

Water Dialogues

Biographies of Speakers and Presenters

Saleem H. Ali is professor of environmental studies at the University of Vermont's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and director of the Institute for Environmental Diplomacy and Security at UVM's James Jeffords Center for Policy Research. He is also on the adjunct faculty of Brown University's Watson Institute for International Studies and the visiting faculty for the United Nations mandated University for Peace (Costa Rica). Ali's research focuses on the causes and consequences of environmental conflicts and how ecological factors can promote peace. Much of his empirical research has focused on environmental conflicts in the mineral sector. His most recent book is titled *Treasures of the Earth: Need, Greed and a Sustainable Future*. Ali is also involved in numerous nonprofit organizations to promote environmental peace-building and serves on the board of The DMZ Forum for Peace and Nature Conservation and International Peace Park Expeditions in the United States and on the board of governors for LEAD-Pakistan. He has also been involved in promoting environmental education in madrassahs (Islamic religious schools) and using techniques from environmental planning to study the rise of these institutions in his ethnic homeland, Pakistan, leading to a monograph entitled *Islam and Education: Conflict and Conformity in Pakistan's Madrassahs*. He is also a professional mediator and has conducted workshops on consensus-building for private and public interests.

Paul K. Barten is professor of forest resources in the Department of Environmental Conservation at the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the director of the Forest-to-Faucet Partnership. He earned undergraduate degrees in forestry from the New York State Ranger School (A.A.S., 1977) and SUNY ESF, Syracuse (B.S., 1983) and an M.S. (1985) and Ph.D. (1988) in forest hydrology and watershed management from the University of Minnesota. He served on the faculty of the Yale School of Forestry & Environmental Studies from 1988-97 before moving to the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

Akiko Busch '75 writes about design, culture, and the natural world for a variety of publications. A graduate of Bennington College, she is the author of *Geography of Home: Writings on Where We Live*; *The Uncommon Life of Common Objects: Essays on Design and the Everyday*; and most recently, *Nine Ways to Cross a River*. Her essay, *Patience: Taking Time in an Age of Acceleration* was published in 2010. She was a contributing editor at *Metropolis* magazine for 20 years, and her work has appeared in numerous national magazines, newspapers, and exhibition catalogues. She held the Richard Koopman Distinguished Chair for the Visual Arts at the Hartford Art School at the University of Hartford and has taught at Bennington College and Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. Her essays have aired on public radio in the U.S. and Canada, and currently she is on the faculty of the School of Visual Arts in New York City. Her work has been recognized by grants from the Furthermore Foundation and NYFA, and she was recently appointed as the inaugural writer-in-residence at the Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies in Millbrook, New York, whose mission is to foster a better understanding of the importance of ecosystems. *The Incidental Steward*, her essays about land use, citizen science, and stewardship, will be published by Yale University Press in 2013.

Brian Campion was elected to the Vermont House of Representatives in 2010 and appointed by Speaker of the House Shap Smith to serve on the House Education Committee. Campion is passionate about improving education so our young people are prepared to be active participants in our democracy and can be prepared to find work that is meaningful both to themselves and to

society. Additionally, Campion is deeply committed to environmental conservation, healthcare reform, and economic development.

Taeyoon Choi studied performance, traveled extensively making video documentaries, completed graduate studies in new media and received a fellowship at Eyebeam Art and Technology Center. He exhibits, performs, publishes books internationally, and collaborates with community that is local and the public that is sometimes imaginary. His recent social practice includes Roadshow: South Korea where he invited 15 international artists and activists to travel along the rivers transforming due to massive urban development. He is a committee of The Public School New York, an open-source school with no curriculum and runs GaOk, a residency program for cultural producers in Seoul.

Rabbi Michael Cohen is a long time environmental activist who, while in high school, co-founded the first recycling center in Ewing, New Jersey, in 1976. He graduated with a B.A. in History from the University of Vermont, where he also received the Paul Evans History Award for his honors paper on "Lenin's Theory of Self-Determination and the Muslims of the Soviet Union." In 1990 he graduated from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College and became the first full-time rabbi of the Israel Congregation in Manchester Center, Vermont. Since 2000 he has divided his time between Vermont and Kibbutz Ketura, Israel, working for the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies, the premier environmental teaching and research program in the Middle East, preparing future Arab and Jewish leaders to cooperatively solve the region's environmental challenges. He has written extensively about the environment and the Middle East peace process in North American and Middle Eastern publications. He is the author of *Einstein's Rabbi: A Tale of Science and the Soul*. His latest project is to try to have a Nobel Environment Prize established. Rabbi Cohen is a visiting faculty member at Bennington for spring 2012.

