Managed Retreat in the U.S. Gulf Coast Region

Committee

Janice Barnes

Co-Chair

JANICE BARNES (Co-Chair) is the founding and managing partner of Climate Adaptation Partners, a NYC-based woman-owned business that focuses on planning, advocacy, and partnership-building for climate adaptation. Recent work includes: collaboration with The Nature Conservancy and Southern Environmental Law Center to track federal disaster funding in South Carolina; developing the City of Houston Resilient Neighborhoods Program; New York City Mayor’s Office of Resiliency AdaptNYC; and leading development of ClimateReadyDC, a globally-recognized climate adaptation plan. She is a member of the Resilient America Roundtable, a co-chair of the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority Climate Impact Assessment Health and Safety Technical Working Group, a co-chair of the Health Working Group of New York City Panel on Climate Change, a lead author for the upcoming UCCRN ARC 3.3 as related to Climate Change, Cities and COVID19, and on the faculty of University of Pennsylvania Perelman School of Medicine and Weitzman School of Design. She is an advisor to the Urban Land Institute Resilience team, the American Institute of Architects National Resilience Advisory Group, the US Technical Advisory Group for ISO TC59 on Buildings and Civil Engineering Works, and the Florida Institute for Built Environment Resilience. She holds a Ph.D. in architecture/organizational behavior and an M.S. in architecture from the University of Michigan, as well as a Master of Architecture from Tulane University. She has completed executive training with the University of Chicago and Lincoln Land on Municipal Finance.

Tracie T. Sempier

Co-Chair

TRACIE SEMPIER (Co-Chair) is the coastal resilience engagement specialist for the Mississippi-Alabama Sea Grant Consortium. She works with local communities, state and federal agencies, non-profit organizations, businesses, coastal managers, residents, and K-12 audiences to decrease the negative effects of disasters (natural, technological, and biological) on families, communities, and the environment. She is also the VORTEX-SE engagement coordinator, for which she is creating a model for regional extension programming focused on severe weather, synthesizing research findings to inform application at the local level, and working to create safe sheltering options for vulnerable populations. She is the lead for the Gulf of Mexico Climate and Resilience Community of Practice, for which she utilizes existing networks to build connections with target audiences. She has over twenty years of professional experience in education/outreach with various audiences in formal and informal learning environments. She is a recipient of the prestigious Gulf Guardian Award and the Spirit of Community Award for her work on resilience issues in the Gulf of Mexico. She earned a Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction from Mississippi State University, an M.S. in science and mathematics education at Oregon State University, and a B.S. in marine science and biology from the University of Alabama.

Kayode O. Atoba

Member

KAYODE ATOBA is an associate research scientist at the Institute for a Disaster Resilient Texas at Texas A&M University. His research draws on the broader theory of urban planning and hazard resiliency to propose best mitigation and adaptation strategies. His research uses quantitative and geospatial methodologies to identify the interactions between the built environment and natural hazards. His recent work addresses issues related to property acquisition and buyouts as non-structural mitigation strategies to reduce flood hazard impacts. He has a Ph.D. in urban and regional science from Texas A&M University, College Station, and an M.S. in geographic information systems from Sam Houston State University. He is a mentor and an alumnus of the William Averette Anderson Fund, the first interdisciplinary organization in the United States focused on increasing the number of underrepresented persons in the field of disaster research and planning. He has frequently made statements on hazard mitigation through his website and his LinkedIn profile. He has also published multiple articles on hazard mitigation and environmental hazards, such as the co-authored article, “Buy them out before they are built: Evaluating the proactive acquisition of vacant land in flood-prone areas,” in Environmental Conservation in 2021, emphasizing the benefits of buying flood-prone property before it is flooded. He participated in an expert workshop that was one source for Property Buyouts Can Be an Effective Solution for Flood-Prone Communities: Improved federal policy on funding and planning would deliver better long-term outcomes (Pew Charitable Trusts, 2022).

