



Alabama Water Rally ABOUT THE SPEAKERS

DON BATES OSPREY INITIATIVE

Don Bates is the Owner and President of Osprey Initiative, LLC. He had over 25 years in the Environmental Consulting field as a Geologist before starting Osprey 7 years ago. He has over 50 years of experience playing and working in the ditches and bayous of Louisiana and beyond.



SHERRY BRADLEY Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program

Sherry Bradley holds a Master's in Public Administration degree and is the former Director of the Bureau of Environmental Services with the Alabama Department of Public Health, where she served as a public servant for 45 years. The Bureau she directed was a regulatory one that regulates the permitting,

installation, maintenance, use, and product & manual approval prior to products being used, of onsite sewage disposal treatment systems.

For over 20 years, improper wastewater disposal in Lowndes County unincorporated areas has been highlighted in the news on an international level. Ms. Bradley has, for the past 5 years, worked and created the Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP), a non-profit 501c3, and the infrastructure needed to support it. The BBUWP was created out of need, to help low-income families who cannot afford a wastewater disposal system obtain one. The BBUWP will be responsible for the installation of at least 175 wastewater treatment systems for single family dwellings without proper wastewater disposal in Lowndes County, Alabama. The BBUWP model is one that can be duplicated by blackbelt officials if best practice STANDARDS that are currently being implemented are used. For the first time in Alabama, an innovative design was installed by BBUWP in Lowndes County called the Effluent Discharge System. Testing of effluent by Dr. Kevin White has produced counts as low as zero fecal coliform. The program has been implemented, taking away any excuse for not having an affordable and sustainable onsite sewage disposal treatment system.

For her work, Ms. Bradley received the State Employee of the Year Award by State Personnel before retiring March 1, 2023, and she received the International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation Award for her voluntary work in Lowndes County with the International Association of Plumbers & Mechanical Officials.

NELSON BROOKE

BLACK WARRIOR RIVERKEEPER



Nelson has been Black Warrior Riverkeeper's staff Riverkeeper since January of 2004. As Riverkeeper, Nelson patrols and photographs the Black Warrior River and its tributaries from the land, water, and air, looks for pollution problems, responds to complaints, researches and analyzes polluters' permits, collects pollution samples for laboratory analysis, educates the public about the beauty of the river and threats to it, works to empower stakeholders throughout the watershed, advocates compliance with environmental laws, works on finding solutions to pollution problems, and is a spokesman for the Black Warrior River watershed.

ABBY BROWN

COOSA RIVERKEEPER

As Director of Community Engagement, Abby ensures the people of the Coosa River watershed are engaged in Coosa Riverkeeper programs and are informed and educated about the



threats to the Coosa and public health. She manages all education and outreach initiatives to increase organizational reach through collecting accurate information on the health of our waters, engaging the public to be good stewards of our water resources, and ensuring ample operating funds are generated for the organization.

Abby joined Coosa Riverkeeper in 2020 as Development Coordinator through AmeriCorps VISTA, working to improve communications, donor retention, and increasing capacity through various funding sources. After one year of AmeriCorps service, Abby became a full time employee of Coosa Riverkeeper as Outreach Manager, leading all outreach efforts for Coosa Riverkeeper programs while supporting fundraising efforts including donor engagement, communications, and events. Abby graduated cum laude from Birmingham-Southern College in 2020 with a B.S. in both Biology and Urban Environmental Science.

Abby loves spending her free time outside with her husband, Jarrod, traveling, obsessing over plants, and snuggling with her 3 kitties.



DAVID BUTLER

CAHABA RIVERKEEPER

David Butler was named the Riverkeeper in 2015 and Staff Attorney in 2018, after serving as both a volunteer and Board member.

David brings over 15 years of experience leading canoe and kayak trips along the Cahaba River, where he observed many of the problems threatening the river today. One of the most frequent questions he fields in his role as a guide is whether the river is safe to swim, and his work as Riverkeeper allows him to play a role in answering that question directly.

“As a recreational user of the Cahaba, I felt obligated to do something to help. I started to look for opportunities to volunteer my time and talents, and was attracted to the Waterkeeper movement because while independent, at each organization’s core is a desire to document through scientific research and data collection the present state of the watershed they serve.”

David studied finance at the University of Kentucky, before moving on to work in the financial research industry in New York. After six years, David returned to the south and enrolled at the University of Alabama where he earned a Journalism degree. While studying in Tuscaloosa, David started working part-time at the former Alabama Small Boats shop and reignited his passion for rivers. In 2018, David earned his J.D. from the Birmingham School of Law and was admitted to the state bar later that year.

