Earthx2026
CONGRESS OF CONFERENCES

THE BIOECONOMY SYMPOSIUM
Day 2: April 21, 2026

Symposium Produced by:
ATiP FOUNDATION
In Partnership with:
Restorative Farms
People, Food & Land Foundation
Nourishing Land, Empowering Communities

Bioeconomy Symposium Program

Bold, Grounded, Real Solutions Across Food Systems, Workforce Development, Clean Energy, and the Circular Economy.

WELCOME

Be inspired amongst industry leaders, innovators, policymakers, and investors advancing the BioEconomy.

Align your organization with economic sustainability, innovation, and environmental leadership.

ABOUT THE EVENT

"The BioEconomy Symposium" at EarthX 2026 on April 21st at the Hilton Anatole Hotel.

Join us and learn how the "bioeconomy" is actually a viable, sustainable, "industry cluster," capable of creating jobs and economic growth in both rural and urban communities, while enhancing our environment.

Meet Your Hosts

WES JUREY

Founder & CEO, ATIP Foundation, LLC

Wes is the Founder & CEO of the ATIP Foundation, a 501(c)(3) LLC, affiliated with the US Department of Agriculture, focused on establishing sustainable, replicable models for economic development, utilizing federal research outcomes, market assessments, and patented technology discoveries. He was appointed by Governor Rick Perry as Chairman of the Texas Workforce Investment Council from 2007-2018. He was one of 20 individuals named to a White House Task Force in 2013 by the White House Office of Science & Technology Policy. He is currently serving on a Task Force developing workforce recommendations for the USMCA (formerly NAFTA) Competitiveness Committee, comprised of the US Trade Representative, the Mexican Ministry of Economy, and Global Affairs Canada.

BRAD BOA

Co-Founder, Restorative Farms

Brad Boa, Dallas, TX-based social entrepreneur and co-founder of Restorative Farms, a USDA GAP-certifed urban regenerative agriculture operation in South Dallas, and a founding team member of Plan-T, a Dallas-based non-profit deploying Miyawaki-method "Tiny Forests" across DFW. A connector at the intersection of food systems, bioeconomy policy and community health, he serves on the steering committee of the Dallas & Dallas County Food System Collaborative and works closely with institutional partners including UT Southwestern, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the NCTCOG. His work aims to center a single argument: That restoring natural systems and building regional economic resilience are not seprate goals, they are the same project.

JOHN HEYWOOD

Executive Director, People, Food & Land Foundation

John Heywood is the Executive Director of the People, Food & Land Foundation, where he focuses on building the connective tissue between land, policy, and capital. With roots in banking and finance, John brings a systems-oriented lens to solving ecological challenges—particularly through the development of circular bioeconomy strategies that transform organic waste into valuable resources. His work spans biomass utilization, soil restoration, and systems-aligned infrastructure, helping to advance initiatives across California that integrate science, mapping, and implementation on the ground. John is deeply engaged in shaping how regenerative practices can move from pilot projects to scalable systems—aligning public policy, private capital, and community action.

GROWING THE BIOECONOMY IN THE USA

CREATING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMERCIAL WASTE-TO-ENERGY BUSINESSES AND TECHNOLOGIES

ATIP FOUNDATION

Agricultural
Technology
Innovation
Partnership

WHO WE ARE

We are ATIP, a non-profit organization headquartered in Texas, staffed largely by former USDA researchers & staff dedicated to commercializing promising new Ag technologies & business models around the country.

WHAT WE DO

We work nationally to support the growth of the bioeconomy, creating new opportunities for commercial waste-to-energy businesses and technologies throughout the United States.

LET'S CONNECT

Interested in participating?
Need more information?
Visit www.atipfoundation.com

Connect with us today!
wesjurey@gmail.com

FUTURE ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

We inventory and geo-locate all sizable (commercial scale) sources of biomass inputs, including wood waste, food waste from processors, animal waste from livestock farms, municipal solid waste, and purpose-grown energy crops and grasses, where available.

We partner with stakeholders locally and regionally, establishing Advisory Councils to assist with our work within those regions.

If you are interested in learning more about our work and initiatives, contact us at: wesjurey@gmail.com.

Restorative Farms

Restorative Farms: Building the Infrastructure for a Resilient Local Food System

Restorative Farms is more than a farm—it is a systems-driven initiative to design, implement, and validate the infrastructure required for a truly local, sustainable food economy. This work moves beyond the "local food" buzzword to address a more fundamental question:

What does it take to build a regional or local food system that operates reliably, scales effectively, and endures over time?

Our approach is grounded in a comprehensive food-system model—developed through in-depth participatory community research and informed by a rigorous review of best practices in urban and high-production agriculture. The model integrates local assets, aligns with market realities, and prioritizes underserved communities. We are intentionally building and testing the core components required for long-term system viability:

- **Scalable, reliable production** aligned with demonstrated market demand
- **Market creation and access mechanisms** to ensure locally produced food is absorbed within regional markets
- **Integrated waste and resource management systems** to enable circular, regenerative operations

Restorative Farms is designed to generate both **measurable food access outcomes and economic returns**—creating jobs, strengthening regional supply chains, and increasing the retention and recirculation of food dollars within the local economy.

