



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Plant Trust Announces Climate Resilience Symposium, Examining Future of Plant Life, Online October 29

September 28, 2021

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(Framingham, MA) Native Plant Trust, the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants, announces a virtual symposium on the changing climate and its effects on the region's flora. The program will address methods for building climate resilience and how key players can support this process. The event will take place online Friday, October 29, 2021 from 1-4 PM. To register, visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

The virtual symposium will feature distinguished experts in the fields of ecology, climate adaptation, and conservation biology. The event will include a keynote address by Dr. Jacquelyn Gill, Associate Professor of Paleoecology and Plant Ecology at the University of Maine. The symposium also includes a workshop on climate adaptation networks, and a panel highlighting current climate change patterns, their implications for the future of New England's plant diversity, and the path toward climate resilience.

"The climate resilience discussion builds on our recent report, *Conserving Plant Diversity in New England*," explains Courtney Allen, Native Plant Trust's Director of Public Programs. "The symposium will consider diverse perspectives that offer cutting-edge thinking on applicable conservation strategies and tools. Working together to implement best practices now will greatly impact the future of native plants and the ecosystems they support."

Speakers include:

Dr. Jacquelyn Gill, Associate Professor of Paleoecology & Plant Ecology at the University of Maine, will present the keynote on native plants and climate resilience in long timescales. Gill is a paleoecologist, biogeographer, and science communicator. Her research focuses on the influences of space and time on questions in ecology and global change science. Her work addresses novel communities and ecosystems, biotic drivers of landscape change on long timescales, and paleorecord implications on plants' abilities to migrate in response to climate

change. Dr. Gill directs the University of Maine Climate Change Institute's Laboratory for Biodiversity and Environments Across Space and Time (BEAST Lab).

Melissa Ocana, Climate Adaptation Coordinator at University of Massachusetts Amherst, will lead a workshop on networking communities for conservation practice. Ocana coordinates partnerships and builds capacity for climate adaptation and natural resources. Her expertise includes climate adaptation networks and collaboratives, peer-to-peer learning, ecosystem resilience/transformation, and wildlife conservation. She founded the American Society of Adaptation Professionals (ASAP) Network of Networks Group and is the organizer for Massachusetts Ecosystem Climate Adaptation Network (Mass ECAN). Ocana also engages in national climate efforts, such as the Climate Adaptation Fund Advisory Council and National Adaptation Forum Steering Committee. Ocana will present the workshop in collaboration with MASS ECAN.

Dr. Christopher Neill, Senior Scientist at Woodwell Climate Research Center, studies ecosystems around the globe, always with a local focus. He is interested broadly in how changes in land use affect ecosystem function, and in our ability to restore impaired systems. In Massachusetts, he studies how the choices we make along our coasts and in our own backyards affect biodiversity. Dr. Neill works with regional and national conservation organizations to design improved methods of ecosystem protection, restoring coastal grasslands and cranberry bogs. He is also a leading communicator for the Yard Futures Project, a science communication collaboration with Native Plant Trust and numerous research institutions.

Dr. Angelica Patterson is the Master Science Educator at Black Rock Forest in Cornwall, New York. She received her B.S. degree in Natural Resources from Cornell University and her M.A., M.Phil., and Ph.D. degrees from Columbia University, where she studied plant ecophysiology. Inspired by the mechanisms behind climate-induced tree migration and plant community shifts, she examines the physiological responses of northeastern US trees to increasing atmospheric temperatures. At Black Rock Forest, Dr. Patterson works with educators to develop innovative, data-driven curricula and inclusive teaching practices, and she directs summer science experiences for underserved students. She is a strong advocate and frequent public speaker for diversity, equity, and inclusion in the environmental sciences. Her research and science communication efforts has been profiled in publications such as The Guardian, The Forestry Source, Cell Press, and the National Environmental Education Foundation.

Aaron Marcus is the Assistant Botanist for Vermont Fish & Wildlife, with further expertise in conservation biology, native plants, and plant education. Marcus manages the endangered and rare plant data for Vermont and makes the data available in the Agency of Natural Resources' Natural Resources Atlas, which makes possible plant diversity tracking and conservation planning. Marcus has spearheaded the status review of hundreds of Vermont's plant species to help monitor the state's most-at-risk plant species, notably in Green Mountain National Forest. Marcus is a graduate of Native Plant Trust's Certificate Program in Native Plant Studies.

For more information and to register for the symposium, please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

This program is eligible for professional continuing education credit through Massachusetts Association of Landscape Professionals, Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, Northeast Organic Farming Association, Society of American Foresters, and Society for Ecological Restoration. Please refer to the symposium registration page for further information on credits.

ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

Native Plant Trust is the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants. We save native plants in the wild, grow them for gardens and restorations, and educate others on their value and use. We are based at Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden that attracts visitors from all over the world. From this flagship property in Framingham, Massachusetts, 25 staff and many of our 1,500 trained volunteers work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs. Native Plant Trust also operates a nursery at Nasami Farm in western Massachusetts and manages six sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are open to the public. Native Plant Trust is among the first organizations worldwide to receive Advanced Conservation Practitioner accreditation by London-based Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which included an endorsement by an International Advisory Council representing six continents. Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

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