

2019 WINTER CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES & CONTACT INFO

Taylor M. Bell works for the [Army Corps of Engineers New England District, Regulatory District](#), where he is the Project Manager for Rhode Island, In-Lieu Fee Program Coordinator for Connecticut, and the Chair of the Stream Mitigation Project Development Team. He has 10 years' experience with the Corps at the Mobile, Wilmington, Galveston, and now New England Districts. He attended Samford University where he received a Master's in Environmental Management. Taylor is an avid college and pro-football fan. In his spare time he also coaches CrossFit at Hanscom Air Force Base.

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Tom Benjamin is a Registered Landscape Architect (RLA), LEED-AP BD+C, of [WELLNESSCAPES](#) and has been an innovator in the field of landscape and sustainable design for more than 20 years. His unmatched insights into low-input resilient design, natural habitat and ecosystem restoration as well as the planning, implementation, and maintenance of therapeutic wellness gardens sets him apart from other landscape architects. His collaborative and holistic approach to planning, emphasizing realistic operations and management practices, has produced an extensive list of long-term landscape success stories that have met compliance needs. In fact, Tom's projects have repeatedly been recognized as leaders in linking exemplary environmental compliance with human use of the quality spaces he's created.

Tom has an unwavering commitment to resilient design that integrates energy, waste, water, and food systems. He has pioneered countless best practices with low-input native plantings for many client and building types including medical institutions, senior housing facilities, public facilities, commercial buildings, residential developments, and private residences. His work has often encompassed the creation and enhancement of natural, passive storm water filtration systems in both developed and natural contexts. He specializes in the full project lifecycle spanning conceptual planning through design, construction, and monitoring phases.

Tom has lectured at Harvard, MIT, and at many professional conferences. He teaches at Greenfield Community College, the [University of Massachusetts-Amherst's Sustainable Food & Farming Program](#), and the [Conway School of Landscape Design](#). His classes tie the built environment to natural systems to advance less resource-intensive landscape design and maintenance approaches. He is a masterful educator and has inspired stakeholders from maintenance staff to top leadership.

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2019 WINTER CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES & CONTACT INFO *continued.....*

Tayler Engel is the lead GIS Analyst and UAS Pilot for ARE-AirShark based in Hampton, NH where he handles all the data processing for photogrammetry and LiDAR projects. In addition, Tayler also heads up the GIS Analysis team at ARE-AirShark, which works on various projects from landfill volumetric assessments to complex vegetation management analysis on transportation and utility rights of way. He has an extensive background in LiDAR analysis and remote sensing, having worked at the University of Vermont's Spatial Analysis Laboratory for 5 years, where he also lead the UAS Team.

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Steve Gephard is a supervising fisheries biologist with the State of Connecticut, Department of Energy and Environmental Protection's Fisheries Division. He is in charge of the Division's Diadromous Fish Program and its Habitat Conservation Program. He has over 35 years of experience with diadromous fish species and fish passage projects. His assignments include: the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission's Technical Committee, the U.S. Atlantic Salmon Assessment Committee, past-chair of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission's (ASMFC) American Eel Technical Committee, current chair of the ASMFC's Fish Passage Working Group, the River Herring Technical Working Group, member of the Loire River Scientific Council (government of France), and holds a presidential appointment as a U.S. Commissioner to the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization, a regional fisheries management organization dedicated to conservation of Atlantic Salmon in international waters.

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Scott Jackson is an Extension Associate Professor at the [University of Massachusetts Amherst Department of Environmental Conservation](#), where he teaches courses on wetlands and wildlife conservation and management. His research interests include: amphibian and reptile ecology and conservation, wetland assessment and monitoring, impacts of roads and highways on wildlife and ecosystems, and landscape-based ecological assessment. Scott is a principal (along with Kevin McGarigal and Brad Compton) in the development of the Conservation Assessment and Prioritization System (CAPS) and serves as project leader for the North Atlantic Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative (NAACC).

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2019 WINTER CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES & CONTACT INFO *continued.....*

Tom Hennessey is the Contech Engineered Solutions' Bridge Consultant for Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island. Prior to this position, he was Sales Engineer responsible for the full Contech offering including drainage, stormwater, bridge and soil stabilization solutions. Prior to Contech, Tom worked for Rotondo Precast and Oldcastle Precast in Connecticut for 15 years. Tom is a graduate of Assumption College and has over 30 years of experience in the Precast Concrete industry.

Contech Engineered Solutions' mission is to significantly strengthen our industry leadership position by offering innovative civil engineering solutions to our customers and providing the highest quality, cost effective solutions to the bridge, drainage, earth stabilization and stormwater markets. We strive for outstanding long-term relationships with partners, vendors and suppliers; talented and dedicated employees; and quality corporate citizenship for our communities.

Over the past 100 years, Contech has grown into a diversified civil engineering site solutions company. Headquartered in West Chester, Ohio, we are the only company that can provide bridge, drainage, erosion control, retaining wall, sanitary, soil stabilization, and stormwater solutions on a national scale. Our product offering includes: corrugated metal and plastic pipe; steel truss, metal plate and concrete arch bridges and structures; hard armor, geotextiles, block and retaining wall systems; and stormwater detention/retention, filtration and treatment systems.

Our product portfolio is based on more than a century of research and practical field experience serving the highway, drainage, and site-improvement industries. A wide range of markets and applications can benefit from the comprehensive Contech family of products including: highway, public transportation, commercial, residential, agriculture, industrial, ports, green building, alternative energy, military, federal, mining and rail.

