



14th ANNUAL TRAIL FORUM SPEAKERS

Thursday, December 2, 2021

Keynote Speaker – The Future of Parks, Trails and Open Space – What’s Next?

Mitchell Silver, FAICP

Award-winning and internationally recognized, Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP, joined the McAdams leadership team June 2021 as Principal, Vice President of Urban Planning. Growing our leadership team with talented, thoughtful individuals helps us stay true to our mission of “creating experiences through experience.” With over 35 years of industry experience, Mitchell has achieved milestone after milestone. He currently serves as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation —notably one of the largest parks departments in the world. Mitchell is currently the President of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and past president of the American Planning Association (APA). Bill de Blasio called him a visionary. Mitchell served as Raleigh’s chief planning officer and planning director for nine years overseeing the Departments of City Planning, Community Development and Inspections, in addition to four offices: Transportation Planning, Economic Development, Development Services and the City’s Urban Design Center. Upon returning to North Carolina Mitchell will provide leadership at McAdams through participation in industry events; key conversations on urban planning and land use; and leadership in relevant equity and demographics trends. He will oversee consulting services for clients and surrounding communities, supported by McAdams’ experienced design and technical staff. In addition, he will prominently serve as an ambassador for McAdams in regional and national organizations.

Using Data to Evaluate Trail Alignment Alternatives

Beth Poovey, PLA

Beth is a Principal, and the Director of Greenways, Parks and Open Space for LandDesign, where she leads a studio focused on the creation of public spaces that matter. She has over 20 years of experience in greenway, trail, streetscape and park planning and design. Combining her sociology and landscape architecture degrees, her focus and passion has evolved into working with communities to create public open space that authentically integrates their unique assets with environmental stewardship opportunities. Public open space is her thing. Parks, trails, streetscapes, peds, bikes and even trikes. Along with her national projects, Beth has played a significant role in defining the greenways and open space throughout the Charlotte region. A few of her notable projects include the vision plans for the Carolina Thread Trail, Little Sugar Creek Greenway, Cross Charlotte Trail and the Charlotte Rail Trail. All of which have been proven to provide positive economic and community impacts for the region. Beth has earned her Bachelor of Sociology from Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, British Columbia and received her Dip LA from Ryerson Polytechnic University in Toronto, Ontario. She is a registered landscape architect in North Carolina, South Carolina and Mississippi.

Jung Woo, DDES

Dr. Jung Woo, DDES is a GIS and data specialist at LandDesign with over 10 years of experience in GIS modeling and analytics. Building in the foundation of her architecture and urban design background, she leverages research, data, and metrics to inform design decision-making. As a widely published thought leader, Dr. Woo understands the significant role of data in influencing the design process to uncover feasible solutions that best function for a community. As part of the LandDesign team, she will utilize data to inform strategic alignments throughout multi-modal systems to identify a route the best serves the goals of the client and needs of the community.

Tapestries to Trails – Implementing a Transformation Vision in Gaston County

John Searby

As Executive Director, John is responsible for the overall leadership of the Catawba Riverkeeper Foundation and serves as its primary fundraiser, visionary, and relationship developer. John brings a diverse background in coaching, athletic administration, fundraising, design, marketing, sponsorship planning, and sales management to the Catawba Riverkeeper. He leverages these experiences to build an organization that uses **engagement** with the water to fund **protection** of the water.

John grew up in Central Illinois where his passion for the outdoors began while bird hunting with his grandfather. John attended Milligan College in Johnson City, TN, where he was a 3-year starter and captain of the basketball team. John fell in love with the mountains of East Tennessee while earning a Bachelor's Degree in History and English from Milligan College and a Master's Degree in English from Tennessee Tech University. After college, John embarked on a ten-year basketball coaching journey at Gardner-Webb University, Tennessee Tech University, Lincoln Christian University, and Auburn University before working in athletic administration at Bradley University. Following his time in athletics, John worked in the business world for XOS Digital, Downstream Design, and Adams Outdoor Advertising.