At the same time, it functions as a **living laboratory**, rigorously testing and iterating models for production, aggregation, processing, and distribution. Both successes and failures are systematically analyzed to produce transferable insights, with the goal of informing scalable, evidence-based approaches to regional food system development.

Through this process, Restorative Farms is intended as a catalyst platform connecting urban and local rural producers to better markets and sustainable production practices. We provide shared infrastructure, training, distribution channels, empowering small-scale farmers to increase yields, diversify crops, reduce environmental impact, and earn fair prices while rebuilding resilient food systems.

The objective is clear:
Establish and validate the essential system components required for local food economies to function efficiently, scale sustainably, and persist over time.

Restorative Farms is not just growing food—we are building and proving the foundation for a more resilient, equitable, and economically viable food future.

People, Food & Land Foundation
Nourishing Land, Empowering Communities

People, Food and Land Foundation (PFL) works at the intersection of community, ecology, and policy to restore and regenerate soil systems, natural resources, and the communities that depend on them. Through grantmaking, financing, policy alignment, and implementation support, PFL advances equitable, place-based solutions that strengthen soil health, support land stewards, and build resilient local economies.

Founded in California's Central Valley, PFL has a long history of supporting small farmers, farmworkers, and Tribal communities through access to land, water, and regenerative practices. Today, the organization operates as a systems integrator—connecting public frameworks, private capital, and applied science to accelerate the transition toward a circular bioeconomy, including the deployment of nature-based solutions across natural and working lands. PFL focuses on aligning policy, capital, and practice—ensuring that public frameworks translate into real-world implementation.

PFL's work spans the full landscape of implementation. Its programs include catalytic funding models that unlock public climate investments, support for community-scale and on-farm composting systems, and applied research and planning tools that help regions coordinate organic material flows and soil restoration strategies at scale. The organization also supports the alignment and implementation of existing policy frameworks, helping ensure that programs deliver intended outcomes across natural and working lands.

At a time when millions of tons of organic material are generated annually and remain underutilized, PFL focuses on transforming these resources into assets—returning carbon and nutrients to the soil, improving water retention, and strengthening the biological infrastructure that underpins both agriculture and emerging bio-based industries.

By linking science, mapping, materials, capital, and coordination, PFL helps design and implement systems that are not only environmentally restorative, but economically durable—supporting a future in which healthy landscapes and resilient communities form the foundation of a thriving bioeconomy.

Schedule

Morning Sessions – Room Coronado BCD

9:00 - 9:15 AM

SYMPOSIUM OPENING REMARKS: "Setting the Stage"

Welcoming remarks: **Wes Jurey**, Founder & CEO, ATIP Foundation, **Brad Boa**, Co-Founder, Restorative Farms, **John Heywood**, President, People, Food & Land Foundation

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9:15 – 9:45 AM

Unlocking the Bioeconomy Across Food, Nature, Waste, Energy, and Jobs

Panelists span soil science, municipal planning, urban forestry, international tree-planting at scale, and climate-health equity, assembling the full stack from natural capital finance to community health outcomes. The argument: these systems are interconnected, and the interventions must be too.

9:45 - 10:25 AM

Urban & Regional Agrisystems as Transformative Engines of Local Prosperity and BioEconomy Innovation

Using South Dallas and Boston as living examples, the panel shows how an integrated agrisystem — production, workforce, health, and circular resource management — generates measurable local economic value. Owen Lynch brings the systems architecture of Restorative Farms; Chris Grallert brings 200+ urban farm sites and a clear-eyed account of why most fail; Debi Rowley anchors the demand side with Dallas ISD's 23-million-meal-per-year procurement operation. Together they make the case that sustainable food systems are built on architecture, not intentions — and that cities are the missing link in the U.S. agrisystem.

10:25 - 10:45 AM

Panel : Food Systems as Bioeconomic Infrastructure

A focused session repositioning food as a renewable economic engine — driving health, jobs, climate resilience, and innovation — and examining where Dallas's existing assets and food policy can align with regional economic development strategy.

10:45 - 11:15 AM

Food, Health & Workforce: Pathways That Center People, Jobs, and Well-Being

A Food Is Medicine model taking shape between UTSW Culinary Medicine and Crossroads Community Services — with clinical outcomes and cost reduction as primary objectives — maps how locally grown regenerative produce becomes sustained institutional demand. Four voices define the emerging system: community delivery infrastructure, county health data, institutional food services, and clinical validation. The goal is a procurement standard that anchor institutions across the region can follow.

Schedule Continued

Morning Sessions - Room Coronado BCD

11:15 - Noon

Planet Saver: Waste to Value technology and the Power of AND

This session focuses on creating economic AND environmental sustainability at scale. A deep dive into the future of food, energy and water including real world applications with projects in North America, Asia, and Africa. The world generates billions of tons of organic waste every year. Most of it sits in lagoons, decomposes in fields, or burdens municipal systems with mounting compliance costs and environmental liability. At the same time, businesses across every sector face surging energy costs, volatile fertilizer markets, and intensifying pressure to demonstrate measurable environmental outcomes. These are not separate problems — and BargerTech has built a single platform that addresses all three simultaneously.

