

## Title for 2025 NAL Conference - **Action Now for Planet Earth**

### MONDAY'S SPEAKERS:

**Max Holmes:** *President and CEO Woodwell Climate Research Center (Woods Hole)* - CO2 concentration and fossil fuels' contribution very much on rise, **need to act NOW** - electricity from renewable resources, **"follow the water"**, control logging efforts on public lands

**Letise LaFeir:** *New England Aquarium* - State of oceans - ocean waters drive our climate cycle, it (**there's only one ocean!**) absorbs some carbon, a lot of heat - seagrasses/mangroves/marshes critical - NOAA monitors endangered species, habitats, satellite coverage of atmosphere, ocean, commerce - worked with and mentioned Baltimore Aquarium - excellent speaker !

**Laura Jasinski:** *ED Charles River Conservancy* - floating wetland in Charles River (similar to floating wetlands we have in Baltimore Harbor), **magic of pilot project, small but impactful**, viable tool for resilience, 730 square feet/\$30,000, salt tolerant plants, 3,000 plant plugs, kayak tours/educate and engage people, renaturalization of river edges and can use as seawall reinforcement (working on bringing out of center of river)

**Elizabeth Gray:** *CEO Audubon* - hemispheric conservation through birds - interconnectedness of birds and people and our environment - 3B birds lost in N America alone since 1970, their color and song indicate warnings for environment and nature - "bend the bird curve" - Artificial Lights and City Lights Out & Dark Nights initiatives, building changes to lessen bird hits thru bird friendly glass - **Wind energy: can paint blades, design so birds can't /don't want to land on blades, turn off during migration, can concentrate wind energy** - native plants and grasslands for habitat America's Wildlife Acts : health of landscape- Bald Eagle great example of successful work "restore balance" - Farm Bill-water and soil health, mangroves and living shorelines, creating "corridor of connected areas" of land protected efforts - Latin America and Canada strong in stewardship of birdland efforts - **There is bird friendly coffee(organic and produced with shade cover habitat for migratory and resident birds "shade grown")** - bird flu is not that alarming as being reported...birds are in crowded areas and pass the flu to one another much like humans ...

**Nat Mund and Anders Reynolds** - *Southern Environmental Law Center*: climate change and **environmental justice** - ultra vires of current administration requires legal authority to enact policies but many are being done w/o it - Flash Bill - affects immigration but also affects public lands, **need to protect "bedrock" environmental laws**, save boundary waters, mangroves and seagrasses most important, three main: public lands/clean air/clean water - among all state and countries need protection and reciprocity of environment

**Janet McCabe:** *former deputy chair of EPA* - Acid rain - **strides made in NEng., hole in ozone - being restored**, Lead paint - much lead added to gas-doesn't have to be and **no longer is** — much progress on pollutants(refrig. foam insulation gone) GCA, gardeners, individual people are advocates/can make a difference, “the great American comeback”  
**Harvard Tracker:** gardening, mulch, pollinators, “take care of yourself and get outdoors”

**Rebecca Riley:** *Dir Food & Agri, NRDC*- nitro oxide and the bee !! Rusty-patched bumble bee focus but all endangered species, bees and butterflies needed for our food chain/pollinators/ dramatic loss with 87% habitat loss, and PESTICIDE use - 70% nitric oxide from agriculture pest., Nitro. Designed to kill insects!, **1 corn kernel can affect 250,000 bees**, used on golf courses, planters, parks, ornamentals, (wheat and soybeans too but not as much), no proof actually helps farmers' yield, **Birds & Bees Bill in NY**, Endangered Species Act, Clean Water Act, Biodiversity sooo important- affects human health

**Collin O'Mara:** *Pr./CEO National Wildlife Federation* - 1937 Restoration of Wildlife Act, policy threats of fin.cuts/layoffs/deregulation of Nat'l Env Policy Act, Clean Water Act, Clean Air Act, End. Sp. Act - **“Destruction versus Common Sense”**, 1,600 plants and animals danger of extin., waterfowl with wetlands destruction, raptors threatened by pesticides, there is State Wildlife Action Plan focusing on restorative needs /private lands/tax breaks ESA - **monarch butterfly big fluctuations** ...back down ...western and eastern monarch