John currently resides on Lake Wylie in Belmont, NC with his wife, Jessi, and two children, Jack (15) and Josie (12). During his free time, he enjoys all things outdoors – kayaking, hiking, mountain biking, trail running, camping, bird hunting, and fishing as well as consuming as much American History as possible. John also serves the Charlotte region and Catawba-Wateree River Basin as a Member of the Board of Directors of the Carolina Raptor Center, and a member of the Board of Directors of the Catawba-Wateree Relicensing Coalition, and as a leader on the South Fork River Health Committee.

Michael Applegate

Michael Applegate, CDME is the Director of Gaston County Tourism Development, a position he has held since 2016. In this role, he leads the effort to optimize Gaston County's brand experiences to drive visitation and partner economic growth. Before obtaining Gaston County's top tourism role, he was Senior Vice President of Sales and Destination Services for Cabarrus County CVB for almost four years and Director of Research for the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority for nearly ten years. After earning a Master of Arts at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Michael spent a decade in business-to-business publishing with Intertec Publishing Company and Thomas Publishing Company. In 2003, he took his passion for marketing, advertising and client satisfaction into the realm of destination marketing. Applegate holds a Certified Destination Management Executive (CDME) credential and a Professional Destination Management (PDM) certificate from Destinations International, the industry's worldwide association. His service to the profession in North Carolina includes terms on the board of directors for North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA), Destination Marketing Association of NC (DMANC) and North Carolina Sports Association (NCSA). Nationally and regionally, he has chaired Destination International's Research Committee and is a past president of the Southeast Chapter of the Travel & Tourism Research Association (SETTRA).

Ashton Lamb

Ashton grew up in Northwest Arkansas where he gained an appreciation and a love for the outdoors. Ashton took his passion for the outdoors to the next level by attending Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins, Colorado. He received a bachelor's degree in Natural Resource Recreation and Tourism at CSU. After taking a year to gain experience in the natural resource field as a seasonal park ranger, ski instructor, and conversation contractor he returned to CSU where Ashton received a master's degree in Conservation Leadership. He then moved to Charleston, South Carolina to pursue a career in private land conservation at Lowcountry Land Trust. Ashton worked at Lowcountry Land Trust stewarding and protecting land for four years. He then took a great opportunity to relocate to Charlotte, NC in April 2021 to work for the Carolina Thread Trail as a Community Coordinator.

Mayor Will Cauthen

Current Mayor of Cramerton, NC since 2016. Prior to that, Mr. Cauthen served as City Commissioner and Mayor Pro-Tem for 7 years. He is founder and chair of the South Fork River Health Committee. He is a 12-year delegate to the Centralina Regional COG, having served on the Executive Board for 3 years. He is also active in South Fork River Litter clean-up events.

Great Trails State Coalition

Palmer McIntyre

Palmer McIntyre is a Conservation Planner with Piedmont Land Conservancy and a coordinator for Piedmont Legacy Trails. Palmer has been serving as a coordinator for the NC Great Trails State Coalition. She first joined the Piedmont Land Conservancy in 1996 as the Program Manager and has served a variety of roles for the organization ever since, including Executive Director, Board member and contractor. Palmer has a B.A. in Comparative Politics from Wesleyan University (CT, 1989) and a Masters of Regional Planning from UNC-CH (2001). She served as a Peace Corps Volunteer in West Africa in the 1990s. Palmer and her husband have three children and she enjoys hiking, gardening, volunteering in schools, serving as a Girl Scout leader, and spending time on their Ashe County farm, which is forever protected by a conservation easement.

Connecting with Nature to Enhance Personal and Community Well-Being

Cheryl Baker

IT professional for the past 25 years. Currently working for Duke Energy. I serve my community by offering opportunities for Black people to connect with one another and nature as a 5th year volunteer leader for Outdoor Afro in the Charlotte, NC network.

Cheryl is a certified Level 1 Kayak Instructor and enjoy chasing waterfalls. Most importantly, she is the proud mother of two amazing young adults, Cherise and Christopher.

Triangle Bikeway – Public Input Innovation, Bringing More Voices to Regional Trail Planning

Iona L. Thomas, AICP

Iona L. Thomas, AICP is a certified planner who combines her passion for greenways with extensive technical expertise and management skills to design trails throughout the Southeast. She is a passionate supporter of greenways and believes they play an important role in economic development, creating healthy communities, providing alternate modes of transportation and connecting people with nature. Iona is a national leader in greenways, as a Trustee for the East Coast Greenway Alliance and foundational member of the Great Trails State Coalition. She and her family live in and love Durham and are active on all kinds of trails.