The TRiFi™ 7000 is a waste-to-value technology that converts organic biomass — from livestock manure and municipal biosolids to food processing waste and agricultural residuals — into three high-demand commodities: 24/7 baseload renewable electricity, premium distilled water, and Carbon NPK™ biochar fertilizer. With zero liquid discharge, verifiable greenhouse gas reductions, and a modular design that scales from a single farm to a regional network, TRiFi™ 7000 represents a fundamentally different approach to the waste-to-energy space — one that generates multi-stream revenue rather than single-commodity returns.

BargerTech's Nick York and Eric Barger will walk through the technology, the company's active deployment projects across North America, and their Planet Saver Initiative assisting additional communities in Kenya, Uganda, and India where access to food, energy, and clean water remains a daily survival challenge. With active projects underway and a 70-unit deployment roadmap already in motion, this is not a concept presentation — it is a progress report on a platform with global implications for the food, energy, and water sectors of the economy.

12:00 Noon
Lunch Break
Room: Chantilly East

1:30 PM
Bioeconomy Symposium Resumes
Room: Coronado BCD

Schedule

Afternoon Sessions – Room Coronado BCD

1:30 – 2:00 PM

Soil Is Infrastructure: Coordinating Restoration at Scale

In this session, soil is examined not as a backdrop to agriculture, but as living infrastructure—the biological system that underwrites food, water, and economic stability. When soil function degrades, these systems grow brittle together. When it is restored, they stabilize and compound. Moving beyond pilot projects, the talk explores what it means to operate at infrastructure scale across tens of millions of acres — connecting soil science, feedstock mapping, material flows, and capital deployment into a coordinated system. Organic "waste" streams are reframed as strategic inputs, capable of rebuilding substrate while fueling new markets, jobs, and industrial pathways. The central question is not whether restoration works—it is whether it can be coordinated. If restoration is measurable and designable, then the remaining variable is alignment.

2:00 - 2:45 PM

The HVDC SuperGrid BioEconomy Panel

The discussion focuses on expanded electricity production and transmission capacity within the State of Texas' ERCOT Grid. With a 10% increase anticipated by 2030, the panel led by Alexander "Sandy" Macdonalddiscusses the value proposition of burying underground HVDC transmission lines along Interstate Hwy 10 from McCamey – San Antonio, a 300-mile leg of a High Voltage Direct Current SuperGrid as phase one of a mesh grid within the ERCOT service territory. This HVDC line will serve the needs of a growing A.I. demand for increased power and enable a national market for electric energy, in which nuclear, wind, solar, geothermal, and all types of energy generation can compete on a level playing field.

2:45 – 3:00 PM

Hacking the High Seas: The Electric Revolution in Maritime Autonomy Theme Alignment

In this keynote, Nico Sell, founder of T3MP3ST, explores how the "hacker mindset" is being applied to marine engineering to disrupt this status quo. By blending extreme sports performance with secure, autonomous technology, Sell's team has developed the Maverick GT - an all-electric, carbon-fiber watercraft capable of navigating 100-foot surf at 70 mph without a single drop of fuel.

Sell will discuss how high-performance electric vehicles can eliminate the toxic logistics of gas-powered vessels and how these innovations are scaling from luxury super-yachts to mission-critical military applications. This session challenges attendees to look beyond simple sustainability and toward a future where we outrun the storm through bold, market-driven innovation.

Schedule Continued

Afternoon Sessions – Room Coronado BCD

3:00 - 3:30 PM

Empowering Resilient and Productive Landscapes | Expanding Biobased Products Manufacturing in California

The University of California System manages three Department of Energy labs under contracts, creating a unique integration of federal and academic research. They have partnered to establish and empower pathways for resilient and productive landscapes, expanding biobased product manufacturing in California.

The session will also provide an understanding of the resources available through the US Federal Lab System among all of the federal agencies.

3:30 - 3:50 PM

Developing the Circular Forest Economy on the California North Coast

The California North Coast region encompasses over 33 million acres of productive forests, substantial local infrastructure and expertise in sustainable forestry and wood products manufacturing, deep-water port infrastructure supporting Pacific export market access, and California's third polytechnic university at Cal Poly Humboldt.

Additionally, California has some of the nation's strongest market demand for disaster-resilient building materials driven by wildfire reconstruction and a substantial housing construction market. The state also faces increasing risk for climate-driven wildfires countered by strong, coordinated activity in active management of wildland fuel loads.

Cal Poly Humboldt has emerging mechanical engineering programs combined with an accredited and world-class forestry program, and we have capacity to provide R&D and a skilled workforce. The Humboldt Bay region provides a real opportunity to unlock competitive West Coast and Pacific Rim market access through what would be California's first integrated forest-products bioeconomy system. The Forest WRX Alliance is a Northern California nonprofit serving as the connective tissue of this regional circular bioeconomy effort, linking forest landowners, academic researchers, industry innovators, and community institutions to build lasting resilience to the North Coast redwood and mixed-conifer and oak woodland region. The Alliance works at the intersection of forest health, climate technology, disaster resilience, and community economic development.

This presentation will showcase the achievements of our Alliance to date, ongoing efforts and future directions. Our vision is to build a sustainable circular bioeconomy model that cascades forest fiber from highest-value structural use through biomass energy for the benefit of the region and the state.

