



New Jersey Forests Forum

Online: January 25, 2022

Meet the presenters of the 2022 New Jersey Forests Forum

- **Forum Panelists:**

Dr Emile DeVito

Manager of Science & Stewardship, New Jersey Conservation Foundation

Emile has been the Manager of Science and Stewardship at the New Jersey Conservation Foundation since 1989. He received a doctorate in Ecology in 1988 for research on bird communities and vegetation landscapes in New Jersey's Pine Barrens. Dr. DeVito develops management plans for NJ Conservation Foundation's 20,000+ acres of holdings designed to protect and enhance biological diversity. He serves on the Endangered and Non-Game Species Advisory Committee within the NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife, the New Jersey Invasive Species Council, and the Science Advisory Committee of the NY-NJ Trail Conference.

Dr Jay Kelly

Associate Professor, Raritan Valley Community College

Jay teaches a variety of courses in ecology, environmental science and field biology at Raritan Valley Community College. His main areas of interest and expertise are the conservation of rare plants in New Jersey; ecology and management of forests, beaches and other ecosystems; plastic marine pollution; and toxins in consumer products. Jay received his Bachelor's Degree in Biology and a PhD in Ecology and Evolution from Rutgers University.

Elliott Ruga

Director of Policy and Communications, New Jersey Highlands Coalition

Elliott has over 25 years of environmental and historic preservation advocacy experience. Working with the Coalition since November 2007, he leads the Coalition's initiatives promoting policies that better protect the Highlands' natural and historic resources. Elliott also provides guidance to grassroots groups working to protect Highlands resources and promotes municipal and county conformance to the Highlands Regional Master Plan. He has a professional background in communications and multi-media production (awarded 2 Emmys), including 17 years at NBC.

Leslie Sauer

Author and former Professional Environmental Restoration Practitioner

Leslie, a native of New Jersey, is the author of *The Once and Future Forest: A Guide to Forest Restoration Strategies* (Island Press). As an Associate Professor at the University of Pennsylvania she introduced field courses on habitat restoration. She is founder emeritus of Andropogon Associates, and a pioneer in the field of restoring and managing native landscapes. Leslie was also a founding board member of the Society for Ecological Restoration.

Silvia Solaun

Co-Founder and Executive Director, New Jersey Forest Watch

Silvia is the Co-Founder and Executive Director of NJ Forest Watch, a newly formed 501c3 grassroots advocacy organization focused on protecting New Jersey's public forests, and preserving their vital resource values. Silvia received her undergraduate from Boston University and her M.S. from the University of Bridgeport. Silvia and her family are residents in Sussex County where she has been a strong advocate for the forests of the Highlands for many years.

Dr Sara Webb

Professor Emerita, Drew University

Sara is Professor emerita of Biology and Environmental Studies at Drew University and director of the Drew University Forest Preserve. She is a forest ecologist with 35 years of teaching and research in forests of New Jersey. Her areas of expertise include forest disturbance by wind and fire, restoration ecology, biological invasions, paleoecology, and old growth forests. Sara received her PhD from the University of Minnesota in Ecology. M.S. in Ecology & Forest Resources and a B.A. from Macalester College.

- **Forum Guest:**

Senator Bob Smith

17th Legislative District

State Senator Bob Smith represents the 17th Legislative District, which includes parts of Middlesex and Somerset Counties. Having served in the New Jersey State Legislature since 1986, first as a State Assemblyman and more recently as State Senator. Senator Smith is considered one of the State's leading environmental lawmakers with a long legacy of important laws to his name, including sponsorship of the New Jersey Highlands Water Protection and Planning Act.

Currently, Senator Smith is Chairman of the Senate Environment & Energy Committee where he continues to pursue an aggressive environmental agenda, currently advancing recycling

legislation to bring the Garden State back to the forefront of recycling in the nation, creating sustainable communities, and combating the global warming crisis.

- **Forum Moderator:**

Marian Janes

Co-Founder and President of Ignite Growth

Marian is a lifelong learner and educator dedicated to the personal and professional growth of others. She possesses an innate ability to motivate and inspire others to sustainable and results-driven action and connection with the life they envision. In her 25 years as a corporate learning leader Marian's focus was on maximizing human resources in support of company growth. Since that time Marian founded Ignite Growth, a boutique coaching and consulting firm. Her business is founded on the premise that if you continually learn, you will grow in ways you never imagined.

She applies these same principles as an environmental advocate, challenging others to make incremental changes that lead to collective transformation towards the betterment of our world.

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Register for the New Jersey Forests Forum at <https://bit.ly/NJFF22>