**Paul Tukey:** *Glenstone Museum* - in Trivilah, MD - The Art of Landscape - **clover is good** to have in lawn, soil and food web - “Poop Loop” of insects and animals, **native trees**  
**-importance of tree canopy** - tulip poplar/sycamore/american beech/red-blk-white oak/virginia pine/black gum

**Tom Campion:** *Alaska Wilderness League* - film *The Arctic*, caribou migration, arctic drilling a NO, largest grasslands in US, largest forest, 5,000 islands, **even if we never see it, leave it alone**, open space and protected lands important, **“the last of”** ...

## TUESDAY'S SPEAKERS:

**Jim McGovern:** *US Rep MA* - “**you don’t have to agree on everything to agree on something**”, protecting nature is a shared value, think globally-act locally, civic engagement and education needed, **Save the Redwoods** - overcrowding being addressed as they come back

**Mazie Hirono** - *Senator HI* - Need **national coordination of native plant seeds cultivation and distribution**, Schools planting native trees initiative, educate, write letters !!

**Jeff Merkley:** *Senator OR* - pollinators and plastics, western monarch butterfly - 2020 less than 2,000, 2021 back to 200,000 then 2022 back down to the Ks, climate chaos with extreme temp fluctuation, milkweed growth affected, pesticides, habitat destruction, fewer weeds/uncultivated land - Response: **pollinator gardens/markers at nurseries, adopt highways and plant pollinators**, conservation easements with pollinators and pesticide free plantings

Plastics- burned/buried/born out to sea - Break Free from Plastics Act - we all have 1t of plastic in our brains, 3 floating trash islands size of Texas in our ocean, OR - first recycle bill of all USA

**Kirstie Pecci:** *Just Zero* - corporations profit from single use plastics! Can’t recycle ourselves out of problem, **Myth - plastic is clean, recycling is regulated and safe, consumers want it** - it’s an environmental injustice on human health, only 1s and 2s (some 5s) recyclable and rec. process gives off chemicals, expensive/polluting/only tiny % actually reused, microplastics in our bodies/milk ducts/testicles, food and bev. containers, PVC pipes, carpets, textiles, non-stick pans, can’t get rid of all but need to phase out a lot- recycle whenever and wherever you can, stick with natural fibers- silk/cotton/wool/linen, **polystyrene has been significantly reduced so can be done**

**Karen Florini:** *C-Change Conversations* - **need to change conversations to resistance** - how likely to happen/how dangerous to health/consequences on economy & health - striking rise in CO2 emissions, 81% of energy from fossil fuels - Medical Society Consortium on Climate & Health - falling costs thru innovations, renewables are becoming less exp., clean technology across nation, innovative pipeline 24/7 enhance geo-thermal -\*battery energy utility to scale\*adv nuclear \*enhance geo thermal \* carbon capture \* green hydrogen\* recent breakthroughs in fusion

**Tom Suozzi:** *US House Rep NY* - elections have consequences, Problem Solvers Caucus, **need common ground**

**Shelley Moore Capito** - *US Senator WV* - New River Gorge National Park and Preserve is **newest national park** est. 2021 -Safe drinking water access for people of WV., Steward Plan which is hub and spoke for regulation plans, Brownfields Revitalization Act : **encourage redevelopment of former industrial /commercial sites** - funding to assess and clean up “brownfields” state and tribal response programs/ sites for clean soil and water

**Ari Novy**: *San Diego Botanical Gardens* - **recipient of GCA Scholarship for his Phd.**, spearheading International Horticulture Expos - in Yokohama 2027, “Scenery for Future Happiness” - 2031 to be held in Minnesota, **public garden** industry, hort and style -

**Chellie Pingree**: *US H Rep ME*- Committee oversees budget for EPA - PFAS -sewage sludge affects drinking water and soil, Food Waste Bill- 30% food wasted 0\$1,000 pp a year, Farm Bill - date labeling needs to be more regulated in concert with USDA, transportation system of food needs to be assessed, **composting and methane gas in landfills not breaking down efficiently as we are led to believe**