3:50 - 4:10 PM

Sustainable Rubber: From Crops to Industry

This session will be led by U.S. NSF Engineering Research Center for the Transformation of American Rubber through Domestic Innovation for Supply Security (TARDISS) + Industry Partners.This session will explore:

- Non-traditional crops as industrial feedstocks
- Reducing dependency Hevea natural rubber
- What it takes to move from lab to supply chain

Audience takeaway: The bioeconomy is an economic growth opportunity from producers to manufacturers and supports supply security and U.S. national security.

Schedule Continued

Afternoon Sessions – Room Coronado BCD

4:10 - 4:40 PM

The Organics Value Hill: An Engine for Regional Economic Growth

This session features two place-based case studies, the Kansas City metro area (KC) and California's San Joaquin Valley, working to transform organic materials from a disposal challenge into an engine for economic growth. The discussion highlights how integrated systems can move materials up the value hill, from food recovery and composting to renewable natural gas (RNG), black soldier fly (BSF) protein production, and other emerging bio-based products, with a focus on where the highest value can be created, as well as the opportunities and challenges of planning for industrial symbiosis. Drawing on real-world projects, including an emerging organics industrial park in KC and a scaled regional ecosystem in California, the session explores how infrastructure, workforce development, and partnerships can unlock co-benefits such as job creation, climate resilience, and local manufacturing.

4:40 - 5:10 PM

The Bioeconomy: Economic & Workforce Development

This session features **Dudley Light**, Regional Administrator, US Department of Labor; **Larry McManus**, Director of Business & Community Development, Office of the Governor, Texas; and **Ernest Huffman**, Program Manager, North Central Texas Council of Governments.

The session will focus on the role of public policy, economic development, and workforce development in supporting the regional growth of the bioeconomy, as a viable and sustainable industry cluster.

5:10 - 5:30 PM

Recycling Food, Crop and Animal Waste for a More Secure Food Future

This session features Mark Buehrer, Founder & CEO, HeartFoods Group

Most food on our tables has traveled an average of 1,500 miles and includes the cost of energy, transportation, storage and waste disposal. Tragically, about 40% of this costly food is wasted, and around 90% of that food waste ends up in landfills! This "waste" is actually a goldmine of valuable natural resources such as water, nutrients, carbon and energy (as measured in calories).

What if more food was grown locally, and the abundance of "food waste" was reused locally as a resource instead of another cost? Mark will share how the biological design of the HeartFoods BioLoopTech™ System and its fuel cell clean energy technology is able to recycle food, crop, and animal waste, to grow affordable nutritious food, by and for the local community.

With its theme of "Food as Medicine" a HeartFoods Community Farm stimulates local "circular" economies by growing 30% or more of the food needed by the community. Providing fresh organic vegetables, greens and herbs, from "Farm to Fork" within 24 hours, is all powered by a net zero design.

Speakers AM

CANDACE CHANDRA **Cardinal Legacy Ecosystem Management**

Candace is a leading voice in regenerative agriculture, water security, and natural capital finance, bridging the gap between on-the-ground restoration and institutional capital allocation. Her career began with a decade of high impact roles at the World Bank and United Nations focusing on post-conflict reconstruction and circular infrastructure. She is launching Cardinal Legacy Asset Management to mobilize family office and institutional capital for scalable bioeconomy solutions. She remains deeply engaged as a certified stakeholder for the upcoming UN Water Conference.

DR. MATTHEW BERG **CEO & Principal Scientist, Simfero**

Dr. Matthew Berg leads Simfero, a science-based research and strategy firm based in Houston. For over 20 years, he has worked on diverse water and natural resources issues across public, private, and academic sectors. Dr. Berg has briefed U.S. Congress delegations, had his work cited in reports guiding key legislation, and advised countless cooperative programs stretching from Texas to three other continents. He is a partner of the Network for Engineering With Nature and was selected to Houston Business Journal's 40 Under 40.

DR. ROSE JONES **Founder/Principal, Rapid Anthropology Consulting**

Rose Jones, PhD, is a Climate & Health Policy Strategist and medical anthropologist whose work examines how climate conditions shape health, labor, and community resilence. She is the founder of Rapid Anthropology Consulting and Executive Director of the HAQ (Heat + Air Quality) App. Through applied research, policy strategy, and public health innovation, she brings a human centered perspective to the bioeconomy, with particualr focus on extreme heat, air quality, and the systems needed to support healthy, productive communities. She serves as VP and Environmental Health Committee Co-Chair of TX Physicians for Social Responsibility.

SUSAN ALVAREZ **Director, Environment & Development, North Central Texas Council of Governments**

Ms. Alvarez is a seasoned environmental executive with broad practical experience in civil and environmental planning, engineering, and management for municipal, state, tribal, and federal governments, including environmental site characterization and restoration, drainage and floodplain management, air quality monitoring, facility planning, and site civil and regulatory compliance.

NILE NUSSBAUMER **Co-Founder / Director, Plan-T**

Nile is a holistic health practitioner, environmental stewards, and co-founder/ director of Plan T, a Dallas-based nonprofit dedicated to restoring urban ecosystems the the planting of dense, biodiverse "tiny forests." Nile's work sits at the intersection of human biology and ecological heath. She is driven by a central belief: we are not separate from our environment— our health is a direct reflection of it.Through Plan T, she works to regenerate soil, cool cities, improve air quality and reintroduce communities to the intelligence of natural systems. Her approach blends science, systems thinking and a reverence for the natural world.