As the staff Riverkeeper, David’s responsibilities include: overseeing the successful Swim Guide program, organizing river cleanups, responding to pollution complaints, managing our intensive data collection efforts, speaking to concerned citizen and civic groups, as well as a host of other duties.

David lives in Vestavia just off Little Shades Creek with his wife (Susan), two children (Jacob, 19 and Allison, 8) and their rambunctious Dalmatian Lucy.



JEAN COX

FRIENDS OF PINCHGUT CREEK

Jean Cox is a conservationist and volunteer with many roles in her community. She is passionately devoted to protecting the Cahaba Headwaters where her children love to play. Her two adventurous boys love to fish and explore in the beautiful clear waterways that flow through Trussville, AL. Jean has been organizing Cahaba Headwaters Cleanups since 2018. In 2021 Jean and her husband, Alex Dowell, started Friends of Pinchgut Creek and they are working hard to improve the conditions and to protect their local waterways.

In her spare time, Jean enjoys fishing, foraging, creek walking, and gardening. She was a founding member of the Alabama Mushroom Society. Her foraging

adventures and gardening stories can be found at www.diggingfood.com. Jean is also a contributing author to the Trussville Tribune's Tree Talk.

BRADLEY DAVIDSON

CONSERVATION ALABAMA

Bradley has spent a large portion of his career working directly with the Alabama legislature as well as city councils, school boards, county commissions, and other local, state, and federal elected officials and agencies across Alabama. He has also advocated for clean energy tax policy in the New Mexico and Oklahoma statehouses. One of his chief concerns is civic engagement and voter participation.



DR. BILL DEUTSCH

Author

Dr. Bill Deutsch is a Research Fellow, Emeritus in the Auburn University School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences. For more than 30 years, Bill has traveled Alabama, studying its rivers and teaching about them. He co-founded and directed the Alabama Water Watch program from 1992 to 2013. Bill authored two books about Alabama's rivers and ancient life, making little-appreciated but important connections that help us understand and protect our natural heritage.

EVA DILLARD

BLACK WARRIOR RIVERKEEPER



Eva Dillard became Black Warrior Riverkeeper's Staff Attorney in 2010. She is a graduate of Mary Baldwin College and the University of Virginia School of Law. Her practice has been split between litigation and advising clients in both the public and private sector. She is a former Senior Counsel for Environmental Compliance in the Office of the General Counsel at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration in Washington, D. C.

As Staff Attorney, Eva represents Black Warrior Riverkeeper on legal matters regarding pollution prevention and environmental enforcement; works with our Riverkeeper and Enforcement Coordinator on pollution investigations, file reviews, permit research, document procurement, and public comments; communicates with polluters and their attorneys to encourage environmental compliance and pollution prevention upgrades; and coordinates the work of our legal volunteers and interns.

DR. MARK ELLIOTT

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA

Dr. Mark Elliott is an Associate Professor of environmental engineering at the University of Alabama. His research focuses primarily on water and wastewater challenges in low-resources settings, membrane-based treatment of water and wastewater, and wastewater management in rural Alabama.



HANK HERSHEY

AUBURN UNIVERSITY

Hank is a PhD candidate at Auburn University in the School of Fisheries, Aquaculture and Aquatic Sciences, where he has been working on migratory fishes of the Mobile Basin since 2017. His research focuses on the effects of dams on fish migration in the Alabama River, but he's broadly interested in river ecology and ecophysiology. Hank is also an avid fly fisherman, artist, and graphic designer.

APRIL INGLE

RIVER NETWORK



April Ingle, River Network's Advocacy Director, has worked for over 25 years leading organizations, collaborating with partners to advance clean water policy, and supporting individuals and organizations who are working together to protect and strengthen their communities and the places they love. April develops tools and resources and facilitates peer-to-peer exchange in the areas of water policy; equitable climate resilience; authentic community engagement; access to affordable and safe water; and building strong organizations.

Prior to River Network, April worked as a full-time consultant after serving as Executive Director of Georgia River Network from 2003-2014. Prior to Georgia River Network, April worked as the Public Relations Specialist, then Executive Director of the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts; as Coordinator of the St. Joseph River Watershed Initiative; and as an environmental educator.

April was named one of Georgia's "40 Under 40" by Georgia Trend magazine in 2013, was the recipient of Greenlaw's 2014 Environmental Hero award, Chattahoochee Riverkeeper's 2012 River Advocate of the Year award, and the Soil and Water Conservation Society - Hoosier Chapter's 1999 Education & Information award.

