



PRESENTER BIOGRAPHIES

Aaron Adams, PhD (aaron@bonefishtarpontrust.org)

Dr. Aaron Adams received a bachelor's degree from St. Mary's College in Maryland, a Master's degree from the College of William and Mary, and a Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts Boston, and also holds a Coast Guard Captain's License. He has lived, worked, and fished on both coasts of the US, and in the Caribbean, where he has been conducting fish research for more than 25 years. As Director of Science and Conservation, Aaron is responsible for formulating, overseeing, and implementing BTT's science and conservation plan, and applying scientific findings to conservation and management via interactions with resource management agencies and other non-governmental organizations. Aaron has been an author or co-author on more than 100 peer-reviewed scientific publications and has authored three books and contributed chapters to four books translating science into layman's terms.

Chris Anastasiou, PhD (Chris.Anastasiou@swfwmd.state.fl.us)

Dr. Chris Anastasiou is the Southwest Florida Water Management District's Chief Water Quality Scientist and Seagrass Mapping Program Lead. Dr. Anastasiou has been working in the Charlotte Harbor watershed and estuary for over 30 years evaluating water quality, mapping seagrasses, and managing habitat restoration projects. Since 2017, Dr. Anastasiou has also served as the District's Emergency Operations Center (EOC) Weather Operations Unit Lead. This year he has also taken on the lead role of the District's newly established EOC Water Quality Recovery Unit. He received his Ph.D. in 2009 from the University of South Florida College of Marine Science. Dr. Anastasiou is also a Commander in the United States Navy Reserve with 18 years of experience as a Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Officer.

Regina Bale (rbale@fgcu.edu)

Regina Bale is the Environmental Education Coordinator of the Center for Environment and Society within The Water School at Florida Gulf Coast University. She previously served as an

academic coach and teacher in Collier County Public Schools at the elementary and middle school levels. Ms. Bale has been honored to receive professional recognition for her teaching from the Education Foundation of Collier County as a teacher of distinction in 2013 and 2019, and from the Sapakie Family Foundation as a Science Technology Engineering Arts and Math (STEAM) Innovative Teaching Award recipient in 2019. Ms. Bale currently serves on the Graduate Student Assembly for the Association for Educational Communications and Technology (AECT) as the Design and Development Board Representative. Ms. Bale is currently working on training and curriculum development for K-20 formal and informal educators to enhance environmental education with technology.

Matthew Bunting (Matthew.Bunting@MyFWC.com)

Matthew Bunting graduated from Florida Gulf Coast University with a bachelor's degree in marine science and from the University of Florida with a Master of Science in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences. Currently works for the FWC in the Fisheries Independent Monitoring Program. His work focuses on ontogenetic habitat shifts in sportfish, coastal pond functions as nursery habitats, and coastal habitat restoration design and monitoring.

Kelly Chase (Kelly.Chase@MyFWC.com)

Kelly Chase is a fisheries biologist for the Florida Wildlife Research Institute's Fisheries Independent Monitoring (FIM) Charlotte Harbor field lab where he studies fish community dynamics and juvenile sportfish ecology. In 2022, Kelly began pursuing his M.S. in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at the University of Florida, examining the effects of habitat shifts on fish communities and the feeding ecology of juvenile Common Snook.

Rebecca Cray (Rebecca.Cray@FloridaDEP.gov)

Rebecca Cray is an Environmental Specialist with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve office. She leads EBAP's continuous water quality and seagrass monitoring programs and coordinates local volunteers as part of the larger Charlotte Harbor Estuaries Volunteers Water Quality Monitoring Network. Rebecca has been with EBAP for over 7 years, and this is her third CHNEP Watershed Summit.

Michael D'Imperio (mdimperio@ufl.edu)

Michael D'Imperio is the Water Resources Agent with the University of Florida IFAS Extension Sarasota County. His work includes outreach and education focused on the protection, enhancement, and awareness of water quality and water supply. Michael specializes in stormwater pond management, drinking water quality, reclaimed water, household water conservation, and practices for reducing non-point source pollution. He provides educational programming to a variety of audiences including residents, HOAs, youth groups, and local stakeholders. Michael has a Professional Science Master's Degree in Environmental Science from Stockton University, and his background includes work in the areas of public water utilities, bivalve aquaculture, and education.