KAPIL SHARMA **Founder & Trustee, SayTrees**

Founder & Trustee, founded SayTrees in 2007 when he could not see the garden city losing its green cover. We take pride in the work we do and Kapil is responsible for this with his never-ending passion and dedication to SayTrees.

SHAWNA WILSON **Founder/Principal, Rapid Anthropology Consulting**

Deeply committed to community impact, Shawna currently serves on the Board of Directors for Restorative Farms, a Dallas-based sustainable, community-driven urban farming network. She has an extensive background at PepsiCo FoodsNorth America (PFNA),, where she most recently led thee Global Business Services group. She has held a series of high-impact leadership roles, including VP of Frito-Lay's Commercialization & Sales Strategy Team, VP of the $1.1 Billion Northeast Sales Region, and leader of PepsiCo's Global Strategic Risk Management group.

Speakers AM

OWEN LYNCH **Associate Professor, Southern Methodist University**

As Sr. Research Fellow of the Hunt Institute for Engineering & Humanity, Owen's research takes a systems theory approach, viewing challenges as part of an interconnected network in which outcomes are shaped by relationships among multiple components rather than by isolated factors. It focuses on identifying leverage points to design solutions that are integrated, adaptive, and sustainable over time. Before co-founding Restorative Farms, Owen served on several projects dedicated to addressing food deserts, access to adequate education, and economic development, with a special focus on South Dallas and the Fair Park area.

DEBI ROWLEY **Executive Director, Food & Child Nutrition Services**

Experienced Executive Director with nearly 20 years of leadership in K–12 food service, currently leading Food and Child Nutrition Services at Dallas ISD and pursuing a PhD in Human Resources Development. Currently oversees operations across 225+ locations serving approximately 27 million meals annually. Proven expertise in large-scale operations, regulatory compliance, and procurement strategy, with a strong focus on sourcing and expanding access to fresh fruits and vegetables. Serves as Membership Committee Chair for the Urban School Food Alliance, contributing to national collaboration of school nutrition programs.

CHRISTOPHER GRALLERT **President & CEO, Green City Growers (GCG)**

Christopher Grallert is the CEO of Green City Growers (GCG), a role he assumed in 2020 after a lifelong career in the fresh produce business and farming. With over 30 years of experience across the global agriculture value chain, from seed to consumer, he has developed deep expertise in regenerative agriculture, vertical farming, controlled environment agriculture, and sustainable food systems. Chris also owns and operates Grallert Farm, LLC, a certified organic mixed vegetable operation in Millis, Massachusetts—an extension of his commitment to sustainable land use and food production.

DR. WHITNEY STRAUSS **Director of the Dallas/Dallas County Food Plan Collaborative**

Dr. Strauss currently serves as Executive Director of the AdvoCare Foundation, where she built an equity-centered grantmaking model focused on improving health and well-being outcomes for children and families. She also serves as Project Lead for the Dallas–Dallas County Food Plan Collaborative, guiding the development of a comprehensive, long-term strategy to strengthen the local food system. In addition, she is Senior Counsel at Sunwest Communications, advising on philanthropic strategy, and frequently lectures at Southern Methodist University (SMU).

DR. J.H. CULLUM CLARK **Director of the Bush Institute - SMU Economic Growth Initiative**

Dr. Clark leads the Bush Institute's work on domestic economic policy and economic growth. Before joining the Bush Institute and SMU, Clark worked in the investment industry for 25 years. He served as an equity analyst and portfolio manager at Brown Brothers Harriman & Co. as a portfolio manager, at Warburg Pincus Asset Management, as President and CIO of Cimarron Global Investors, a Dallas-based hedge fund firm, and as President of Prothro Clark Company, a Dallas family investment office. Prior to entering the investment industry, he served for one year on the staff of the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence.

MATT DUFRENE **Vice President, Community Partnerships, Texas Health Resources**

Matt oversees numerous community health programs and initiatives at THR. Under his leadership, Texas Health has been the recipient of numerous local, state, and national awards. In 2018, Matt was recognized as one of "The 400 Most Influential People" in Fort Worth by Fort Worth Inc. magazine. In 2024, Matt and his team were awarded the Texas Governor's Volunteer Community Champions Award. Matt has also been published in BMJ Public Health, co-authoring a peer-reviewed paper on nutrition security in North Texas.

BRAD BOA **Co-Founder, Restorative Farms**

Brad Boa, DALLAS, TX-based social entrepreneur and co-founder of Restorative Farms, a USDA GAP-certifed urban regenerative agriculture operation in South Dallas, and a founding team member of Plan-T, a Dallas-based non-profit deploying Miyawaki-method "Tiny Forests" across DFW. A connector at the intersection of food systems, bioeconomy policy and community health, he serves on the steering committee of the Dallas - Dallas County Food System Collaborative and works closely with institutional partners including UT Southwestern, Dallas Area Rapid Transit, the NCTCOG. His work aims to center a single argument: That restoring natural systems and building regional economic resilience are not seprate goals, they are the same project.

Speakers AM

EMMA SAVING **Culinary Medicine Program Coordinator, UT Southwestern Medical Center**
Public health researcher focused on preventing diet-related chronic disease through improving nutrition access and healthy environments. Emma provides hands-on nutrition education to health professions/graduate student learners, patients, and communities across Dallas-Fort Worth. Helps conduct Food as Medicine nutrition intervention research to reduce food and nutrition insecurity and prevent diet-related chronic disease.

