

Tree Canopy Conference 2025: Stories of Resilience | Friday, October 17
The 12th Annual Tree Canopy Conference

This year's conference will include six presentations exploring stories of resilience in our urban forest. Our speakers will dive into topics such as climate-resilient trees, the restoration of ecological function in degraded waterways, local efforts to address tree canopy disparities, resilience in the face of shifting political and economic landscapes, and much more. Attendees may also enjoy a behind-the-scenes tour of Haverford College Arboretum's extensive tree collection and a walking tour from the Philadelphia Mycology Club. The program has been approved to carry 5 CEUs from ISA, LA CES, and 6.25 CEUs from the NJ Board of Tree Experts.

7:45 - 8:45 am: Optional Earlybird Tour of Haverford College Arboretum

Mitch Roberge, Horticulturist, Haverford College Arboretum

9:00 am: WELCOME

Jennie Kelly, Haverford College Arboretum

9:10 - 10:00 am: Session 1

From Creek to Canopy: A Resilient Watershed Action Plan for Goose Creek

Michael B. Dunn, Associate Director of Urban Forestry, Morris Arboretum & Gardens

Dr. Megan Fork, Assistant Professor, West Chester University

The Goose Creek Alliance was founded to promote ecological resilience and environmental justice, ensuring that healthy waterways and urban forests benefit every community. In this session, we'll share the story of how the Alliance came together and how our Watershed Action Plan is turning that vision into action. Key strategies include legacy sediment floodplain restoration, stream stabilization, riparian buffer plantings, and urban canopy expansion. You'll learn how these integrated efforts reduce erosion, improve water quality, mitigate flooding, and foster collaboration across sectors to create a resilient and equitable future.

Michael B. Dunn is the Associate Director of Urban Forestry at the Morris, where he leads initiatives integrating urban forestry, green infrastructure, and watershed restoration. With 25 years of experience spanning municipal forestry, institutional land management, and watershed planning, Michael brings deep expertise to building resilient urban ecosystems. He is the Founder and President of the Goose Creek Alliance, where he spearheads efforts to advance ecological resilience and environmental justice through the Goose Creek Watershed Action Plan.



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Megan Fork is a member of the biology faculty and head of the Aquatic Ecosystems Lab at West Chester University. She earned a PhD in Environmental Science from Duke University in 2017, and researched multi-disciplinary solutions to urban stream issues in Durham, NC, Austin, TX, and Baltimore, MD before coming to southeastern PA. As a board member of the Goose Creek Alliance, she brings expertise on the ecology and restoration of urban aquatic systems to help monitor and find interventions for the wicked problems faced by this West Chester area watershed.

10:00 - 10:20 am: BREAK

10:20 - 11:10 am: Session 2

Growing Equity: Restoring Chester's Tree Canopy Through Youth and Community Action

Barron Lacy, Executive Director, 9th Street Youth Community Center

Chester faces one of the lowest tree canopy coverages in the region, leaving residents more vulnerable to extreme heat, flooding, and poor air quality. This session will explore how the 9th Street Youth and Community Center's Environmental Youth Corps addresses these disparities by planting and tending trees, engaging young people in environmental stewardship, and supporting trail development that builds climate resilience. Attendees will learn how community-led efforts are creating healthier, greener neighborhoods while empowering the next generation of environmental leaders.

Barron Lacy is the Executive Director of the 9th Street YCC, an environmental youth organization in Chester, Pennsylvania, where he leads the Youth Environmental Corps, a program that engages young people in hands-on projects like tree planting, land and waterway clean-ups, and environmental stewardship across the city. He also serves as Chairman of the Chester Shade Tree Commission, is a member of the Delaware County Parks Board, and is a member on the Chester Trails Committee, an initiative led by the Pennsylvania Environmental Council.

11:10 am - 12:00 noon: Session 3

Beyond Planting-Working with Partners to Care for New Trees

Addelin Ceballos, Business District Manager, HACE CDC

Marissa Donohue, Manager of Commercial Corridor Tree Partnerships, Phila. Dept. of Commerce

Kate Illes, Community Forestry Manager, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation

Mariame Tadjiddine, Commercial Corridor Manager, African Cultural Alliance of Philadelphia

Musa Trewaly, Corridor Administrator, African Cultural Alliance of Philadelphia

Out of the community recommendations and cross-departmental collaboration from the Philly Tree Plan, Philadelphia Parks & Recreation partnered with CDCs and the Department of Commerce to expand an existing commercial corridor



cleaning program to include street tree planting. Centering maintenance, community care, and economic opportunity, this initiative strives to enhance the civic centers of Philly's neighborhoods. This presentation will highlight the collaboration that brought this program to life, highlighting the partners who make it a reality.