Jon Cohrs is a recording engineer and visual artist based in Brooklyn, NY. Often employing humor and absurdity, his work uses public engagement and site-specific interventions to address global issues. Recently, he created OMG I'm on TV, an analog pirate TV station that filled the void left behind by the digital transition. OMG TV was used as a reference in a Supreme Court amicus brief on creativity and copyright. He has taught at Parsons, The New School for Design, as a visiting artist at Colorado College, and taught at SUNY Purchase in the Film and Media department in January 2012. He has just completed a fellowship at Eyebeam Art and Technology Center and is currently working on a film about artificial flavoring and the New Jersey Meadowlands called *The Spice Trade Expedition*.

Elizabeth Coleman is one of the country's leading innovators in higher education and the ninth president of Bennington College. Her vision for a new liberal arts education and its role of reinvigoration in society has been widely recognized in the United States and abroad. President Coleman's recent presentations include delivering the concluding presentation at the 25th anniversary TED Conference in Los Angeles, keynoting The Conference on World Affairs in Boulder, and addressing The Royal College of Defence Studies in London, and the National Association of Independent Schools, of which she is a trustee, in Washington, D.C. Prior to assuming the presidency at Bennington, Coleman was the dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and a professor of humanities at the New School for Social Research in New York, where she founded and directed the Freshman Year Program and the Seminar College. Prior to The New School, she was professor of literature at SUNY-Stony Brook. President Coleman serves on the board of advisors for the European College of Liberal Arts in Berlin and has served on the boards of the Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt Institute, the Council for a Community of Democracies, and the Committee for

Economic Development. Coleman graduated from the University of Chicago, where she was a Ford Foundation Scholar, completed her master's degree in English and American Literature at Cornell University, and received her PhD from Columbia University, where she was a Woodbridge and President's Fellow.

David Deen brings a long history of concern for the waters of the State of Vermont. He has been an articulate advocate for the Connecticut River since 1989. He is the Connecticut River Watershed Council's River Steward. CRWC is the premier watershed organization for the entire Connecticut River watershed. He is serving in his 22nd year as a member of the Vermont House of Representatives; 24 years in the legislature with 2 years in the Senate and currently serves as chair of the House Fish, Wildlife, and Water Resources Committee.

Randie Denker '72 is an environmental attorney with 30 years of experience in all aspects of environmental litigation and issues including surface and groundwater pollution, aquatic preserves, and marine and wetland restoration. She has worked as both a government attorney and a private attorney, within the state and federal court systems, and in the administrative law system. Denker has also taught classes as a guest lecturer at numerous universities, had publications in law journals and elsewhere, has helped municipalities and counties craft environmental and land use laws, has served on numerous boards, and has served as a mediator for Florida State University's mock negotiations on river basin conflicts, as well as working internationally with NATO in Kazakhstan and Morocco. Denker is listed in Who's Who in America, Who's Who in the Law, Who's Who of Emerging Leaders, Who's Who in International Women, and International Directory of Distinguished Leadership.

Mansour Farhang served as revolutionary Iran's first ambassador to the United Nations, resigning in protest when the Khomeini regime refused to accept the U.N. Commission of Inquiry's recommendation to release American hostages in Teheran. Early in the Iran-Iraq war, he served as envoy in negotiations with international peace missions. Currently, he is on the advisory board of Middle East Watch, a branch of Human Rights Watch. He is the author of *U.S. Imperialism: From the Spanish-American War to the Iranian Revolution*; and, with William Dorman, *The U.S. Press and Iran: Foreign Policy and the Journalism of Deference*; he is also a frequent contributor to scholarly journals and the national news media. He has taught at the Claremont Graduate School, the California State University at Sacramento, and Princeton University, where he was also a research fellow at the Center for International Studies. BA, University of Arizona; PhD, Claremont Graduate School. Farhang has taught at Bennington since 1983, where he is the Catharine Osgood Foster Chair for Distinguished Teaching.