**Jared Huffman**: *US H Rep CA* - all of this is bigger than us - we may never see sites we save but need to - today’s sessions not addressing what needs to be addressed, unprecedented assaults on agencies who do a lot of work, only look at End. Species Act successes and assumes all is well, need to stay on it - **address Global Biodiversity Crisis** - GCA etc. -use roundtables/conferences/etc. Article I

**Mark Warner**: *US Senator VA* - Great American Outdoors Act - Lamar Alexander from TN was big help - we’re dealing with a **deferred maintenance of sorts on our natural system** - for example- Ice melt is a threat to national security as raising piers for rising waters affects midshipmen/shipping industry ...need to restore parks -all should support whether Rep or Dem-GCA has power and respect

**Sheldon Whitehouse**: *US Senator RI* - Have to have carbon capture - **has to be a price on carbon pollution** - oil industry basically has “freedom to pollute” - CBAN - GMA inquiry dig ...Threats to Florida coastline big and costly -Insurance affects Mortgage affects Prop Value - Need permanent LAnd Cons Fund and Park Maintenance Bill, America the Beautiful Act is Trump’s version - need Rec Wildlife Act, Fix Forests Act, Save Our Seas, Rise Act -

## MEETINGS WITH REPRESENTATIVES:

**Senator Chris Van Hollen** : He stopped by  
**Congressman Jamie Raskin's** Reps  
**Congressman Johnny Olszewski's** Reps  
Shared with Reps about legislation pushes below-

Introduced and advocated for support of legislation:

- 1) The Great Outdoors Act Renewal
  - 2) The Recovering America's Wildlife Act
  - 3) The North American Grasslands Conservation Act
  - 4) The Fix Our Forests Act
  - 5) National Interagency Seed and Restoration Center Act
  - 6) National Native Plant Month
  - 7) The Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
  - 8) The Ohio River Basin Restoration Initiative
  - 9) The Save Our Seas 2.0 Amendments Act
  - 10) The Reinvesting in Shoreline Economies and Ecosystems Act
  - 11) The Farm Bill
  - 12) The Break Free From Plastics Pollution Act
  - 13) The REDUCE Act The PFAS Action Act
- The Farm Bill is lacking a strong conservation piece
  - While not in our backyard, #7& #8 are relatable in the sense of the support we receive for the Chesapeake Bay and how the waters are all connected
  - We have Native Plant Month in May in Maryland but #6 is for a National NPM in April
  - Grasslands are often considered a mid-west /plains concern but along our coastline and in small pockets around delmarva - also want to support other states - grasslands instrumental in helping sink CO2
  - Save Our Seas - large floating islands of trash need to be addressed now
  - Supply chain of native plant seeds needs to be improved and pesticide free
  - Fix Our Forests –for example, redwoods regrowth needs to make room so some felled
  - This is the time to make a difference: advances in technology & financial incentives
  - Trying to get Dem and Rep team to support legislation

***Native plants are the glue to creating regenerative & sustainable landscape/greenscape/open spaces to then touch on all of these initiatives - “best practices for reducing pesticide use, increasing seed collection, more nursery capacity, diversified seed production, climate-resilient forest restoration”***

**Newsflashes:**

January 25-28 2026 - GCA Conservation Study Conference - protect and restore North America's largest wetlands - The Everglades- "Odyssey in the Everglades" - National Parks Association and Botanical Gardens will coordinate research and education presentations, mangrove cover illustration - importance of mangroves -

Audubon celebrating 120 years

GardenForWildlife.com - brings native plants right to your door

Glenstone Museum - in Trivilah, MD - example of structure and biology

Film: *The Arctic, Our Last Great Wilderness*

Presentation of Ellen Harvey Kelly Medal - renderings and award process introduced

International Horticulture Expos- 2027 in Yokohama and 2031 in Minnesota - stay tuned

NAL 2025 attended by Jennifer Paternotte and Sana Brooks