Our speakers in this panel are all part of a larger team that work together to plan and implement the Commercial Corridor tree planting and care program in Philadelphia. Musa, Mariame and Addelin represent community-based organizations, where they focus on the business communities in the neighborhoods they serve and administer the Taking Care of Business cleaning ambassador program. Mariame and Musa have worked with ACANA for close to a decade, serving the vibrant community of Southwest Philadelphia. Addelin works with HACE, serving the Fairhill neighborhood in the lower northeast part of the city.

12:00 noon - 1:30 pm: Lunch, Tours, and Botanical Art

12:40 – 1:25 pm: Optional Tours

Introduction to Mushroom Hunting, Philadelphia Mycology Club

Join the Philadelphia Mycology Club on a stroll around campus to hunt for fungi. We will talk about how to identify the mushrooms we find and the roles they are playing in the ecosystem around us.

Tour of the Haverford College Arboretum

Led by Haverford College Arboretum horticulturists

Botanical Art from Trees with Nicole Dupree

Join artist Nicole Dupree for an informal 'make and take' art experience with inks made from trees.

1:30 pm - 2:20 pm: Session 4

Rooted in Community: Building Trust and Resilience Through Urban Forestry

Dan Preziosi, Director of Trees, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society (PHS)

This talk will share how PHS is strengthening community partnerships and adapting to shifting federal funding to sustain its urban forestry work. Through on-the-ground examples, Dan will highlight strategies for building trust, engaging residents, and ensuring long-term impact. This session will explore what it takes to grow not just a tree canopy, but a resilient, community-rooted movement.

Daniel Preziosi is Director of Trees at the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, bringing 15+ years of experience in horticulture, green infrastructure, and team leadership. Formerly Director of Grounds at New Orleans City Park, he led operations across horticulture, sanitation, and volunteer engagement. He holds a B.S. in Plant and Soil Sciences from



UMass Amherst and completed Urban Park Leadership training through CUNY. A New Jersey native, Daniel enjoys fishing, woodworking, and exploring the Wissahickon with his family.

2:20 pm - 2:40 pm: BREAK

2:40 pm - 3:40 pm: Session 5

Supporting Plant Communities and Natural Regeneration in East Coast Urban Forests

Jack Levy-Diedrich, University of Delaware

Urban forest natural areas are forest patches, often small in size, embedded within cities and other populated areas. While they are often rich in biodiversity, these ecosystems can be significantly altered by the threat of invasive plants and white-tailed deer. Jack will highlight some findings from his work on the status of natural regeneration within these ecosystems and offer some perspectives on how practitioners and communities might best preserve their local urban forest ecosystems.

Jack Levy-Diedrich is a PhD candidate at the University of Delaware, working in the Trammell Urban Ecology Lab within the Department of Plant and Soil Sciences. Jack's dissertation work is focused on understanding plant communities within urban forest patches of cities along the East Coast. By focusing specifically on plant regeneration, Jack hopes his work can contribute to how best to sustain urban forests and urban biodiversity.

3:40 pm - 4:30 pm: Session 6

Rooted in Resilience: Tough Trees for Tough Places

Aaron Greenberg, Arboretum Manager at Laurel Hill, Board Certified Master Arborist

Andrew Conboy, Urban Forester at Morris Arboretum, ISA Certified Arborist

This session will discuss hardy, resilient tree species that thrive in the most challenging conditions—from rocky, barren soils to waterlogged clay—and how that resilience makes them great landscape trees. The environmental challenges in which these tree species evolved have resulted in unique adaptations that make them suitable for many tough, human-dominated landscapes. This talk will leave you feeling excited to try a few of these species in your garden or community projects!

Aaron Greenberg is an ISA Board Certified Master Arborist and an enthusiastic planter and steward of trees. He is the Arboretum Manager for Laurel Hill, a pair of historic Philadelphia-area cemeteries that combine to form a single 265-acre Arboretum with over 8,500 specimens. Greenberg also serves as the State Coordinator for the Pennsylvania



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Champion Tree program, a Pennsylvania Forestry Association program that catalogs and verifies the largest trees of each species in PA.

Andrew Conboy is an urban forester and ISA-certified arborist. Through his work at Morris Arboretum, on social media platforms, and through his ecological restoration non-profit (Community Canopy Project), he hopes to inspire a wider integration of native trees, plants, and greenery into the spaces where we live, work, and play. His user-friendly content on social media platforms (@Andrew_The_Arborist) aims to educate and encourage people to connect with the natural world around them.

4:30 pm: CLOSING REMARKS

5:00 PM OPTIONAL happy hour at Tired Hands Brewing

35 Cricket Terrace, Ardmore, PA 19003

Let's continue the conversation! We will all pay our own way.