Brian Fitzgerald is the Streamflow Protection Coordinator for the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources. He developed his appreciation of Vermont's natural resources while growing up in Pittsford, where his home range spanned two watersheds: the Castleton River and Otter Creek. Since 1996 he has worked in streamflow protection and river restoration at the Agency, where his work focuses on regulation of hydroelectric projects and water withdrawals, mitigating the impacts of dams on Vermont's rivers, and dam removal. He holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in biology and ecology from the State University of New York, College of Environmental Science and Forestry in Syracuse.

Nora Jacobson is a filmmaker, writer, producer, cinematographer, and director of the award-winning documentary *Delivered Vacant*. She is the founder of Off The Grid Productions of Norwich, Vermont, and former instructor at State University of New York at Purchase. She is currently in

production for the feature film *Letters to My Mother's Early Lovers*, being shot in Vermont. Jacobson earned her B.A. from Dartmouth College and her M.F.A. from the Art Institute of Chicago.

Patricia Johanson '62's major projects include Fair Park Lagoon in Dallas (1981-86), a municipal flood basin, and "Endangered Garden", in San Francisco (1987), a transport-storage sewer that is part of the Bay Circuit Trail. Ellis Creek Water Recycling Facility in Petaluma, California, utilizes sequential wetlands to process sewage into recycled water, while providing three miles of trails through varying wildlife habitats. "The Draw at Sugar House" Salt Lake City incorporates a registered dam, floodwalls, and spillway into a major highway crossing while reconnecting Parley's Creek, which was disrupted during the construction of I-80. and "Mary's Garden" in Scranton, Pennsylvania, restores surface flow and purifies water on a site devastated by coal mining.

Nancy Knowlton holds the Sant Chair in Marine Science at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, where her research focuses on the ecology, evolution, and conservation of coral reef organisms. Knowlton received her undergraduate degree at Harvard University and her PhD at the University of California at Berkeley, and was a professor at Yale University prior to moving to the Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute in Panama, where she worked for 14 years. She then joined the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California at San Diego, where she was the founding Director of the Center for Marine Biodiversity and Conservation. She is an elected fellow and member of the Board of Directors of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and an Aldo Leopold Leadership Fellow. In 2009 she received the Peter Benchley Award for science in the service of marine conservation, and in 2011 the Heinz Award for leadership in the field of the environment. In addition to numerous scientific papers, she is the author of *Citizens of the Sea*, published by the National Geographic Society.

Steve Leitman has extensive experience working on transboundary water issues for federal, state, and non-governmental organizations both in the U.S. and internationally in both policy and technical support roles. He has worked in the government sector and in the private sector, and has nearly 30 years experience working on comprehensive water issues involving the Apalachicola-Chattahoochee-Flint River basin to establish a Tri-State Water Compact. Towards this end, he has been involved in water modeling to facilitate allocation formulas, as well as hands-on work with endangered aquatic species. Leitman spent several years working on water issues in Eastern Europe under the auspices of the German Marshall Fund. He has also taught undergraduate and graduate level classes at Florida State University since 2001 in the area of river basin management. He has published multiple papers on transboundary water issues. He is a certified mediator.

Clive Lipchin serves as the director of the Arava Institute's Center for Transboundary Water Management where he oversees research projects, workshops, and conferences that focus on transboundary water and environmental problems facing Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian Authority. He is also a member of the Arava Institute faculty where he teaches courses in sustainable development, water management, scientific research methodology, and culture and environment interactions. His specialty is in water resources management and policy. He has been involved in a number of regional projects, such as assessing impacts on the declining water level of the Dead Sea. This project was conducted jointly with Palestinian and Jordanian partners and funded by the European Union. Recently, Lipchin was part of a research team working on the World Bank sponsored feasibility study of the Red Sea-Dead Sea conduit. He conducted research on the environmental and social impact assessment of the proposed project. He also consults for a number of national and international water agencies and has been involved most recently with the European Union's Water Initiative project for the Mediterranean region. Lipchin has published and presented

widely on the topic of transboundary water management in the Middle East and has served as senior editor on two books: *Integrated Water Resources Management in the Middle East* and *The Jordan River and Dead Sea Basin*.