Jon Dinges (DingesJ@bv.com)

Mr. Jon Dinges has more than 28 years of experience in water resources engineering in both the public and private sectors. Jon's experience includes a variety of programs and projects including storm water, floodplains, water supply assessment and planning, water quality improvement, hydrologic restoration, minimum flows and levels, reclaimed water, natural systems restoration, and integrated water resource management planning. Jon has worked with Black & Veatch since 2018 leading the firm's Florida water resources practice. He is a licensed Professional Engineer in Florida.

Stephanie Erickson (Stephanie.Erickson@FloridaDEP.gov)

Stephanie Erickson has been with the Department of Environmental Protection for more than 15 years in the Office of Resilience and Coastal Protection. She joined the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve office as program lead for their seagrass and water quality monitoring programs and assisted with upland management, education & outreach, and interagency coordination activities as well. Stephanie has been the manager of the Estero Bay Aquatic Preserve since 2016 and oversees the office's resource management, education/outreach, and resource monitoring efforts which include water quality, oyster monitoring, seagrass and macroalgae monitoring, and rookery monitoring.

Emily Hall, PhD (emily8@mote.org)

Dr. Emily Hall is a Senior Scientist and Program Manager at Mote Marine Laboratory. She currently manages the Chemical and Physical Ecology and the Ocean Acidification Programs at Mote with labs in Sarasota and the Florida Keys. Her research is focused on effects of local and global stressors on coastal and marine organisms (e.g., corals and harmful algae) and studying unique habitats that may be able to withstand or alleviate the effects of stressors. Dr. Hall is also co-coordinator for the Southeast Ocean and Coastal Acidification Network (SOCAN), a network supported by NOAA that focuses on the US Southeast to understand how coastal waters are changing, what this means for coastal resources, informing stakeholders about acidification, coordinating approaches to drive monitoring and research to address stakeholder needs, and increasing acidification monitoring throughout the region.

Kayla Hayes (Kayla.J.Hayes@FloridaDEP.gov)

Kayla Hayes is an Environmental Specialist for the Florida Department of Environmental Protection at Charlotte Harbor Aquatic Preserves. Previously, she has worked as an Adjunct Professor and an Environmental Scientist. She received her Bachelors from Eckerd College and her Master of Science in Aquatic Biology/Limnology from Texas State University.

Paul Julian, PhD (PJulian@evergladesfoundation.org)

With nearly 2-decades of water quality experience in South Florida, Dr. Paul Julian integrates knowledge of the Everglades ecosystem, water management operations, estuarine and wetland hydrology, biogeochemistry, and aquatic ecology to evaluate water quality and restoration progress across South Florida.

Miles Medina, PhD (miles.medina@ufl.edu)

Dr. Miles Medina of the University of Florida's Center for Coastal Solutions is a quantitative ecohydrologist focusing on coastal water quality and its drivers in Florida. Last year, he discovered a link between red tide blooms near Charlotte Harbor and nitrogen loads from Lake Okeechobee. He continues ongoing research on water quality trends in Charlotte Harbor, based on the approximately 20-year dataset generated by the Coastal Charlotte Harbor Monitoring Network. Previously, as a quantitative consultant, he worked with various government entities and developed data management and machine learning tools to identify sources of water quality impairments throughout Florida. Miles completed his PhD in 2019 with a thesis on inferring causality in complex ecohydrological systems, including treatment wetlands in the Everglades and red tide blooms off Florida's Gulf Coast.

Eric Milbrandt, PhD (emilbran@sccf.org)

Dr. Eric Milbrandt received his B.S. from Cal Poly Humboldt and earned a Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Oregon. His research is on water quality, harmful algae blooms, and the effects on seagrass and oyster reef communities. In 2007, he established SCCF's River, Estuary and Coastal Observing Network (RECON) to provide data about the dynamics of the Caloosahatchee Estuary and Gulf of Mexico. He is the director of the SCCF Marine Laboratory.