MAGGIE JOHNSTON

WILD ALABAMA

Maggie Johnston is the Executive Director of Wild Alabama. She grew up on a farm in Winona, Mississippi where she played in the forests and climbed trees. She is a lifelong learner and teacher. She has degrees from the University of Southern Mississippi and the University of Montevallo. Maggie taught science at the Alabama School for the Deaf for over 25 years. She was the director of McDowell Environmental Education Programs, helping to start McDowell Farm School, the only residential farm school in the Southeast, and Magnolia Nature Preschool. Now Maggie is enjoying helping to educate more people about the wonderful wild places that we have in our state. Wild Alabama believes that education is the key to conservation and protection of these wild places.





KAREN JONES

WHOM IT CONCERNS, INC

Karen Jones is an ambassador of truth, outspoken advocate, community activist, organizer, leader, registered farmer, change agent, and empowerment specialist. She is a revolutionary thinker relentless in her efforts to inspire others to light their own torch. She has earned a reputation as a catalyst for change. Karen engages in resourcing those in need with strategic tools that will change their lives and communities. Some say she is radical, too hopeful; she believes she is purposeful in her divine mission. She provides straight talk with humor, compassion, empathy, and colorful language which captures the

bona fide truth through edutainment. Karen develops content and provides leadership on important community issues, policy and procedures.

Karen Jones holds a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from the University of Phoenix Atlanta and a Master of Public Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. Karen Jones is CEO and Co-Founder of Whom It Concerns, Inc, where she provides youth and community development, education, enrichment, financial, and health programs and services to low-income, rural, and ex-offenders. There have been sleepless nights, anxious calls home and short-tempered days, as she pressured herself to be better--to get things right. Karen has received numerous awards that exemplify her work in communities and commitment to volunteerism. As a community leader and advocate, she is passionate and resolves to find solutions in policy and programs that affect civil and human rights.

CADE KISTLER

MOBILE BAYKEEPER

Cade grew up on Guntersville Lake in north Alabama. After earning his B.S. from Auburn University, he took a position with the U.S. Forest Service as a wilderness restoration intern in Washington state. However, sweet home Alabama called and Cade returned to work on his M.S. at Auburn University. He has completed all coursework and will receive his M.S. upon completion of his thesis.

After getting married, he followed his wife to her home in Baldwin County and has been exploring the treasures of the Gulf Coast since. In his spare time, Cade likes to kayak and bike with his wife and snow-ski whenever he can. Cade is thrilled to have the opportunity to work for the citizens of the Alabama Gulf Coast and preserve the environment of this majestic area. Kistler, who served as Mobile Baykeeper's Program Director for six years, now fills the Baykeeper role previously held by Casi Callaway.



DAWN LEE

ARA BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Dawn Lee is a Birmingham native and currently resides along the Valley Creek watershed. She is a graduate of UAB and The George Washington University as well as a wife and mother of 2 beautiful little girls. Dawn has worked as an Informal educator for the past 13 years and believes investment in building long lasting community relationships and partnerships leads to sustainable, relevant programming. As a child, Dawn's favorite movie was The Little Mermaid and her most favorite place is the beach, providing her with the relaxation and recharge she needs to fight another day.

CINDY LOWRY

ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE

Cindy is the executive director of the Alabama Rivers Alliance. She joined the staff in 2005 as Watershed Leadership Coordinator and quickly became executive director in 2007.

A native of Alabama, Cindy was born and raised in Oneonta, Alabama. She received her BS degree in Wildlife Science from Auburn University and her Masters of Public Administration from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The focus of her masters' thesis was citizen participation in public policy. Cindy has more than 20 years of experience in the conservation nonprofit sector.



Cindy has been recognized as a "Wonderful Outstanding Woman" from the Metro Birmingham branch of the NAACP (2012), named one of the "Women Who Shape the State" by al.com (2016), awarded an Auburn University Alumni Spirit of Sustainability Award (2017) and has been inducted in UAB's MPA Hall of Fame (2020). Cindy is the former president of the board of directors for Alabama Arise and was a long-time member of the board of directors for the Friends of the Locust Fork River. She currently serves as president of the League of Women Voters of Greater Birmingham Board of Directors.