Deborah Markowitz was appointed the secretary of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, the state agency with primary responsibility for protecting Vermont's environment, natural resources, and wildlife and for maintaining Vermont's forests and state parks, by Governor Peter Shumlin in January 2011. Markowitz previously served as Vermont's Secretary of State from 1999 until 2011. She has a distinguished record of achievement and is widely recognized for enhancing customer service at the Secretary of State's office, improving access to government, and strengthening Vermont's democracy. As secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, Markowitz has shaped the environmental agenda of the state, focusing on the challenges of climate change, habitat fragmentation, and the need to make Vermont more resilient to flooding. She believes that Vermont must find new and creative approaches to care for its natural resources, build strong communities, and support its working landscape for a sustainable future. A graduate of the University of Vermont, Markowitz received her Juris Doctorate degree from the Georgetown University Law Center. Markowitz served as a law clerk with Justice Louis Peck of the Vermont Supreme Court and practiced law with Langrock, Sperry, Parker, and Wool. She served as the founding director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Municipal Law Center, where she published numerous handbooks and academic papers and lectured on issues related to municipal law and ethics in government. Markowitz has served on numerous state and national boards and commissions and is the founder of the Vermont Women's Leadership Initiative and Vermont Votes for Kids. She has been recognized nationally for her leadership by being awarded an Aspen Institute Rodel fellowship.

Mary Mattingly's work collapses boundaries between performance, sculpture, architecture, and documentation. Through wearable environments and autonomous living systems, her practice addresses nomadic themes that are based on the need to migrate due to current and future environmental and political situations. Mary is the founder of the Waterpod Project, a self-sufficient habitat and public space atop a barge built to explore future collaborative living situations. It is docked throughout New York City, with artists living onboard testing the ecosystem for the project's duration. Over 200,000 people visited the Waterpod in 2009. Mattingly is currently working on the Flock House project, living systems that bridge informal cross-discipline and cross-boundary notions of property.

David Mears, a national leader in environmental law, was appointed commissioner of the Department of Environmental Conservation by Governor Peter Shumlin in January 2011. Mears was formerly an associate professor at the Vermont Law School and director of VLS's Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic and Land Use Clinic. He has been he an assistant attorney general in the Texas Office of the Attorney General, a senior attorney with the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, and the energy and environmental policy director with the Texas Office for State-Federal Relations in Washington, DC. He then served as a trial attorney and counselor for state and local affairs with the U.S. Department of Justice, Environment, and Natural Resources Division. Most recently, Mears was on a Fulbright Scholarship at Sun Yat-Sen University in China, lecturing and developing environmental clinical programs to strengthen enforcement of China's anti-pollution laws.

Carol Oldham' 93 is the northeast Regional Outreach Coordinator for the National Wildlife Federation and brings more than a decade of outreach experience on issues relating to the environment and energy. She has worked on outreach surrounding renewable energy in the

Southwest and throughout New England as well as issues relating to fossil fuel-produced energy. She has brought together groups as disparate as tribes, ranchers, faith groups, educators, utilities, and hunting and fishing interests. She previously worked for the Sierra Club as a regional manager and organizer and for Southern Mutual Help, organizing relief efforts in Louisiana after Katrina and Rita and for the Forest Service as a field biologist. She has an MBA in Policy and Planning from the University of New Mexico. Oldham's current role at the National Wildlife Federation includes reaching out to the hunting and fishing communities, NWF members in the northeast, and other key constituencies to educate decision makers on the impacts of policies and issues.

Julian Portilla is currently the director of the Graduate Program in Mediation and Applied Conflict Studies of the Woodbury Institute of Champlain College. Prior to his position at the college, Portilla worked on community, environmental, and political consensus-building processes in several countries in Latin America. Most recently based in Mexico, his primary responsibilities were managing several consensus-building processes on and around the Baja peninsula regarding fishing, environmental and land development policy issues. In addition to his current responsibilities at Champlain College, he consults for the UN, NGOs, universities, colleges, and other institutions.

