

## PHPR Summit 2026

### Speaker Bios and Contact Info

**Ali Rhodes, Passionate Professional Parks and Recreation - [RhodesA@bouldercolorado.gov](mailto:RhodesA@bouldercolorado.gov)**

Ali is Parks and Recreation Director for the City of Boulder. Her two key responsibilities as Director are to ensure the community is experiencing a high-quality parks and recreation system and that BPR's teammates have the support and skills they need to operate that system. Beginning her professional career in Finance, Ali soon realized that she had a public service heart and passion for greenspaces, health equity, and people leadership – she joined the city in 2002 and has never looked back. Ali holds a Bachelor's degree in history (cum laude) and Spanish from the University of Colorado at Boulder and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of Colorado at Denver.

**Anna Allegretti, University of Denver - [Anna.Allegretti@du.edu](mailto:Anna.Allegretti@du.edu)**

Anna Allegretti, a current MSW student, joined the Center for a Regenerative Future in the fall of 2025. Her background is rooted in both conservation and social work. Beginning with Southwest Conservation Corps she led wildfire mitigation crews, later moving on to working in Child Welfare before joining GSSW in fall of 2024. She is passionate about shaping policies, prevention, and responses in disaster relief that will better serve the communities most affected.

**Annie Goyanes, Jefferson County Open Space - [agoyanes@jeffco.us](mailto:agoyanes@jeffco.us)**

Annie Goyanes is on the Volunteer Services Team at Jefferson County Parks & Open Space, where she engages youth and young adults in meaningful outdoor volunteer experiences. Annie holds a B.S. in Environmental Sciences and Marine Biology and has a background in bilingual environmental education, community outreach, and event coordination.

**Bill Mahar, AICP, Passionate Professional Built Environment - [bmahar@norris-design.com](mailto:bmahar@norris-design.com)**

Principal at Norris Design, has more than 20 years of experience in urban planning, landscape architecture, active transportation, public health, and community engagement. He is well-versed in managing complex and high-profile projects, helping public agencies and community leaders develop collaborative visions and achievable goals. His work across both public and private sectors provides a comprehensive understanding of the planning process and centers his work on sustainability and public health. He has spearheaded initiatives to create walkable neighborhoods and connected, accessible parks, trails, and open spaces that support community, economic development and placemaking.

**Christine Chopyak, Arlosoul – [chris@arlosoul.com](mailto:chris@arlosoul.com)**

Chris is a creative entrepreneur, small business owner that has supported businesses, universities and NGOs across the globe with skilled facilitation, visual strategy, and organizational development for over 20 years. Using battle-tested tools of the trade, Chris has the uncanny ability to combine strategy, design thinking and innovation with pictures and color, turning everyday work into meaningful and thoughtful strategy and action. Honing her skills with Fortune 100 companies and many nationally recognized nonprofit organizations, Chris built the foundation for her first book, the business best seller, *Picture Your Business Strategy: Transform Decisions with the Power of Visuals* (2014 McGraw-Hill Professional). Seen as a “go-to” resource for organizational leaders, teams, heads of government, educators and

entrepreneurs this book outlines how to visualize complex challenges using pictures to create solutions. A new book is in the works as are new online programs.

**Cristi Moran, Passionate Professional Librarian - [librariancristy@gmail.com](mailto:librariancristy@gmail.com)**

Cristy Moran (she/ ella) is a librarian and facilitator who has worked in libraries and education for over 15 years. She is a "librarian for librarians" and a library evangelist, bringing the critical often overlooked role libraries play as social and civic infrastructure to every room she's in. Currently, Cristy works as branch manager in a mid-sized suburban library in a highly diverse community in north metro Denver. Prior to this role, she was the Adult Library Services Senior Consultant at the Colorado State Library, served as a faculty librarian at Broward College based out of the joint-use North Campus which served as the Broward County Public Library's North Regional Library, and worked as the Director of Education at Sylvan Learning Centers in Miami. Cristy's professional library interests are wide-ranging and varied, but always centered on the users, patrons, and communities who we serve. Spanglish is her superpower. Kindness punk is her praxis. She'd tell you wildflower seed-bombing is what she does for a living.

