

SAVING AMERICA'S WORKING LANDS

A National Conference Hosted by American Farmland Trust

DALLAS, TEXAS | APRIL 23-25, 2025

Session: Creating Coalitions that Make a Difference

SPEAKERS



Lori Olson

Executive Director

Texas Land Trust Council

Lori Olson has served as the Executive Director of the Texas Land Trust Council since July of 2011, working to strengthen a coalition of more than 35 organizations working to conserve essential lands and waters across Texas. Lori seeks to advance the conservation efforts of land trusts by engaging in advocacy and strategic program development, offering technical assistance, furthering collaborative efforts, and hosting the annual Texas Land Conservation Conference. Lori has over 25 years of experience in the field of land conservation, working with conservation organizations in Oregon, North Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. A native Texan, Lori is a graduate of the University of Texas at Austin with a B.S. in Biology, and a graduate of the University of Oregon with a Master's degree in Community and Regional Planning, as well as a Master of Science degree in Public Affairs. She also received her Certificate in Non-Profit Management from Duke University. Lori serves on the Advisory Team for the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's Land Trust Bird Conservation Initiative, the Advisory Council of the Texas Real Estate Advocacy & Defense Coalition, the Wimberley Parks Board, and as a member of the Hays County Parks and Open Space Commission. She is an avid conservationist and lover of the outdoors. Lori lives in the Texas Hill Country with her family.



Mallory O'Steen

Southeast Senior Program Manager

American Farmland Trust

Mallory O'Steen joins American Farmland Trust as the organization's first Georgia Program Manager, where she plays a key role in leading high-impact programs that help respond to urgent threats facing farming in Georgia, including the protection of farmland from real estate development. O'Steen is a seventh generation Georgian with over seven years in the agriculture, land conservation, and environmental outreach and education fields. O'Steen received her B.A. in Environmental Studies from University of Colorado at Boulder. Most recently, O'Steen served as the Farmland Protection and Outreach Manager for Georgia's Athens land Trust where she managed the organization's outreach, application, acquisition, and ongoing monitoring of agricultural easements. She also managed GAFarmLink, an online platform and resource center to connect farmland seekers and landowners to place beginning farmers securely on the land and protect farmland from development.



Kip Kolesinskas

Co-Chair

Working Lands Alliance

Kip is a Consulting Conservation Scientist. His current projects include assisting agencies, NGOs, and private individuals with farmland protection, land access and affordability for new and beginning farmers, farmland restoration, and climate change adaptation strategies. He is the co-chair of the Working Lands Alliance Steering

Committee, former member of the CT Council on Environmental Quality, and a USDA Climate Adaptation Fellow. Kip has contributed to numerous publications and initiatives including Conservation Options for Connecticut Farmland, and Planning for Agriculture – A Guide for Connecticut Municipalities. He is formerly a USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service State Soil Scientist for Connecticut and Rhode Island, where he worked extensively with farmers, educators, government, and nonprofits to help them protect farmland and wetlands, and use soils information to make better informed land use decisions.



Facilitator

Chelsea Gazillo

Senior California Policy Manager

American Farmland Trust

Chelsea Gazillo is American Farmland Trust's New England Policy Manager and Director of AFT's Working Lands Alliance in CT. She represents AFT on the CT Department of Agriculture's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Secure Land Access Sub-group, CT Senator Chris Murphy's Land Conservation Advisory Board, the Seeding Power VT Coalition, and the Food Solutions New England network team. She grew up in Western, MA and currently lives in Holyoke, MA where she sits on the Holyoke Conservation Commission and is a member of the Holyoke Food and Equity Collective. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in International Affairs from Humboldt State University in Arcata, CA and a Master's in Sustainable Development with an emphasis in Policy Advocacy and Analysis from SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, VT. In her free time, she enjoys fermenting locally grown foods, gardening, traveling, biking, and hiking in the pioneer valley with her sweet dog Layla.