Mirka Prazak is a scholar of development and cultural change whose work in East Africa centers on globalization, inequality, gender- and age-based hierarchies, reproduction, and family formation. Her work has been funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the National Science Foundation, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Social Science Research Council, and the Wenner-Gren Foundation, and has been conducted under the auspices of Yale University, the Australian National University, University of Nairobi, and Bennington College. Author of the recently completed draft manuscript on the tradition of genital cutting, *A Cut Above: Negotiating Identity in Rural East Africa*, she has contributed chapters to *African Families at the Turn of the 21st Century* and *Africa Today: A Multi-Disciplinary Snapshot of the Continent in 1995*. She has published extensively in academic journals including *Africa Today*, *African Studies Review*, *Journal of African Cultural Studies*, *The Anthropology of Work Review*, and the *Journal of African Studies*. Prazak was born in the Czech Republic and educated there and in Pakistan, the U.S., and Australia. She has taught at Yale University, Australian National University, the University of Nairobi, Williams College, and the Community College of Vermont. She earned her BA at Smith College; her M Phil. and PhD at Yale; and has done postdoctoral work at Australian National University. Prazak has taught at Bennington since 1996.

Michael Rancourt's engineering background comes first from his father and from an apprenticeship where he built and ran machines for molding plastics, including the robotic machines that made the IBM typewriter ball. As a woodworker, he developed an abrasive planer for guitar builders and precision woodworkers, built ultralight canoes, furniture, cabinetry, and several buildings. As an independent sawyer with a portable sawmill, he sawed out hundreds of houses, barns, sheds, log cabins, and lumber for everything from floors to musical instruments to the Mass MoCA project in North Adams, MA. His numerous unique theater projects have included a parasol that bursts into flames, a totally silent stage elevator, a 14-foot-wide black widow spider costume, and two baby carriages strong enough to hold college age "babies." Rancourt was Scene Shop Supervisor at Bennington College from 1982–92 and returned as Technical Director in 2005.

Tim Schroeder is a geologist who studies the movement of rocks and fluids through the Earth at active plate boundaries and at locations of past plate tectonic activity. He is interested in how mass-transfer reactions can change the physical properties of rocks to facilitate rock-weakening within fault zones. Schroeder is currently researching how active faults are exhuming rocks from the

Earth's mantle to the sea floor to construct new plates at the Mid-Atlantic Ridge. This work has included participation on two research cruises that sampled rocks from the sea floor via submersibles and drilling. Schroeder is also studying the formation of the Cordilleran rift 25 million years ago in Arizona by studying rocks that were brought to the Earth's surface from the mantle by ascending magma that erupted during the first phases of faulting. His research has been published in the journals *Geology*, *Geochemistry/Geophysics/Geosystems*, and *Marine Geophysical Researches*, and he has received grants from the United States Geological Survey, the Joint Oceanographic Institutions, and the Geological Society of America. He received his BS from the University of Wisconsin, Madison; his MS, from Northern Arizona University; and his PhD, from the University of Wyoming. He has taught at Bennington since 2008.

Bill Scully '94 has, since being a student at Bennington College, studied sculpture and architecture; assisted well-known artists such as Jenny Holzer and Maria Westerlund- Roosen; apprenticed at a local café; been the executive chef at the Cambridge Hotel; opened the popular, award-winning restaurant, Pangaea and Pangaea Lounge, in North Bennington; launched a second restaurant, Allegro, in downtown Bennington; and bought and revamped the much-loved Powers Market, contributing to the revitalization of North Bennington. He reentered the Bennington College community as the director of dining services. His most recent project is to pursue the development of Vermont's first hydroelectric plant in 25 years.

Elizabeth Sherman is known for her extensive work in amphibian behavior, Sherman has published in *Herpetological Review*, *Journal of Comparative Physiology*, *American Zoologist*, *Comparative Biochemistry and Physiology*, and *Journal of Thermal Biology*. She has received numerous grants from the National Science Foundation, as well as from the American Wildlife Research Foundation and The Grass Foundation. A commissioner for six years for The New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Sherman has previously taught biology at the University of Vermont and Cornell University. BA, University of Rochester; PhD, University of Vermont; postdoctoral work, Cornell University; National Science Foundation fellow, University of Vermont. Sherman has taught at Bennington since 1978.