Brandon Moody (Brandon.Moody@charlottecountyfl.gov)

Brandon Moody is the inaugural Water Quality Manager for Charlotte County. First filled in March 2021, this position is responsible for the development of a county-wide water quality monitoring strategy, development of the county's water quality management plan (One Charlotte, One Water), and inter-departmental coordination of certain water quality related actions within the county. Prior to joining Charlotte County, Brandon served in the Nutrient Source Control and Water Quality Monitoring programs at the South Florida Water Management District, and Georgia Environmental Protection Division's Watershed Planning and Monitoring Program.

Katherine Rose (kate.rose0210@ufl.edu)

Katherine "Kate" Rose has served as the UF/IFAS Florida Sea Grant Extension Agent for Charlotte County since January of 2022. Although she grew up in New Jersey, Kate has been connected to Florida all her life. Kate completed her first open water dive in Key Largo and is a double gator, earning both her bachelor's and her master's from the University of Florida. In her time as a student, Kate was awarded the E.T. York Medal of Excellence by the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. She has experience with sponge restoration, disease ecology, finfish aquaculture and crustacean fisheries, but in her present role focuses on seagrass ecology, water quality and citizen science. The ongoing work completed by Kate's citizen science volunteers is currently valued at over \$40,000 and shows no signs of slowing down.

Peter Rubec, PhD (PeterRubec@cs.com)

Dr. Peter Rubec worked at the Fish and Wildlife Research Institute with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. Peter does spatial modeling with GIS and conducts habitat

mapping and habitat suitability modeling of fish and invertebrates in estuaries and the coastal zone. He has extensive experience in fisheries, stock assessment, and small-scale fisheries. The presentation is titled 'Spatial modeling to predict the influence of water withdrawals on species distributions and population abundance in Charlotte Harbor, Florida' conducted in collaboration with staff from the Southwest Florida Water Management District.

Elizabeth Salewski, PhD (esalewsk@sfwmd.gov)

Dr. Salewski is a broadly trained benthic ecologist with over 10 years' experience in habitat restoration and monitoring of coastal benthic communities, including oyster reef, seagrass, salt marsh and mangrove systems. Her research interests include community ecology and invertebrate zoology, with a focus on the conservation and restoration of benthic habitats. She earned her master's degree in Environmental Sciences from Florida Atlantic University and her doctorate in Biology from the University of South Florida. Dr. Salewski is a Senior Scientist with the South Florida Water Management District and currently leads the SAV monitoring program for the Coastal Ecosystem Section.

Shimelis Setegn (ssetegn@sfwmd.gov)

Dr. Shimelis Setegn earned his Ph.D. in Land and Water Resources Engineering, MS, and BS in Agricultural Engineering. He also completed his postdoctoral research in Earth and Environment. He joined SFWMD in April 2017. Currently, he is a Lead Scientist at the Applied Science Bureau of SFWMD. Before the district, Dr. Setegn was a faculty member at Florida International University. At FIU, he has been Asst. Professor and geospatial modeling and water resources programs lead at the Department of environmental health sciences and Global Water for Sustainability Program (GLOWS). He was a PI and Co-PI for several projects funded by NASA, USDA, EPA, IADB. His research skills, experience, and teamwork on several projects have led to more than 115 peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters and proceedings, which have been cited more than 3200 times.

Detong Sun, PhD (dsun@sfwmd.gov)

Dr. Detong Sun is a modeling expert for estuarine hydrodynamics, sediment transport and water quality. With over 20 years experiences working on Florida's estuaries, he has played a major role in the development and application of hydrodynamic and water quality models for the St. Lucie River Estuary and Caloosahatchee River Estuary. While numerical modeling has been his essential area he's also interested in theoretical models and has developed a zero-dimension theoretical water quality model for the St. Lucie Estuary and one-dimensional theoretical water quality model for the Caloosahatchee River Estuary.

Teresa VanderWaag (tvanderwaag@scgov.net)

Teresa VanderWaag is originally from Atlanta, Ga where her love for biological sciences began at Kennesaw State University. There, she researched genetic variation in seagrass species throughout the Florida Gulf Coast. She moved to Florida with her husband in 2017 to further her career in environmental stewardship, starting at the Florida Department of Environmental Protection to her current position at Sarasota County. She is the project manager for multiple

hydrologic restoration and water quality improvement projects. In her free time, she enjoys reading, diving, and doing anything outside and on the water with her family.