WOLDU AMENESHOA **Assistant Director, Chronic Disease Prevention Division (CDPD)**
Woldu has served at the Dallas County Health and Human Services Department for the past 21 years in a variety of progressively responsible roles. In his current role, he provides strategic oversight for initiatives addressing chronic diseases, and community wellness. He earned his Master of Public Health (MPH) from the University of North Texas Health Science Center at Fort Worth in 2012. In addition, he is a certified Texas A&M AgriLife Master Gardener, and certified Lifestyle Coach, reflecting his commitment to community-based approaches that promote nutrition, physical activity, and healthy living across Dallas County.

BEYNAYE WADKINS CHAMBERS **President and CEO, Crossroads Community Services**
Over the past five years at Crossroads, Benaye has helped lead the organization into a new era of innovation and impact, including the launch of the first Nutrition Pharmacy of its kind in North Texas. Located in Southern Dallas County within a lifestyle hub alongside healthcare providers, the model reflects her vision for a future in which food access, health, and community support are more deeply connected. Through this work, she is helping redefine how families experience care, stability, and opportunity.

TODD ICHINAGA **Assistant Director, Food Services, Auxiliary Enterprises, UT Southwestern**
Visionary food service leader with 20+ years of experience in culinary operations, corporate dining, and health-forward programs. Todd has a proven track record of operational excellence, strategic growth, and building community-rooted food ecosystems.

ERIC R. BARGER **Founder & Chief Executive Officer, BargerTech USA, LLC**
A serial entrepreneur and visionary leader, Eric has been inventing, innovating, and building great teams since he was a teenager. An early pioneer in fiber optic, wireless network, and voice & data systems – Eric's early projects were recognized as state-of-the-art innovations in Bill Gate's book "Business at the Speed of Thought." He has continued to operate at the "speed of thought" throughout his career, in such diversified sectors as software development, telecommunications networks, mobile heating and cooling technology, and advanced engine technology for renewable energy generation.

NICK YORK **Chief Impact Officer, BargerTech USA, LLC**
Nick has been an entrepreneur, strategic business advisor, and lawyer for 30 years with leadership experience ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies, universities, governments, and national non-profit organizations. Nick is a dedicated advocate and servant leader across an array of public and private initiatives, operating at the intersection of business, technology, and public policy in the fight to provide sustainable food, renewable energy, and clean water for all.

1:30 PM Keynote:

JOHN HEYWOOD **Executive Director, People, Food & Land Foundation**
John focuses on building the connective tissue between land, policy, and capital. John brings a systems-oriented lens to solving ecological challenges—particularly through the development of circular bioeconomy strategies that transform organic waste into valuable resources. His work spans biomass utilization, soil restoration, and systems-aligned infrastructure, helping to advance initiatives across CA that integrate science, mapping, & implementation on the ground. He is engaged in shaping how regenerative practices can move from pilot projects to scalable systems, aligning public policy, private capital, and community action.

Speakers PM

CHIP COMINS **Founder, Chairman & CEO, American Renewable Energy Institute (AREI)**

Chip is the Founder of AREI, as well as AREDAY; President and CEO of American Spirit Productions; and Managing Director of WEnergy. He focuses and connects climate solutions in a Climate Constellation of implementation, acceleration and replication locally, nationally and globally. In 2009 he produced 13 official side events at the UNFCCC COP 15 in Copenhagen, Denmark and presented at COP 16 in Cancun, Mexico in 2011; COP21 in Paris, France in 2015 & COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco in 2016. Comins has produced and directed both long and short form documentary films for educational and broadcast television markets, including PBS, Link TV, BET and Discovery Network, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory and DOE Wind Powering America.

ALEXANDER M. "SANDY" MACDONALD **Leading Meteorologist and Climate Scientist, NOAA**

Dr. MacDonald is a nationally recognized atmospheric scientist and former senior leader at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), where he served for over 40 years. He was Director of NOAA's Earth System Research Laboratory and Chief Science Advisor for NOAA Research. He is best known as the inventor of Science On a Sphere®, an innovative visualization system now used in museums and science centers around the world to communicate complex Earth and climate data. He also played a key role in modernizing the U.S. National Weather Service and advancing global weather modeling systems. A former President of the American Meteorological Society, he received multiple Presidential Rank Awards for his contributions to science and public service.

MIKE NELSON **Director of Communications, American Energy Initiative**

Mike began his career in 1976 as meteorologist in Madison, WI. He has received 20 Emmy awards for outstanding work in TV weather broadcasting. In 2016, Mike was inducted into the "Silver Circle" – recognizing 25 years of Broadcast Excellence and Community Service in CO. He's written 2 books on Colorado weather. In 2019, Mike was named a Fellow of the American Meteorological Society (AMS), and in 2023, inducted into the Denver Press Club Hall of Fame; the first and only meteorologist to receive this honor. In 2024, Mike retired from television to pursue other ventures in renewable energy and climate change.

DAN GAMBLE **Engineer, EDP Renewables**

Dan is a veteran renewable energy expert, who since 2007 has built his career around supporting the integration of emerging technologies into the built environment. His mission has always been to find practical, scalable and simple solutions to the meet the world's growing need for sustainable energy and water resources, using commercially available and bankable solutions that meet at the nexus of innovation and infrastructure.

