



## Spring Conference 2020

### Session 3

#### Return on Environment – Quantifying the Returns on Investing in Protected Open Space.

### Biographies

#### **Rachael Griffith, Trails & Open Space Planner, Chester County Planning Commission**

Rachael Griffith currently serves as the Trails and Open Space planner at the Chester County planning commission and is a PA-licensed landscape architect. Rachael managed the update of the 2019 Return on Environment study in collaboration with a diverse group of partner organizations. She manages complex feasibility studies for regional multi-use trails and helps to develop strategies for the development of the county trail system. She liaises with land conservancies and other environmental organizations to coordinate initiatives related to natural resource protection, land preservation and trail development. Rachael holds a Bachelor of Science in Landscape Architecture from Temple University and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Pennsylvania.

#### **Gary Smith, President and CEO, Chester County Economic Development**

Gary W. Smith currently serves the Chester County Economic Development Council as President and CEO. He joined the Council in 1976 and pioneered award-winning programs of below market-rate financing, agricultural economic development, brownfields redevelopment, conduit funding for commercial construction, industry partnerships, urban revitalization and multi-agency collaboration. During his tenure, the Council has secured over \$369 million in external funding for 420 plus projects ranging from regional economic revitalization to workforce development. The Council's programs and services have helped to create over 175,000 new jobs; assisted in retaining more than 190,000 existing jobs; and brokered more than \$13.5 billion in commercial financing loans. Over 8,000 new businesses have also been established during that period. Gary has been honored with many awards. Mr. Smith holds a MA in Public Administration from West Chester University as well as his undergraduate degree from West Chester University.

#### **John Goodall, Senior Outreach Associate, Brandywine Conservancy**

John Goodall is a Senior Outreach Associate and Director of the Laurels Preserve at the Brandywine Conservancy. John conducts conservation easement outreach and assists with monitoring, enforcement and administration of conservation easements within southwestern Chester County and southeastern Lancaster county. He coordinates and manages agricultural preservation outreach efforts to encourage farmers to implement best practices to mitigate agricultural impacts on water quality. John also serves as director of the 771-acre Laurels Preserve where he oversees stewardship of the preserve's natural areas and trails.

#### **Peter Williamson, Vice President, Conservation Services, Natural Lands**

Peter is responsible for administering Natural Lands' land acquisition, conservation planning, and municipal assistance activities. He has worked for Natural Lands for over twenty-five years. One of his favorite accomplishments on the job was helping Natural Lands acquire Bear Swamp, an old-growth forest that became part of our Glades Wildlife Refuge in 2005, after 20 years of effort. Peter earned a B.A. in Biology from Gettysburg College and a Masters, Landscape Architecture from North Carolina State University.