Gary S. Belkin

Member

GARY BELKIN is a visiting scientist at Harvard University T.H. Chan School of Public Health and the founder and president of the Billion Minds Institute, which brings science and policy to bear on tackling the “social climate” crisis of the climate crisis. He works with municipalities—in the US and globally—to innovate methods for population community mental health and resilience in ways that advance other social and human capital aims and outcomes and that shift knowledge, skills, and implementation tools to community members. Efforts to realize this include the ThriveNYC initiative and a community-wide response to depression and trauma in Haiti after the 2010 earthquake. Those approaches inform his current focus: how to ambitiously scale civic-led coping and collective acting in the face of increasingly common and overwhelming environmental damage. He has served on numerous advisory boards, led large health and human service systems, including as Medical Director for Behavioral Health across the NYC Health and Hospitals Corporation, and is Founding Editor of the journal Global Mental Health. He was formerly Executive Deputy Commissioner for the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. He holds a Ph.D. in the history of medicine from Harvard University, and an M.D. from Brown University Alpert School of Medicine and completed a residency in psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School.

Debra M. Butler

Member

DEBRA M. BUTLER is the executive Director of the American Society of Adaptation Professionals. She has a PHD in Environmental Studies from the University of Massachusetts-Boston and her research focuses on climate displacement, migration, and resettlement on the Gulf Coast. Her research and writing collaborate with Indigenous and placed-based communities in Louisiana, Alabama, Mississippi and Sancti Spiritus, Cuba. She has received research fellowships from the National Science Foundation-IGERT and the Harte Research Institute at Texas A&MU-Corpus-Christi. In 2016, she was selected as a Gulf Research Policy Fellow by the National Academies of Sciences. During her tenure at EPA Gulf of Mexico Program, she worked on the ground with place-based ecological and cultural restoration projects in Turkey Creek MS and Dauphin Island, AL. She volunteers on numerous not-for-profit boards and community organizations including the Climigration Network, Stone Living Labs and Rising Voices Center for Indigenous and Earth Sciences-UCAR (University Corporation for Atmospheric Research). Dr. Butler also holds Masters’ degrees from Brandeis University International Business School and Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is a native of the Gulf coast.

Craig E. Colten

Member

CRAIG COLTEN is professor emeritus at Louisiana State University, having retired in May 2021 after 21 years on the geography faculty. His principal training is in historical geography, with foci on human adaptation to environmental conditions and settlement geography. His recent research has focused on hazards and community resilience in the Gulf Coast, adaptation to environmental change, and environmental migration as an adaptive strategy. He is Senior Advisor, Water Institute of the Gulf, a Fellow of the American Association of Geographers, and recipient of the association's 2022 Gilbert White Distinguished Public Service Honor. He held the Carl O. Sauer Professorship at Louisiana State University (2004-2021) and received a Rainmaker Award from the University in 2021. He will embark on a Landhaus Fellowship with the Rachel Carson Center in Munich in 2023. Previously he was on the faculty at Texas State University (1996-2000), a senior project manager for PHR Environmental Consultants in the DC area (1994-96), and held several positions with the Illinois Department of Energy and Natural Resources (1984-94). More recently, he served as the chair of the Isle de Jean Charles Resettlement Project Academic Advisory Committee (2017-2021). He has a Ph.D. in geography from Syracuse University. He has reported to academic and applied audiences at professional conferences that the absence of community relocation considerations are a shortcoming in current Louisiana state coastal restoration projects. He has authored and co-authored articles in academic publications with the viewpoint that current Louisiana state coastal restoration projects do not adequately take into consideration community relocation. He has also authored several books, with the most recent one published in 2021, State of Disaster: A Historical Geography of Louisiana's Land Loss Crisis.