NICO SELL **Founder & Chief Executive Officer, T3MP3ST Labs**

Nico Sell is a "serial-serial entrepreneur," professional athlete, and world-renowned security expert who has spent over 20 years championing privacy and innovation. As the founder and CEO of T3MP3ST, she is spearheading the development of high-performance,all-electric, and autonomous personal watercraft designed to protect marine life while delivering extreme power. Before venturing into maritime technology, Sell co-founded Wickr, the end-to-end encrypted messaging platform used by world leaders and activists, and founded r00tzAsylum, the non-profit that teaches children the values of white-hat hacking at DEF CON.

GLENDA HUMISTON **Vice President, Agriculture & Natural Resources, University of California System**

Dr. Humiston brings over 30 years of policy development and program implementation supporting sustainability, including time as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tunisia. She served President Obama 2009-15 as the CA State Director for USDA's Rural Development programs, where she produced a widely acclaimed guidebook on "Access to Capital" and led efforts to bring rural issues to the forefront of the state's Economic Summit and policymakers throughout California. She also served President Clinton as Deputy Under Secretary for Natural Resources and Environment at USDA.

BLAKE SIMMONS **Division Director, Biological Systems and Engineering, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory**

Dr. Simmons currently serves as the Chief Science and Technology Officer and VP of the Deconstruction Division at the Joint BioEnergy Institute, a DOE Office of Science Bioenergy Research Center tasked with the development and realization of next-generation "drop-in" biofuels and bioadvantaged products produced from the conversion of sustainable, non-food lignocellulosic biomass. He also serves as the Project Management Task Lead for the Agile BioFoundry and is an Adjunct Professor at the University California-Berkeley and the University of Queensland in Australia. He has over 450 publications and book chapters, as well as over 50 patents.

Speakers PM

ERIC RIGGS **Dean, College of Natural Resources and Sciences, California State Polytechnic University, Humboldt**

At Cal Poly, Dr. Riggs has overseen the transition and growth of science, engineering, agriculture & natural resources programs, and related facilities as the institution became California's 3rd polytechnic university. He is directly engaged with university-agency-private partnerships at Humboldt in regenerative medicine, fiber-optic seismology, bio-based products and workforce development. He has contributed to 3 National Academies of Science, Engineering and Mathematics (NASEM) workshops & reports related specifically to the future of the earth science workforce. He also served as the chair of the Public Wildfire Catastrophe Model Strategy Group which provided recommendations on paths forward in modeling catastrophic risks related to wildfires.

CHRISTY PRESCOTT **Executive Director, Forest WRX Alliance**

Christy has spent more than two decades at the intersection of working forests and working economies. At Forest WRX Alliance, she convenes the landowners, innovators, institutions, and investors needed to transform how forests are managed and how the materials they produce move through regional supply chains. Her work is grounded in over 20 years as a Social Scientist with the USDA Forest Service, specializing in analyzing the social and economic impacts of federal projects. She also co-leads the New Program Design Project at Cal Poly Humboldt, developing academic programs at the nexus of natural resource management and climate technology—building the workforce the emerging bioeconomy will need.

WILLIAM "BILL" BRANDT **Director of Strategic Integration at ASU LightWorks**

Bill Brandt is Director of Strategic Integration at ASU LightWorks and a longtime strategist in energy, commercialization, and partnership development. He is helping lead the Biomass-to-X initiative in Northern Arizona, advancing new models to convert forest biomass from restoration projects into valuable products and energy while supporting wildfire risk reduction, healthier forests, and rural economic growth. His work brings together industry, policy, finance, and innovation to move complex ideas toward practical deployment.

FREDERICK MICHEL **Professor of Biosystems Engineering, Ohio State University**

Dr. Michel and his group conduct research at the intersection of bioprocessing, environmental stewardship and the circular economy. His work includes significant advancements in the conversions of lignocellulosic crops and corn to biofuels and the development of composting for organics recycling. His focus is the development of scalable extraction processes for rubber, inulin (a food additive) and other root components. Fred serves on the Boards of Green Energy Ohio, the Ohio Organics Council, and Chair's the OSU CFAES Sustainability and Promotion and Tenure Committees.

CATHERINE SIMPSON **Associate Professor of Urban Horticulture and Sustainability, Texas Tech University**

Dr. Simpson's work bridges plant science, sustainability, and human well-being. She is the Thrust 2 lead within the NSF-funded TARDISS Engineering Research Center, contributing expertise in controlled-environment agriculture, water and soil sustainability, and sustainable crop production for arid and semi-arid systems. Dr. Simpson's research explores how innovative production systems, ranging from hydroponics and greenhouse cultivation to alternative water sources, can improve plant nutritional quality, phytochemical composition, and resilience while reducing resource use.

KAREN WARNER **Founder & CEO, BEAM Circular**

BEAM Circular is a hub for circular bioeconomy development and biomanufacturing innovation in California's agricultural heartland. Karen began her career in global health, building health system strengthening programs in the US and East Africa. She went on to serve in a variety of nonprofit, governmental, and private sector roles focused on social impact and public-private partnerships, including in the Office of the Governor of Colorado and at leading medical device company Medtronic. In 2018 she served as District Chief of Staff for a Member of Congress prior to launching BEAM Circular.

