



**OPEN SPACE
INSTITUTE
LAND TRUST**

Appalachian Landscapes Project Advisory Committee *(September 2025)*

[Katie Allen, Director of Landscape Conservation, Appalachian Trail Conservancy](#)



Katie Allen serves as the Director of Landscape Conservation to support the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's efforts to fulfill its vision realize the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape are protected forever for all to enjoy. At ATC, she oversees the coordination of the Appalachian Trail Landscape Partnership, a collaborative of over 100 partners working to connect the wild, scenic and cultural wonders of the Appalachian Trail and its surrounding landscape; the Wild East Action Fund, a grant program that promotes the protection of land and capacity building of partners in the

Appalachian Trail Landscape; and the Appalachian Trail Community Program(TM), a designation program for communities along the trail to promote their dedication to stewardship of the AT, outdoor recreation economic development, and conservation of natural and recreational resources.

Katie has always loved to be outdoors and exploring nature on foot, on horseback, or paddling through waters near her home in Shepherdstown, WV, across the country and abroad. Prior to joining the ATC, Katie was the Director of The Conservation Fund's Conservation Leadership Network (CLN) leading a range of services related to rural economic development, strategic conservation planning, and market-based conservation finance. She looks to build collaborative solutions to meet shared goals that build connections between communities, recreation, and conservation.

She holds a Master of City and Regional Planning degree in Environmental and Land Use Planning from the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and a Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from Boston University. Katie serves as a coordinating committee member of the Network for Landscape Conservation. She also provides technical support for the joint EPA and USFS program, Recreation Economies for Rural Communities.

[Dr. Mark Anderson, Senior Program Officer, The Nature Conservancy](#)



Dr. Mark Anderson directs The Nature Conservancy's North American Center for Resilient Conservation Science (CRCS) which provides science leadership, ecological analysis, and landscape assessments for conservation efforts across all 50 states. He holds a Ph.D. in Ecology from University of New Hampshire and has worked as an ecologist for over 37 years, 33 with The Nature Conservancy. He has published widely on climate change resilience, large landscape conservation, biodiversity, and forest dynamics. He manages a team of six scientists specializing in the spatial analysis of

terrestrial, freshwater, and marine systems. In 2017, Mark received TNC's Conservation Achievement Award for his work to identify climate resilient "strongholds" where nature is most likely to persist and thrive under a changing climate. Mark and the CRCS team have created a comprehensive map of these strongholds across all 50 states which is being used by TNC, government agencies and other conservation organizations to prioritize the most important lands and waters to protect in order to sustain the diversity of life on Earth. For this work, Mark and the CRCS team received the Land Trust Alliance's 2021 Kingsbury Browne Conservation Leadership Award for outstanding leadership, innovation, and creativity in land conservation.

[Bruz Clark, President and Treasurer, Lyndhurst and Riverview Foundations](#)



Bruz Clark is the president and treasurer of the Lyndhurst Foundation and executive director and secretary of the Riverview Foundation. Both foundations are headquartered in Chattanooga, Tennessee, and have overlapping programmatic interests that include the conservation, protection and restoration of terrestrial and aquatic habitat and biodiversity; the expansion of public parks; and outdoor recreation. The geographic focal areas for both foundations are also similar and include portions of the Cumberland Plateau, Ridge and Valley, Southern Blue Ridge, and Piedmont ecoregions.

A graduate of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Morehead Scholar, Bruz formerly taught biology and general science at the Baylor School in Chattanooga. He is a graduate of the Colorado Outward Bound School and worked as a camp counselor and trip leader in the Tetons of Wyoming and Algonquin Provincial Park of Canada. Bruz participates on the judges panel for the Southern Environmental Law Center's Reed Environmental Writing Award, and he is a trustee emeritus of the Thrive Regional Partnership, where he also serves on the steering committee of the Natural Treasures Alliance. Bruz is a member of the Biodiversity Funders Group, Philanthropy Southeast, and Timber Framers Guild and teaches

on occasion at the John C. Campbell Folk School. His interests include forestry, architecture, carpentry, and landscaping. Bruz and his wife, Julie, enjoy traveling and are members of the Rising Fawn Social Club folk and bluegrass band. They are especially fond of their Bernese Mountain Dog, Bluebelle.

[Sam Huber, Trustee and OSI Board Liaison, Open Space Institute](#)



Sam Huber taught English at Newark Academy in Livingston, NJ, Collegiate School, and Columbia University in Manhattan. Sam has also worked at NRDC and at OSI. He is a trustee of the Stone Foundation of New Jersey and Two River Theater Company, and a former trustee of the American Littoral Society, Greater Newark Conservancy, and Pinelands Preservation Alliance, all in New Jersey. Sam graduated from Princeton University (B.A.) and received a M. Phil. and an M.A. in English and comparative literature from Columbia University.