Eric Weather (Eric.Weather@MyFWC.com)

Eric Weather is the Research Administrator of FWC's Fisheries Independent Monitoring Charlotte Harbor Field laboratory. In this role, he oversees operations for a number of research projects, including a long-term fisheries monitoring survey in Charlotte Harbor, water quality data collection in Upper Charlotte Harbor, fisheries research on a number of habitat restoration projects, and Smalltooth Sawfish monitoring. Previously, Eric was a marine fisheries researcher with FWC's Tampa Bay Field lab working on a wide variety of inshore and offshore projects. He is also a former charter vessel owner/operator and owner of multiple businesses in the field of residential construction. He holds a B.S. degree in Marine Resource Science from the University of Rhode Island. Outside of work, Eric enjoys inshore and offshore fishing, traveling to the mountains to hike and fly fish and raising two adventurous Florida boys.

Barbara Welch (bwelch@sfwmd.gov)

Barbara Herrmann Welch, originally from the Midwest, is an Environmental Scientist 4 with the South Florida Water Management District in the Coastal Ecosystems Section of the Applied Sciences Bureau in the Water Resources Division. She has thirty plus years at the WMD with expertise in areas of water quality, oysters, and seagrasses in the Indian River Lagoon (IRL), St. Lucie (SL), Caloosahatchee (CRE) and Loxahatchee Rivers (LR) and Estuaries. Additionally, she has extensive experience in contract management oversight for various projects within Picayune Strand, SL, CRE, IRL and LR. Barbara is currently completing the third update of the National Loxahatchee River Wild and Scenic Management Plan.

JoEllen Wilson (jwilson@bonefishtarpontrust.org)

JoEllen Wilson is the Juvenile Tarpon Habitat Program Manager for Bonefish & Tarpon Trust. As a Punta Gorda native, she grew up fishing Charlotte Harbor with her family which influenced her to pursue a career in marine science. After receiving her Bachelor's Degree from Florida Gulf Coast University, JoEllen was hired as BTT's first membership administrator and research assistant in 2009. She completed her Master's Degree in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences at University of Florida where her research focused on Juvenile Tarpon Habitat Use. JoEllen oversees juvenile tarpon habitat research projects from South Carolina to the Florida Keys focusing on nursery habitat conservation. The main goal of her program is to create a framework that integrates habitat into marine fisheries management plans.

Debra Childs Woithe (Debra.Woithe@MyManatee.org)

Debra Childs Woithe joined Manatee County in 2021 to further establish the Environmental Lands Program and implement the Conservation and Parks Projects Referendum. She is working with the Environmental Lands Management and Acquisition Committee (ELMAC), county staff and strategic partners to acquire and manage conservation and recreational land in Manatee County. With 25 years of combined experience in academia, government agencies, and private consulting, Debra has held key technical and management roles involving environmental

analysis, spatial technology, planning and governance. Debra has lived in Manatee County for 20 years, is a native Floridian and a graduate of the University of Florida. She earned a B.S. in Landscape Ecology, a M.S. in Systems Ecology, and a Graduate Certificate in Wetlands.

Andrew Wooley (Andrew.Wooley@MyFWC.com)

Andrew is a fish biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at their Charlotte Harbor Field Lab. He was born and raised in Southwest Florida and has spent the last 7 years with FWC studying the fishes of Charlotte Harbor with a focus on the smalltooth sawfish. In addition to his work for FWC, Andrew is studying the movement and habitat use of juvenile smalltooth sawfish within the Harbor for his graduate research at the University of Florida.

Dylan Yakich (Dylan.Yakich@MyFWC.com)

Dylan Yakich is a fisheries biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's Fisheries Independent Monitoring program. She is originally from the suburbs of Chicago and has been passionate about marine biology since she started diving at a young age. Dylan obtained a B.S. in Biology with a focus on organismal and ecological biology from Florida Gulf Coast University. She worked as a laboratory assistant in the Invertebrate Zoology Laboratory and volunteered with FWC as an undergraduate. Dylan has spent the last 3 years as an OPS Biological Scientist II with FWC conducting research on the Smalltooth Sawfish.

The 2023 Watershed Summit is presented by:

