



SPEAKER BIOS



Becky Ross, NRCS State Conservationist, New Hampshire

Becky Ross (she/her) is the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) State Conservationist in New Hampshire. She is the second out State Conservationist in the nation. Becky has over 26 years of service with NRCS in Oklahoma, Virginia, Indiana, Colorado, Wyoming, Utah and New Hampshire. She grew up in north central Oklahoma on a hobby farm where her family raised cattle, hogs and a large garden. She began working for the Soil Conservation Service, now NRCS, as an intern in Oklahoma while attending Oklahoma State University where she earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biological Sciences. Since joining NRCS, Becky has served as a Soil Conservationist, District Conservationist, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations, Management and Strategy and Programs. Becky is a Lifetime Member and Senior Champion of Equality USDA, and a member of Women in NRCS and the Soil and Water Conservation Society.

Kerith Conron, Research Director, Williams Institute

Kerith J. Conron (she/her), Sc.D., M.P.H., is the Blachford-Cooper Distinguished Scholar and Research Director at the UCLA School of Law Williams Institute. As a social and psychiatric epidemiologist, her work focuses on documenting and reducing inequities that impact sexual and gender minority populations. She is committed to altering the landscape of adversity and opportunity for LGBTQ communities. Conron is Co-Principal Investigator of the NICHD/NIMHD-funded Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity, Socioeconomic Status, and Health across the Life Course study. She trained at the Harvard and Boston University Schools of Public Health and has published work in the American Journal of Public Health, Archives of Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine and Psychological Medicine. Her expertise and commentary have been featured by the New York Times, the Associated Press, and National Public Radio.



Lakeitha Ruffin, Agricultural Economist, WTNCS NRCS

Lakeitha Ruffin (she/her) is an Agricultural Economist at the West National Technical Support Center in Portland, Oregon and the Oregon NRCS LGBTQ Special Emphasis Program Manager (SEPM). Lakeitha began her NRCS career in Bozeman, Montana as an Agricultural Economist working on an interdisciplinary team. Lakeitha enjoys being in the outdoors, camping, backpacking and hiking, listening to the birds sing and the waters flow within its bank. Her dream is for all people to feel welcomed, heard, and accepted knowing they can be their authentic self - without fear of judgement. She desires peace to fill the lives of people and for them to know true rest. She believes in helping others, finding something to laugh at daily, and there always being room for cheesecake.



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Dominique Morgan, Executive Director, The Okra Project

Dominique Morgan (she/her) is an award-winning artist, activist, and TEDx speaker. She is the Executive Director of The Okra Project and Black and Pink National, leading work across the country to dismantle the systems that perpetuate violence on LGBTQ/GNC people and individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Partnering her lived experience of being impacted by mass incarceration and solitary confinement, with a decade of change-making artistry, advocacy, and background in public health, she continues to work in spaces of education, radical self-care, and transformative youth development with intentions of dismantling the prison industrial complex and a theory she describes as the "gender to prison pipeline." Ms. Morgan is a recipient of many awards, including the 2020 Ten Outstanding Young Americans Award, NAACP Freedom Fighter Award, 2020 JM Kaplan Innovation Prize, and a United States 2021 nominee for Ten Outstanding Young People in the World.

Kevin Shea, Administrator, APHIS

In his role as the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Administrator, Mr. Shea carries out the agency's multiple missions of protecting the health and value of American agriculture; mitigating the impact of human-wildlife conflict to protect agriculture, the environment, and human health and safety; ensuring the safe and timely availability of new genetically engineered technologies; and administering the Animal Welfare and Horse Protection Acts. Before becoming Administrator, Mr. Shea served as the Associate Administrator from 2004 to 2012; the Deputy Administrator for Policy and Program Development from 2000 to 2004; and Director of Budget and Accounting from 1992 to 2000. He has been with APHIS for over 40 years. Mr. Shea is a graduate of DeMatha Catholic High School in Hyattsville, MD, and the University of Maryland in College Park, MD. He earned a law degree, summa cum laude, from the University of Baltimore School of Law.