[Chandni Navalkha, Director, Conservation and Stewardship, Lincoln Institute for Land Policy](#)



Chandni Navalkha has over a decade of experience in voluntary, community-led conservation. As Director of Conservation and Stewardship at the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy, Chandni focuses on efforts that advance and accelerate private land conservation, large landscape conservation, and conservation innovation in the United States and around the globe. She leads the International Land Conservation Network at the Institute, fostering cross-boundary exchange and peer-to-peer learning to strengthen policy and practice for private and civic land conservation across seven continents. Chandni holds a Masters in Environmental Science from the Yale School of Environment.

[John Seebach, Project Director, U.S. Conservation, The Pew Charitable Trusts](#)



John Seebach manages work to conserve land and freshwater and advance policies to improve the resilience of these ecosystems to climate change in southern Appalachia for Pew's U.S. conservation project. Previously, Seebach led Pew's efforts to secure wilderness and other protective designations and in national forest planning, partnering with organizations and decision-makers to secure lasting protection for public lands and rivers across the western United States.

Before joining Pew, Seebach worked for more than a decade on freshwater conservation, including as vice president for river basin conservation at American Rivers, chair of the Hydropower Reform Coalition, and chair of the governing board of the Low Impact Hydropower Institute, a nonprofit that seeks to improve the environmental performance of hydropower dams through a rigorous voluntary certification program.

Seebach holds a bachelor's degree in English literature from Davidson College and a master's in international relations/environmental dispute resolution from the University of Kentucky.

[Will Singleton, Program Director, Southern Regional Office, National Fish & Wildlife Foundation](#)



Will Singleton brings extensive national and international conservation experience to his current role at the National Fish & Wildlife Foundation as a program director. Will directs the Southeast Aquatics Fund which makes grants to conserve aquatic habitat from North Carolina to east Texas. Will directs the Cumberland Plateau Stewardship Fund which supports forest and aquatic conservation in Alabama, Tennessee, and Kentucky. Will also represents the Southern Regional Office in engaging partners and considering grantmaking related to coastal areas. Will has a master's degree in regional planning. Previously he had a nationwide practice designing collaborative processes that sought to integrate landscape-scale

conservation biology into local, state and federal land use decisions. Previous positions were with Conservation International, the World Wildlife Fund – US, RESOLVE, the Keystone Center, and Sustainable Apparel Coalition.

[Dr. Alexandra Sutton, Executive Director, Landberry Foundation & Founder, Indigenous East](#)



Dr. Alexandra E. Sutton (African American/Saponi Nation of Ohio) is the Executive Director of the Landberry Foundation and founder of Indigenous East -- an ambitious vision for a connected network of Indigenous-led land reclamation projects and a permanent capital fund to support land, culture, and health across the Eastern U.S. Alexa's work centers on reclaiming and protecting Yesàh homelands in the Appalachian and Piedmont regions while strengthening intertribal systems of sovereignty. She previously held appointments as the Chief of Staff, Natural Resource Conservation Service and the Senior Advisor for Climate, Office of Global Operations at the U.S. Peace Corps;

she also held prior roles as Vice President of Conservation, Justice & Equity at Ocean Conservancy; Senior Regional Director, Southeast at The Wilderness Society; and Science Policy (SciPol) Program Director in the Initiative for Science & Society at Duke University. Her

prior professional and academic work focused on identifying and protecting endangered & marginalized cultural landscapes on federal public lands. She holds a Ph.D. in Environment from Duke University, an M.S. from Texas A&M, and a B.S. from Howard University, and is currently on hiatus from an M.A. in American Studies at UNC Chapel Hill. Her reflections on Afro-Indigenous identity appear in *To Our Future Afro-Indigenous Kin* and *Ribbons of Color Along the Eno River*.

[Marjorie Van Dercook, Trustee and Board Liaison, Open Space Institute](#)



Marjorie L. Van Dercook was the Executive Director of the School of American Ballet from 2004-2017. She served as a member of the board of directors of the New York City Ballet from 1995 through 2003, where she was on the Executive Committee and was co-chair of the Development Committee.

Margie currently serves on the board of the Open Space Institute where she has been a trustee since 2023. She founded and co-chaired the Friends of Concerts and Lectures of the Metropolitan Museum of Art from 2000-2009 and is a current member of The Firebirds Friends Group and The Fund for the Met. She is a board member of both Pollyanna, an organization that promotes racial literacy, and the Catskill Art Space in Livingston Manor NY. She has also served as a strategic advisor to the Juilliard School on its efforts to create and implement an Equity based strategic plan.

She worked as an associate at the law firm of Paul Weiss Rifkind Wharton & Garrison as well as Franklin Weinrib Rudell & Vassallo and clerked for Lawrence W. Pierce of the Second Circuit.

Margie holds a J.D. degree from Fordham University School of Law, an M.A. in Political Science from Columbia University, and a B.A. from Vassar College. She is married and has three adult children.