BRIAN WEINBERG **Executive Director, the Foundation for Regeneration**

Brian Weinberg is a regenerative strategist and capital innovator with over 15 years of experience at the intersection of philanthropy, social entrepreneurship, and impact investing. Brian is the co-founder and Executive Director of the Foundation for Regeneration, where he is applying his global experience to catalyze local change. With a focus on land-based demonstration projects, Brian is committed to proving that regeneration is not just a theory—it's a practical, inclusive, and necessary path forward for America's communities.

Speakers PM

KEVIN ANDERSON **CEO, Missouri Organic Recycling (Compost)**

Under Kevin's leadership, Missouri Organic Recycling has become one of the Midwest's most trusted organic recycling operations. The company processes yard waste and food waste into high quality compost, mulch, and custom soil blends used by homeowners, landscapers, businesses, and municipalities. MOR sells more than 400,000 yards of mulch and over 100,000 yards of compost each year and recycles more than 100 million pounds of organic material annually. Since 2005, the company has diverted over two billion pounds of organic waste from local landfills. Kevin approaches sustainability in a practical, results driven way. Missouri Organic Recycling exists to solve real problems, reduce landfill waste, improve soil health, and support long-term community resilience.

IAN PIRO **Senior Director Corporate Development, Burnham RNG**

Ian works to develop high impact recourse recovery projects. He has held various roles in both the public and private sectors, spending the first half of his career at the Delaware County Water Quality Control Authority (DELCORA) where he became a licensed wastewater operator, led environmental compliance and supported strategic planning for the utility serving over 500,000 population. He then held various roles in the private sector, including providing innovation and technology consulting, leading clean water organizations at Isle Utilities and business development & project origination in North America for Anaergia. This experience helps Ian provide a grounded, technically sound and community focused approach to project development.

PATRICK CROWLEY **CEO, Chapul Farms**

Patrick has focused his career on preserving natural resources for future generations. He founded ChapulFarms in 2012 with a mission to weave insects into the broader landscape of sustainable agriculture, by building insect farms with a triple value proposition: diverting food waste from landfills, harvesting insects as a sustainable animal feed, and producing a nature-based soil fertilizer. He has pioneered new market categories, technologies, and environmental initiatives. As CEO, Pathas raised capital from mission-aligned sources of public and private capital, including an investment from Mark Cuban after his appearance on Shark Tank.

DUDLEY LIGHT **Regional Administrator, US Department of Labor**

James (Dudley) Light started his career as a first period carpenter apprentice. Upon completion, he was invited to become an instructor and was later invited to be a technical coordinator the Carpenters' International Training Fund. He was promoted to the Executive Director position with the responsibility for over 250 apprenticeship programs and an annual budget of over $500 million. In July 2011, Mr. Light accepted a position with the USDOL Office of Apprenticeship as the Arkansas State Director and, in 2014, he became the Texas State Director. In 2016, he accepted the position of Regional Director for "Region 4," which covers 11 states.

LARRY MCMANUS **Director of Business & Community Development, Office of the Governor, Texas**

McManus is responsible for the management of the Office's Existing Industry and Business Recruitment Activities, Small Business, International, Marketing, Research, and Community Relations initiatives. He served as Sr. Director for Rural Economic Development at the TX Department of Agriculture (TDA). While with the Office of the Governor, he managed Community Relations and Domestic Expansion and Recruitment (DER) activities whose teams assisted in the announcement of more than 140,000 jobs and capital investment in excess of $63 billion between January 2005 and August 2015.

ERNEST HUFFMAN **Program Manager, North Central Texas Council of Governments**

Huffman leads regional initiatives related to aviation planning, workforce development, unmanned aircraft systems, and Advanced Air Mobility. He manages the North Texas Aviation Education Initiative, the Surface Access to Aviation Program, the North Texas UAS Safety and Integration Initiative, and the North Texas Air Transportation Advisory Committee, while serving as a liaison among public agencies, industry, airports, universities, and other stakeholders across the region. His work focuses on preparing North Texas for the future of aviation through regional planning, infrastructure coordination, education, and public policy.

MARK BUEHRER **Founder & CEO, HeartFoods Group**

Mark is a registered professional civil engineer, author, and inventor with over 30 years engineering experience on sustainable building projects around the world. Mark founded 2020 ENGINEERING, a professional engineering consulting firm dedicated to providing simple and innovative solutions for the long-term economic and environmental sustainability of local, national and international communities. HeartFoods Group, PBC was founded in October 2020 as a design-build-operate entity to grow nutrient dense food from food, crop and animal waste.

The world's waste is our competitive advantage.

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– ERIC BARGER

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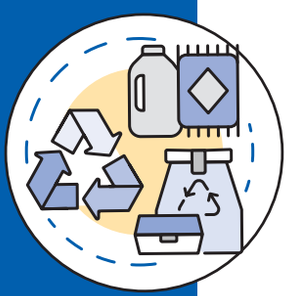

Empowering resilient, productive landscapes through research and statewide collaborations that:

- Expand biobased products manufacturing in California
- Support healthy forests and working lands
- Provide critical, science-based technical assistance in economic development
- Support workforce training and development

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