ELLIE MALLON

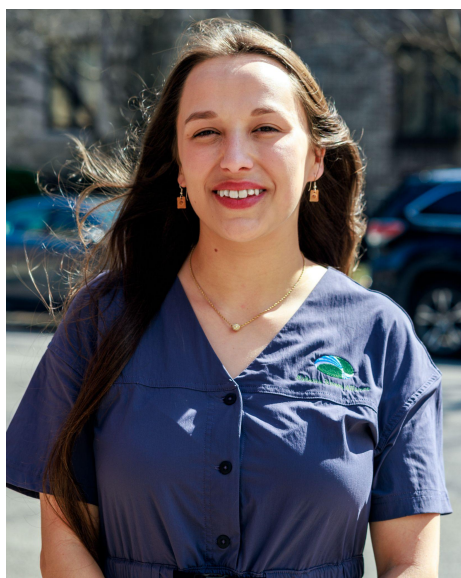
OSPREY INITIATIVE

Ellie is from Carmel, Indiana but has spent the last nine years studying and working in the beautiful Mobile, Alabama area. She graduated from Spring Hill College in 2018, where she received a B.S. in Biology. Ellie joined Osprey Initiative in March of 2019 as their Data Analyst and Project Manager. She is now Osprey's Senior Project Manager and working towards finishing her Master's Degree at Mississippi State University.

SHEREE MARTIN

ENERGY ALABAMA

Sheree Martin joined Energy Alabama in May 2022 as its Deputy Director and is passionate about educating and advocating for clean, renewable energy and energy efficiency in Alabama. Sheree is a licensed attorney and has extensive experience as a business and tax lawyer. Sheree is a lifelong outdoors person, a committed conservationist, and an advocate for eating real, whole foods, preferably grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides. Sheree served on the board of the Alabama Rivers Alliance from approximately late 2010 - late 2013. Sheree holds a B.A., J.D., and Ph.D. from the University of Alabama, an LL.M. in Tax Law from the University of Florida, and a certificate in sustainable food systems leadership from the University of Vermont College of Continuing Education.



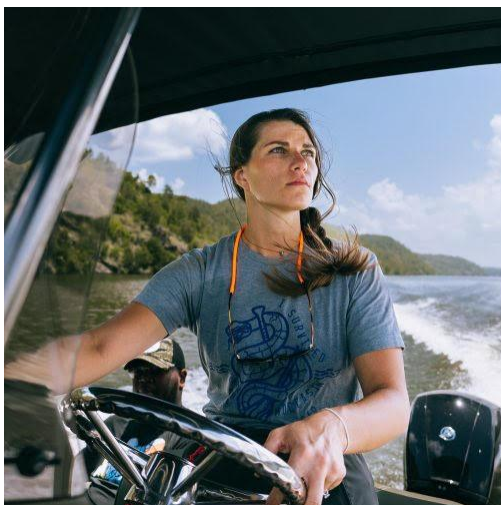
VICTORIA MILLER

ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE

Victoria Miller is the latest addition to the Alabama Rivers Alliance team as Advocacy Assistant. She brings her tenacious passion for justice and public health knowledge to help extend our advocacy efforts across the River State and empower Southern voices. An Alabama transplant, Victoria came to our state in 2016 and has since grown to adore all the untamed nature and scenic waterways Alabama has to offer. She graduated cum laude with her Bachelor of Science in Public Health along with a minor in Chemistry and Distinguished Honors College recognition from the University of Alabama at Birmingham in 2020. While in undergrad, Victoria was welcomed into the world of Alabama

environmental advocacy and began volunteering with Coosa Riverkeeper. Her experience there led her to dive in feet first after graduating and she hasn't looked back!

Victoria grew up on the Mississippi Gulf Coast, where she enjoyed the best of both worlds from the brackish bayous of the Pascagoula and Escatawpa Rivers to the salty Mississippi Sound. Her upbringing was steeped in Cajun culture and joy for the outdoors. Victoria, her partner Max, and their small pup Pixie currently reside in Childersburg where they enjoy hiking the trails at Kymulga Grist Mill and finding waterfalls in the Talladega National Forest.



JUSTINN OVERTON

COOSA RIVERKEEPER

As the Executive Director and Riverkeeper, she ensures Coosa Riverkeeper has the resources needed to fight for swimmable, drinkable, and fishable water. Justinn patrols the watershed, investigates pollution, and speaks on behalf of the river. She also coordinates many other aspects of our organization such as membership, capacity building, special events, and outreach. She provides direction to our staff, volunteers, and robust internship programs with local universities.

CECE PLESS

MOBILE BAYKEEPER

Born in Birmingham, Cece has spent her adult life pursuing a love of rivers and oceans up and down the East Coast. She holds B.A.s in International Affairs and French from Skidmore College in Upstate New York and spent her time in school studying the sustainability of international fisheries. A former intern at Baykeeper, Cece worked for Patagonia and Athleta (both certified B Corps) before joining the Baykeeper staff. In her free time, Pless enjoys all things “life aquatic,” all things Wes Anderson, and you can be sure to find her on the trail with her dog Styx.