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Christine Odiaga is living her dream, "washed ashore" on Cape Cod at long last and working for Friends of Herring River on the Herring River Restoration Project in Wellfleet – an incredible multi-agency effort to restore tidal exchange to over 1000 acres of historic estuary. Prior experience includes ten years of outreach and education as a MassDEP Wetlands Circuit Rider, three years as a municipal Conservation Agent/Stormwater Coordinator and six years of construction site sampling and monitoring on the Central Artery/Tunnel Project (fascinating!!). She took advantage of the Cooperative Education Program at Northeastern University (as important as any class), and earned a BS in Biology with a geology department minor in Marine Studies. Challenges on the CA/T led Christine to the International Erosion Control Association; twelve years on the Northeast Chapter Board included four years as President. She joined SWCS in 2013 and served as RI Director, worked for two years as Executive Director and currently serves as Treasurer. Fun includes visiting family in Perú, dancing to live music and paddling around on her pond.

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Laura Wildman is a practicing fisheries engineer that established and runs the New England Regional Office for Princeton Hydro focusing on ecological restoration consulting for aquatic systems. Her expertise and passion, centers on the restoration of rivers through the reestablishment of natural functions and aquatic connectivity. She is considered one of the foremost nation U.S. experts on barrier removal and alternative fish passage techniques, regularly lecturing, instructing, and publishing on these topics; including assisting with the instruction of courses for the University of Wisconsin and Yale University. She recently co-wrote the Dam Removal chapter in the book *Sea to Source 2.0*, in addition to a publication for a special edition of the *Journal of Engineering Geology* regarding the history and human dimensions of barrier removal projects. In addition to engineering, her work has emphasized reconnecting communities to rivers, and the socio-economic complexities relating to the balance between natural resource management and healthy river systems. She has been involved in hundreds of river restoration, barrier removal, and fish passage projects throughout the U.S.; working on all aspects of the projects from inception through design and construction, both as a licensed professional engineer designing and managing the projects and as a non-profit project partner when she was the Chief Engineer of American Rivers. Ms. Wildman received her bachelor's in Civil Engineering from University of Vermont, her Master of Environmental Management from Yale University, and has conducted 2 years of post-graduate work at the University of Southampton, in England, focusing on international issues relating to the removal of dams and the restoration of aquatic connectivity. Ms. Wildman integrates both engineering and a deep understanding of river science into her restoration work.

In 2001 she initiated and led the Northeast Stream Barrier Task Force for 8 years, which established a network for NGO's state, and federal agencies working on connectivity issues throughout the great northeast. In 2010 she developed the Dam Removal and Fish Passage Network on LinkedIn with close to 2,000 members worldwide, and also currently co-manages the World Fish Migration Network.

Ms. Wildman was an invited participant in the Aspen Institute's two year National Policy Group regarding dam removal and played a key role in establishing the University of CA-Berkley's Clearinghouse for Dam Removal Information. Ms. Wildman has developed and led multiple successful symposia, one of which led to the creation of the American Society of Civil Engineers Environmental and Water Resource Institute's (ASCE-EWRI) manual on Sediment Dynamics Post Dam Removal, for which Ms. Wildman chaired the Task Committee. She was a member of the Federal Interagency Advisory Subcommittee on Sedimentation that developed national guidelines for sediment management for dam removal, and in 2008 she headed the Environmental Impacts subgroup for Association of State Floodplain Managers' (ASFPM) Working Group on Dams.

Ms. Wildman is a past President for the Bioengineering Section (BES) of the American Fisheries Society (AFS) and served on the AFS Governing Board and Management Committee. She is also a past Governing Board member for the American Society of Civil Engineers' (ASCE) Environmental and Water Resource Institute (EWRI). In 2011, Ms. Wildman initiated an Ad Hoc Committee under both AFS-BES and ASCE-EWRI leadership to further the strategic goals of both organizations with the objective of developing a partnering relationship between the two organizations on the topic of fish passage, and co-led the effort to establish in 2011 the now highly successful International Fish Passage Conference and web-based repository for fish passage information.

In addition to her work in barrier removal, fish passage and river restoration, Ms. Wildman also has significant experience in fluvial geomorphology, fisheries habitat/flow analysis, dam modification/repair, open channel hydraulics, grant coordination, public outreach, policy, environmental advocacy, and advanced hydraulic and sediment transport modeling.

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2019 WINTER CONFERENCE SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES & CONTACT INFO *continued.....*

James (“Jim”) Turek is a restoration ecologist with over 30 years of experience in fishery biology and aquatic ecology. He has worked with the NOAA Fisheries Restoration Center for nearly 20 years and prior to that, worked for 13 years as an environmental scientist at consulting firms in Maryland and Rhode Island. He also previously worked with the NOAA Fisheries Habitat Conservation Division in the Chesapeake Bay region for 3 years prior to his private consulting experiences. Mr. Turek has expertise with diadromous fish passage including the assessment, design and implementation of dam removals, nature-like fishways and structural fishways. He is also involved in the assessment and design of salt marsh and non-tidal wetland restoration projects, for both proactive restoration and compensatory restoration in natural resources damage cases. He is responsible for managing or providing technical assistance to partners on an array of Southern New England coastal habitat and migratory passage restoration projects in Narragansett Bay, Long Island Sound, Buzzards Bay and contributing watersheds, and is also participating in natural resource damage cases in Michigan and New York. Mr. Turek received a bachelor’s degree in Zoology and minor in Geological Sciences from the University of Maine at Orono; and a Master’s degree in Marine Affairs from the University of Rhode Island. Jim is passionate about fly-fishing, mineral collecting, hiking, or being on the water in a kayak or on a paddleboard.

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