

# SAVING AMERICA'S WORKING LANDS

A National Conference Hosted by American Farmland Trust

**DALLAS, TEXAS | APRIL 23-25, 2025**

## **Session: Planning for Agriculture: Putting All the Pieces Together**

### **SPEAKERS**



**Lisa Specca**

Planner

Specca Farms

As a licensed Professional Planner in the State of New Jersey, Ms. Specca has provided expert professional planning services to municipal planning and zoning boards, state and county governments, non-profit organizations, regional planning agencies, and the NJ courts. She served for nine years on the State Agriculture Development Committee, which administers the NJ Farmland Preservation Program. Her practice specializes in rural and environmental planning, farmland and open space preservation plans, natural resource inventories, and transfer of development rights. Ms. Specca brings a unique perspective to the challenges facing rural communities as she is not only a professional planner but also a farmer. She is a partner in Specca Farms: a 4th generation family farming operation which has transitioned to 100% direct marketing of fruits and vegetables grown on their 125-acre preserved farm. Additionally, she was elected to her Township's Governing Body and served for nine years on her local Planning Board. She is currently serving as Vice President of the NJ State Board of Agriculture. Ms. Specca has served as an expert planning witness for municipalities facing solar energy litigation and has been a frequent speaker on solar energy issues and farmland preservation at meetings, conferences, and workshops across the state. She is an Eisenhower Fellow for Agriculture and an alumnus of the NJ Agricultural Leadership Development Program.



## **Janice Hill**

Consultant

Acreage43560

Janice launched Acreage43560, LLC, Planning for Local Farms and Communities in 2020 while working for Kane County, Illinois as an Executive Planner and as the founding Farmland Protection and Local Foods Manager for the award-winning farmland protection and local foods program. Using her experience from Kane County, she assists farms and farmers in Indiana, Ohio, and Idaho, along with farmers and organizations in DeKalb, Will, McHenry counties in Illinois. She advises on topics including conservation, climate mitigation, agrihoods, agri-tourism, farm viability, and private, corporate and government fundraising. Janice's presentations to national, state and local audiences focus on weaving community goals with farm viability and protection. Her work has been featured in national publications including Progressive Farmer, Planning Magazine (American Planning Association), and Urban Land Institute. She has been interviewed by National Public Radio and featured in and produced videos on farmland protection. Sharing her expertise on topics of planning, farmland protection, sustainability and climate, local foods and their markets, Janice speaks at local high schools, higher education classrooms, and national and regional conferences. Janice stays close to her Michigan family who operates their homestead farm, along with 1,000+ additional acres and is motivated by her uncle's advice that the most important thing she can do is support the next generation in farming. She participates as a Mentor in the Wallace Center's REGAIN (Regenerative Ag Education and Advocacy Mentorship Program). She is certified by the American Institute of Certified Planners since 1986, and with a Masters in City Planning from University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.



**Sabrina Torres**

Sustainable Agriculture Planner  
Boulder County



*Facilitator*

**Julia Freedgood**

Senior Fellow and Senior Program Advisor  
American Farmland Trust

Julia is a prominent national expert in farmland protection, land tenure and access, agricultural viability, and food system planning. As Senior Fellow and Senior Program Advisor at American Farmland Trust, she focuses on the planning and policy framework required to support the livelihoods of farmers and ranchers, and to advance equitable and just regional food systems to increase food security and combat climate change. Currently writing a book on this subject, she also is involved in other research, extension, and community engagement projects at AFT. Julia is the author or co-author of many articles and reports, recent ones include “Cultivating the Next Generation: Resources and Policies to Help Beginning Farmers Succeed in Agriculture,” “Farms Under Threat: The State of the States,” “Fail to Include, Plan to Exclude: Reflections on Local Governments’ Readiness for Building Equitable Community Food Systems,” and “Growing Local: A Community Guide to Planning for Agriculture and Food Systems.” She has many professional affiliations. Among them, she is a long-time member of the American Planning Association, a founding member of North American Food Systems Network, and serves on the Advisory Board and Editorial Committee of the Journal of Agriculture Food Systems and Community Development. She has served on USDA’s Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program Grant Review Board and USDA-Secretary Vilsack’s

Land Tenure Advisory Committee. She holds a M.A. in Urban and Environmental Planning and Policy from Tufts University.