

Speaker Biographies

Brooke Lee Bateman, Director of Climate Watch, National Audubon Society

Dr. Bateman's research focuses on spatial ecology and species distribution with particular emphasis on the effect of extreme weather events and climate change on biodiversity. In 2010, she received her Ph.D. degree in Zoology and Tropical Ecology from James Cook University, Queensland, Australia. As Director of Climate Watch for the Audubon Society, Dr. Bateman works with community volunteers to better understand how North American birds are affected by climate change. In addition, she collaborates with scientists from universities, government agencies and within the Audubon Society's science team to develop research focused on climate, citizen science and conservation of birds.

Karena Gore, Director of the Center for Earth Ethics, Union Theological Seminary

The founder of the Center for Earth Ethics, Ms. Gore, is a graduate of Harvard College, Columbia University Law School and Union Theological Seminary. Bridging the worlds of religion, academia, politics and culture to stop ecological destruction and create a society that values life, the Center reframes climate change as a moral issue and encourages faith-based activism to solve it. Prior to establishing the Center, Ms. Gore volunteered as an attorney at Sanctuary for Families, which serves victims of domestic violence, and worked as Director of Community Affairs for Association to Benefit Children (ABC). She is the author of *Lighting the Way: Nine Women Who Changed Modern America* and the daughter of former Vice President Al Gore.

Emily Nobel Maxwell, Director, Urban Conservation Program In New York City, The Nature Conservancy

Ms. Maxwell is the Urban Conservation Program's inaugural Director and also Strategic Advisor to the Nature Conservancy's North America Cities Network. A former Doris Duke Conservation and Ford Fellow, she previously served as Associate Director of the National Wildlife Foundation's Northeast Regional Center and led the foundation's school sustainability programs in New York, New Jersey and Connecticut. Prior to that she was program director at New York City's Partnership for Parks. Ms. Maxwell received her B.A. in Urban Studies from the New School for Social Research and has an M.S. in Natural Resources Policy with a specialization in Environmental Justice from the University of Michigan.

Don J. Melnick, Thomas Hunt Morgan Professor of Conservation Biology, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology, Columbia University

Dr. Melnick wears two hats: university professor and Director of the Center for Environment, Economy and Society, a group that integrates natural science, economics and business in an effort to conserve biological diversity on global, national and local levels. An anthropologist by training, with a Ph.D. from Yale University, Dr. Melnick developed the blueprint for the Department of Ecology, Evolution and Environmental Biology leading to the creation in 2000 of the first new Columbia University Arts and Sciences department in more than half a century. As a scientific researcher for more than 40 years, he has used molecular genetics to explain aspects of the ecology, behavior, evolution and conservation of vertebrates.

Ana Luz Porzecanski, Director of the Center for Biodiversity and Conservation, American Museum of Natural History

As director of the CBC, Dr. Porzecanski oversees strategic planning project development and a multidisciplinary staff leading conservation research and capacity development initiatives worldwide. Her primary interests relate to understanding biodiversity and how to sustain it effectively for the future. Dr. Porzecanski was co-curator of *Cuba!* the Natural History museum's recent groundbreaking exhibition on Cuba's biodiversity and culture and the largest exhibition of its kind in the US. She also teaches courses in conservation biology and evolution at Columbia and New York Universities. After studying biological sciences at the Universidad de la Republica, Uruguay, Dr. Porzecanski received her Ph.D. from Columbia, researching the taxonomy and historical biogeography of South American aridland birds.

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**William Stanley Fallon Schuster, Executive Director,
Black Rock Forest Consortium**

Since he became Executive Director of the Consortium in 1992, Dr. Schuster has overseen its development as a biological field station of national significance and led the successful effort to build a \$4 million green campus at the Forest with classrooms, laboratories and a 60-bed lodge. Today the Consortium supports 13,000 student-visitor days annually and 50,000 public visitors. Dr. Schuster's primary research interests include understanding tree and ecological health in relation to the environment and long-term ecological sustainability. He holds a Ph.D. in biology from the University of Colorado, an M.S. from Pennsylvania State University in forest ecology and a B.A. in biology from Columbia University.

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A Few Suggestions for Further Reading:

Elizabeth Kolbert, *The Sixth Extinction: An Unnatural History*

In this bestselling book which reads like a scientific thriller, the New Yorker writer reports with imagination and rigor on the disappearances of species before our very eyes.

Douglas W. Tallamy, *Bringing Nature Home: How you Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants*

The Chair of the department of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware presents a compelling illustration of how the choices we make as gardeners can profoundly impact the diversity of life in our yards, towns and on our planet.

Edwin O. Wilson, *Half Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*.

A Pulitzer Prize-winning author and world-renowned biologist states that in order to stave off mass extinction of the species, including our own, we must move swiftly to preserve the biodiversity of our planet.