Katherine J. Curtis

Member

KATHERINE J. CURTIS is Professor of Community & Environmental Sociology and Associate Director of the Center for Demography and Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her work is centered in demography and extends to spatial, environmental, rural, and applied demography, and focuses on two central themes: population-environment interactions, most centrally the relationship between demographic, economic, and environmental forces; and spatial and temporal dimensions of social and economic inequality, most centrally historical and local forces perpetuating racial disparities. In her work, Curtis adopts place-based theoretical frameworks and employs advanced spatial and spatiotemporal statistical approaches to analyze questions about inequality, which has profound and far-reaching impacts on population wellbeing. Professional service and awards include Diversity Committee of the Rural Sociological Society, Program Committee of the Population Association of America, Associate Editor of Rural Sociology, Editorial board of Spatial Demography, and National ESS Excellence in Multistate Research Award (W4001, past chair). She earned her Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Washington.

Lynn R. Goldman

Member

LYNN R. GOLDMAN, a pediatrician and epidemiologist, is the Michael and Lori Milken Dean and professor of environmental and occupational health at the Milken Institute School of Public Health at the George Washington University. She was previously professor of environmental health sciences at the Bloomberg School of Public Health; assistant administrator for toxic substances at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where she directed the Office of Chemical Safety and Prevention; and chief of the division of Environmental and Occupational Disease Control at the California Department of Public Health. She is a member of the National Academy of Medicine. She is chair of the board for the Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health; a member of the NIH National Advisory Environmental Health Sciences Council; a member of the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine Environmental Health Matters Initiative; and a member of the CDC Advisory Committee to the Director. She holds an M.D. from UC San Francisco; an M.PH. from Johns Hopkins University; and a B.S. and M.S. from UC Berkeley. She completed a pediatric residency at the UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in Oakland. She serves as a trustee for the Environmental Defense Fund.

E. Barrett Ristroph

Member

E. BARRETT RISTROPH is owner of Ristroph Law, Planning, and Research, which provides services at a reasonable cost to tribes, communities, and agencies related to natural resources, hazard mitigation, government, and climate change adaptation and relocation. She is a lawyer, planner, mediator, evaluator, and researcher based in south Louisiana and sometimes Alaska. Her work has included assisting Newtok Village, Alaska, with relocating to Mertarvik; establishing a climate change program for an Alaskan inter-tribal organization; assisting tribes with hazard mitigation and adaption planning; working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on environmental review for Louisiana coastal restoration projects; and working on reports for international agreements related to environmental and human rights issues. She volunteers her time to various coalitions on adaptation and has served as a mentor through the Louisiana Bar Association and the American Society of Adaptation Professionals. She holds a Ph.D in adaptation planning and a J.D. She is a frequent presenter at conferences on the experience of Newtok residents and has published articles such as “Strategies for Planned Community Relocation: A Case Study of Newtok Village, Alaska” in the Journal of Environmental Studies and Sciences (2021).

Catherine L. Ross

Member

CATHERINE L. ROSS is regents' professor and Harry West professor of city and regional planning and civil and environmental engineering and director of the Center for Quality Growth and Regional Development at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Her extensive regional resilience and sustainability research focuses on water resources, energy, transportation, economic development, and Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS). Her work includes a multidisciplinary focus on resilience, analytics, transportation impact assessment, and performance management. From 2012-2016, she was deputy director of Georgia Tech's Tier 1 University Center for Transportation System Productivity and Management, which included (MAP-21) program implementation and monitoring, highway investment, complete streets, pedestrian routes, congestion pricing, freight and passenger mobility options, port facilities, and economic competitiveness. She currently serves as chairman of the board of directors of the Auto Club Group (American Automobile Association). She recently joined the board of the Health Effects Institute, which focuses on the health effects of air pollution, including those caused by unconventional oil and gas development. She holds a Ph.D. in city and regional planning from Cornell University.