Public Private Partnerships for Trail System Development

Matt Weschler, P.E.

Matt is an associate and Senior Designer for LandDesign largely focused on bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. He is an avid cyclist and outdoor enthusiast, which fuels his determination to provide safe transportation for all. As a participant in LandDesign's MatterLab program, he partnered with another designer to develop an internal design guide for LandDesign's approach to bike/ped infrastructure

Lori Milam

Lori is an Associate and Designer for LandDesign involved in every facet of the design process, from concept to construction. She plays a key role in developing graphically compelling vision books, which the firm uses to communicate a project's story and intent. Lori has cultivated an unwavering passion for large-scale master planning since joining LandDesign and enjoys working with clients to turn their visions into reality.

Clifton Coble

Clifton is Senior Vice President for Northwood Development, and leader of the development team for the Ballantyne Reimagined project. With more than 24 years of commercial real estate experience, Clifton Coble manages commercial development projects for Northwood Office in Charlotte and is involved with development and repositioning projects throughout the nation. Previously, he held a similar role at The Bissell Companies. Under Coble's leadership, the firm developed more than five million square feet of Class A office space, including two million square feet of LEED® Gold speculative office space, representing one of the largest commitments to sustainable development in the nation. Coble also developed four hotels, including a luxury hotel and select-serve product. Coble is a Past President of NAIOP Charlotte and is involved in the ULI Charlotte District Council and Real Estate & Building Industry Coalition (REBIC).

Trail Oriented Development

Wyatt Dixon

Wyatt is a founding partner of Proffitt Dixon Partners (PDP) and has over 23 years of multifamily, mixed-use, and commercial real estate development and investment experience. Since co-founding PDP with Stuart Proffitt in 2010, their firm has successfully completed transactions valued at well over \$1 Billion. PDP has developed multiple projects in the Carolinas that included greenways or were oriented to trail corridors. Prior to forming PDP Wyatt served as a development and investment executive within some of the Southeast's premier multifamily firms including Camden Property Trust (and predecessor Summit Properties), Lane, and Faison. During his career, Wyatt has been responsible for development and investment activities throughout the Southeast in markets including NC, SC, GA, and Southeast Florida. Wyatt is an active community volunteer and currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Charlotte YMCA's Camp Harrison. He received his MBA from the Kenan-Flagler Business School at the University of North Carolina with a concentration in Real Estate

and a bachelor's degree in business administration from Appalachian State University. Wyatt is married with two children.

Sean Paone, PLA, Senior Project Manager, Cole Jenest & Stone/Bolton & Menk

Sean is a Landscape Architect and Senior Project Manager/Team Leader with Cole Jenest & Stone/Bolton & Menk, a leading landscape architecture and civil engineering firm based in Charlotte. Sean has worked on land planning and site development for the last 20 years in the Charlotte region. As a consultant to PDP, he recently led the land planning and development entitlement process for the Caroline, a trail-oriented mixed-use development in Cornelius, NC. He is a graduate of Clemson University.

Lorna Allen, PLA, ASLA

Lorna Allen is a Senior Urban Designer and Planning Project Coordinator for the City of Charlotte Urban Design Center and is a registered Landscape Architect. Practicing in the nonprofit, private, and public sectors, Lorna provides extensive planning and design experience building consensus through community input and engagement. Her work has been published and has won state and national awards in master planning, communication, and site design. Lorna was named an 80 Cities Knight Foundation Emerging City Champion for her engagement work and is a member of Leadership Charlotte Class 42.

John Cock, AICP

With experience in local government, private, and nonprofit sectors, John has worked with communities of all sizes across the southeastern and southern U.S. He has developed expertise in the areas of comprehensive and community planning; land use and transportation integration; Smart Growth policy, regulatory, and urban design standards; active and sustainable transportation and mobility planning; planning and design for complete street and trail corridors; streetscape and roadway design principles for walkable and transit-friendly communities and corridors; transit station area and new mobility planning; grant writing; project management; strategic planning and group facilitation.

