, she reported for Harvest Public Media and the Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk. She was based at KCUR 89.3 in Kansas City, Missouri, where she covered agriculture, food and the environment across the Mississippi River Basin.

Zella Palmer

Zella Palmer, is an author, professor, filmmaker, curator, scholar and the Chair and Director of the Dillard University Ray Charles Program in African-American Material Culture in New Orleans, Louisiana. Palmer is committed to documenting and preserving the legacy of Afro-Diasporic, Indigenous and LatinX culinary history. As the Chair of the Dillard University Ray Charles Program, Palmer filmed and produced the (2016) *Story of New Orleans Creole Cooking: The Black Hand in the Pot* documentary. In 2020, under Palmer's leadership, she launched a Food Studies Minor at Dillard University.

Theresa Dardar

Theresa Dardar is a lifelong resident and leader of the Pointe-au-Chien Indian Tribe in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes, where she is a powerful advocate for coastal communities, tribal rights, and ecosystem protection. As president of Lowlander Center's board, she elevates the voices of her people locally, nationally, and internationally—including at United Nations forums and indigenous rights gatherings. Theresa blends traditional knowledge with activism—championing restoration, environmental justice, and indigenous sovereignty while staying deeply connected to her bayou roots and community life.

Moderator: Dr. Aimee K. Thomas

Dr. Aimée K. Thomas is a Lecturer/Assistant Professor in the Department of Biological Sciences, and Assistant Director for the Office of Teacher Certification at Loyola University New Orleans. She was the Director of the Biological Sciences Learning Center. At USM, she received the University Research Council Creative Activities Award for the informal science education programs she developed, including Night at the Museum, Discover Nature Series, Biology Trails and Survivor Biology camps, was named the Beta Beta Beta Teacher of the Year, and received the College of Science and Technology Outstanding Faculty Teaching Award. She was named a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and a Quality Enhancement Plan Fellow by USM. At Loyola, she recently received a Bobet Fellowship for her development of an innovative first-semester biology course that uses experiential learning to teach the process of science.