Gavin P. Smith

Member

GAVIN SMITH is a professor in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at North Carolina State University. His research focuses on hazard mitigation, disaster recovery, and climate change adaptation and the integration of research and practice through deep community engagement. His current research includes assessing the state of disaster resilient design education at U.S. Universities, the analysis of a national survey assessing the role of states in building the capacity of local governments to implement hazard mitigation grants and a comparative assessment of hazard-prone housing acquisition programs in the US, New Zealand, and Australia. He has developed a graduate certificate program in disaster resilient policy, engineering, and design and is helping to coordinate a university-wide effort focused on disaster resilience spanning research, teaching, and engagement-related activities. He is the author of Planning for Post-Disaster Recovery: A Review of the United States Disaster Assistance Framework (Island Press, 2011) and served as the co-editor of the text Adapting to Climate Chance: Lessons from Natural Hazards Planning (Springer, 2014). He holds a Ph.D. in urban and regional planning from Texas A&M University. He has received funding from several jurisdictions—including Louisiana; Queensland, Australia; the U.S. Virgin Islands; and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security—for advising on hazard adaptation and mitigation strategies, coastal management, and disaster response. He has written numerous peer reviewed journal articles, book chapters, and practice-oriented reports that address hazard mitigation and disaster recovery issues. Recent articles discuss lessons from buyouts and their application to managed retreat strategies, development of a hazard overlay districts to adapt to climate change-induced hazards, and a governance-based approach to improve recovery outcomes.

Natalie L. Snider

Member

NATALIE L. SNIDER (she/her/hers) is currently serving as a science integrator at the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Sciences (UMCES) Integration and Application Network (IAN). Until recently, Snider was the associate vice president for climate resilient coasts and watersheds for the Environmental Defense Fund (EDF). Her work centers on building just climate resilience through the adaptation, transition and transformation of the socio-ecological system, focusing on governance and adaptive management, to meet the challenges of climate change impacts to coastal and riverine ecosystems and communities. Snider previously worked at Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority, leading efforts on the Louisiana Coastal Master Plan and as the science director at the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. She has received a Champion of Inspiration award from National Conference on Volunteering and Service, a Make a Difference Day Award from USA Today, a Women in Conservation Award from National Audubon Society, and a Coastal Stewardship Award from the Coalition to Restore Coastal Louisiana. Snider has actively engaged with the challenge of climate change through tweets and blogs, including “4 ways to reduce disproportionate flood risk and build resilience for all communities,” and "Building climate resilience requires a whole-of-government approach. Here's how Louisiana is making it happen" on EDF’s blog; she has also co-authored the articles, “Eroding Land and Erasing Place: A Qualitative Study of Place Attachment, Risk Perception, and Coastal Land Loss in Southern Louisiana” in Sustainability and "Responding to flood risk in Louisiana: the roles of place attachment, emotions and location" in Natural Hazards. She has a B.S. in wildlife and fisheries management and an M.S. in oceanography and coastal sciences, both from Louisiana State University, and a Ph.D. in marine and estuarine environmental sciences from the University of Maryland.

Courtney S. Thomas Tobin

Member

COURTNEY S. THOMAS TOBIN is an assistant professor in community health sciences at the Fielding School of Public Health and a faculty associate of the Ralph J. Bunche Center for African American Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. As a medical sociologist, she integrates traditional sociological theories with perspectives from public health, social psychology, medicine, and the biological sciences to examine the social, psychological, and biological (i.e., biopsychosocial) pathways that contribute to the health and longevity of Black Americans. Her research program makes conceptual and empirical contributions to three interrelated areas of inquiry: (1) psychosocial pathways to embodiment, including the interconnections between mental and physical health; (2) health risks and resources across the life course; and (3) racialized stress and coping processes among Black Americans. She was a UC President’s Postdoctoral Fellow in Public Health and Psychology prior to joining the faculty at UCLA. She holds a Ph.D. in sociology from Vanderbilt University and a B.S. in psychology from Xavier University of Louisiana.