Thermal Belt Rail Trail

Jerry Stensland

Safe Routes to School Coordinator and RPO Planner at Foothills Regional Commission. He manages the trail counting program for the region as well as other bicycle and pedestrian projects. Stensland is also the President and co-founder of the Rutherford Outdoor Coalition a non-profit trail and outdoor recreation organization in Rutherford County.

Doug Barrick

Town manager in Rutherfordton, NC. Barrick serves as one the Trail Partners, a group of local government leaders who developed and manage the Thermal Belt Rail Trail. Barrick has also been instrumental in getting the new Purple Martin Greenway constructed in the Town of Rutherfordton, which will soon connect to the Thermal Belt Rail Trail.

Karyl Fuller, CZO, GISP

Karyl has been employed with Foothills Regional Commission since August 2008 and as the Community and Economic Development Director since May 2021. As Director, she has been involved with a variety of plans, from the Isothermal Region Bicycle Plan to the Rutherford County Comprehensive Transportation Plan and working on several land use plans. She has also played a role in facilitating the planning and development of the Thermal Belt Rail Trail.

Guide to Trail Planning, Design and Construction

Jeff Ashbaugh, PLA

Mr. Ashbaugh of Alfred Benesch & Company is a Landscape Architect with over 30 years of experience specializing in parks, recreation, and trail master planning and design. He has served as Project Manager on more than 100 park and trail projects throughout the Carolinas including numerous segments of the Carolina Thread Trail and has worked in Charlotte since 1990. Jeff has extensive experience presenting and speaking at the Carolina Thread Trail Forum, the North Carolina and South Carolina Recreation and Park Association Conferences, and the North Carolina Park and Recreation Director's Conference; and presently serves as chairperson of the Kannapolis Parks and Recreation Commission.

Jon Wood, PLA

Jon Wood, PLA, serves as a Senior Project Manager at Alfred Benesch & Company. With over 35 years of experience in landscape architecture, primarily in the parks and recreation field, his planning and design portfolio includes numerous parks and greenways. Jon has lived and worked in the Carolinas for the entirety of his career, bringing a personal connection to the region's physical environments as well as the needs of the surrounding communities. In addition, he has overseen the planning for the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plans in Lancaster and Cherokee Counties, and been involved in several associated projects to enhance trail connectivity, including the Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail in Spartanburg County.

Emily Reinicker, PE, CFM

Emily Reinicker currently serves as the director of operations and design for Wildlands Engineering's Ecosystem Restoration Team. Her duties include technical guidance and project management for ecological restoration projects. She has 20 years of professional experience in water resources and civil engineering, including hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, natural channel design, and storm water management. She has been involved in the design of more than 50,000 LF of stream restoration and enhancement work in urban settings and 100,000 LF of streams in rural settings of NC. Wildlands Engineering specializes in stream and wetland restoration with a particular focus on innovative engineering for ecosystem renewal.

Brian Bennett, PLA, ASLA

Brian is a landscape architect responsible for managing capital improvement projects for Mecklenburg County. Over the course of his career, he has led the conceptualization, design, and implementation of high-quality public and private projects in the United States and around the world. As a native Charlottean, six-years working in Tokyo, Japan, refined his appreciation of public space, broadening his perspective and design sensitivity, while laying bare the critical role public servants play in the delivery of successful public spaces. His current role allows him to navigate the realm between design consultant and owner to develop consensus and drive the design and delivery of valued public parks and greenways for residents and guests of Mecklenburg County.

East Coast Greenway Becomes a State Trail

Sarah Sanford

Sarah Sanford is the Virginia and North Carolina Manager for the East Coast Greenway Alliance. Sarah leads the development of the Greenway in these two states through trail advocacy, policy work, and technical assistance. Before coming to the Alliance, Sarah worked in the environmental field as a consultant, naturalist, and environmental educator. She holds a master's degree in Environmental Management from Duke University and a bachelor's degree in Environmental Science from the College of William and Mary. Sarah is passionate about connecting people to nature and she enjoys exploring the outdoors by bike, by boat, and on foot.