As Major Donor Advisor, Cece is responsible for building and stewarding relationships with major donors, recruiting and courting annual and event sponsors, and providing input into development plans.

DR. CLAUDETTE POOLE

UNIVERSITY OF ALABAMA AT BIRMINGHAM



Dr. Claudette Poole graduated medical school in Cape Town South Africa. After completing her general pediatric residency at Schneider Children's Hospital Manhasset in New York, and her pediatric infectious disease fellowship at University of Alabama at Birmingham (UAB), Claudette went on to receive a master's of science in public health epidemiology at UAB. She is an assistant professor of pediatrics in the school of medicine at UAB in the division of pediatric infectious diseases. She serves as the medical lead for infection prevention of the neonatal intensive care units of UAB and as the associate program director for the UAB pediatric infectious diseases fellowship training program. Her clinical activities include general pediatric infectious disease and pediatric HIV care, including management of perinatal HIV exposed infants. She is the principal investigator of a public health project funded by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention addressing health concerns related to sanitation access in the Alabama Black Belt.

ERIC REIDY

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT

Eric is from Mobile and a graduate of the University of South Alabama with degrees in chemical engineering and biology. He has been at the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) for nine years and has been the State Revolving Funds (SRF) chief for the past three years.



WILLIAM STRICKLAND

MOBILE BAYKEEPER

A native of Tuscaloosa, William began his career in the field of environmental engineering before moving into the faith-based non-profit sector.

William graduated from the University of Alabama where he earned a BS in Civil Engineering with a focus on water issues. He played football under Nick Saban at Alabama, winning two national championships during his time there. He is currently pursuing a Master's of the Arts in Missional Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary.

William's love for nature and an understanding of humans' place in it were instilled in him from an early age by his late grandfather, Bill, a conservationist and outdoorsman. He hopes to pass that love on to his three young children. He brings to the organization a passion for process and excellence gained during his time under Saban at Alabama.

JASON THRONEBERRY

THE NATURE CONSERVANCY OF ALABAMA



Jason Throneberry
Director of Freshwater Programs
The Nature Conservancy in Alabama
B.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Biology
M.S. Biology with an emphasis in rare and endemic species ecology
15 years of streambank, instream habitat, and floodplain ecology and restoration
Rosgen Level 4 Certified
Certified Fisheries Biologist
President of the Alabama Chapter of the American Fisheries Society

JAXON TOLBERT

ENERGY ALABAMA

Jaxon Tolbert is a senior Political Science and Earth Ecosystems student at the University of Alabama in Huntsville. He has spent his previous two summers with the Environmental and Energy Study Institute and the Natural Resources Defense Council's E2 (Environmental Entrepreneurs) affiliate. As an Alabama native, he is inspired by efforts to decarbonize and electrify the Southeast's most vulnerable communities. He now interns for Energy Alabama, where he helps to support the organization's pillars of clean energy education and advocacy across the state.



BEN WEGLEITNER

CAHABA RIVER SOCIETY



Ben Wegleitner joined the Cahaba River Society team as River Sustainability Director in April 2021. His main focus is working collaboratively with cities and developers to educate and advocate for green infrastructure and low-impact approaches to development to protect the river from stormwater runoff and other urban impacts. Ben is also CRS's lead for science and policy, building on the achievements of retired Field Director Dr. Randy Haddock. Ben has a BS in Water Resources and Fisheries Management and a MS in Conservation Biology.

JACK WEST

ALABAMA RIVERS ALLIANCE

Jack joined the Alabama Rivers Alliance as Policy & Advocacy Director in 2020, just a couple of days before Covid shutdowns started happening across the US. He brings legal experience from corporate private practice, as well as an entrepreneurial background to ARA. Jack is a Birmingham native and grew up camping in Cheaha State Park, fishing in Lake Guntersville, and backpacking Alabama's Pinhoti Trail.



Prior to joining ARA, he worked in-house with a solar company advising on issues of state policy. He also previously founded a technology company at Birmingham's Innovation Depot. After hours, Jack volunteers with Citizens' Climate Lobby and is a member of the Public Affairs Research Council of Alabama's Roundtable.

Jack graduated from Sewanee: The University of the South where he indulged his love of the outdoors caving and hiking along the Cumberland Plateau. He earned his law degree magna cum laude from the University of Mississippi School of Law, serving as an associate editor on the Law Journal. Jack and his wife, Emily, live in the Roebuck Springs neighborhood with Ruffner Mountain's 14 miles of trails conveniently located right outside the back door.