**D.L. Pos Ryant, Apprentice of Peace Youth Organization (AOPYO) - [pos@aopyo.org](mailto:pos@aopyo.org)**

Pos is a Strategy consultant and facilitator with Arlosoul. In this role, Pos has supported strategic planning sessions with local and national businesses and nonprofits. In his strategic planning role Pos has previously led planning sessions with The SHARE Network, Civic Canopy, Guided By Humanity and others. He has worked and trained staff, students, counselors and interns in cultural competence, organizational strategy and facilitation. Pos is also the Executive Director and Co-Founder of The Apprentice of Peace Youth Organization (APOYO), a nonprofit that focuses on reducing mental health stigma and increasing life skills through wellness. In this leadership role, Pos is charged with strategy, positive youth development and building community while creating innovative ways to address mental health stigma and the intersectionality of youth violence. One way he does this is through Tai Chi, infusing the practice and APOYO's philosophy into a fully integrated lifestyle movement that empowers students through a whole person approach that incorporates leadership, arts, wellness, and skilled trades. He has an extensive background in working with youth in sports and social emotional learning from coaching basketball to teaching wellness and positive mental attitude strategies. Pos is proud to work in the arena of mental health stigma awareness and reduction working with youth locally, nationally, and abroad.

**Haley Stephenson, City of Westminster - [hstephen@westminsterco.gov](mailto:hstephen@westminsterco.gov)**

Haley Stephenson holds a Master's degree in International Human Rights and a Bachelor's degree in International Studies (and Italian), both from the University of Denver. She has worked with a variety of underserved populations including rural communities, refugees, low-income families, and families and individuals experiencing homelessness. She has worked as a Homeless Navigator for the City of Westminster for nearly 4 years and is excited to continue serving her community for years to come.

**Jill Matlock, Passionate Professional Public Health - [ematlock@weld.gov](mailto:ematlock@weld.gov)**

Jill Matlock, M.Ed, MPH coordinates the Healthy Eating Active Living Program at the Weld County Department of Public Health & Environment. She has worked in a variety of settings, including cardiac rehabilitation, clinical pediatric weight management, school wellness, and chronic disease prevention.

She received an M.Ed. in Exercise Science from Cleveland State University and an MPH from the Colorado School of Public Health. In her free time, Jill enjoys cycling, hiking, and reading.

**Jo Burns, JoBurnsConnects, LLC – [jo@joburnsconnects.com](mailto:jo@joburnsconnects.com)**

Jo Burns (CTRS) is known for her work bringing together professionals from parks, recreation, public health and built environment. She has created nonprofits and founded a few community groups that bring all sorts of people together to learn, collaborate and improve health. Jo is a skillful connector with experience in community, camp, professional trade association, and higher education parks and recreation settings. Jo is passionate about helping folks find belonging and connection in their communities. Given the opportunity, Jo would rather be outside doing most anything rather than sit in front of her computer. The PHPR Summit is one of her favorite days of the year.

**Julia Senecal, University of Denver - [julia.senecal@du.edu](mailto:julia.senecal@du.edu)**

Julia Senecal (MSW, CPT) serves as the Assistant Director at the Center for a Regenerative Future, adjunct faculty at the Graduate School of Social Work, and as research facilitator at the Institute for Human-Animal Connection (all at the University of Denver). She is also the founder and owner of Regenerative Coaching & Consulting, which allows her to combine her passions for eco-transformational leadership, holistic wellness, and human-nature connection while serving her community. Her background in public administration, K-12 education, mental health services, and program development support her creation and implementation of ecological-social justice curriculum, programs, and research initiatives that empower young people to engage in practices that support global and ecological justice, regeneration, and equity for humans, animals, and the natural world.

**Lauren O'Neill, City of Westminster - [loneill@westminsterco.gov](mailto:loneill@westminsterco.gov)**

Lauren O'Neill is currently serving as a Senior Park Ranger for the City of Westminster, Colorado. Lauren has been working for Westminster as a Park Ranger since 2019, first seasonally before starting full time in 2022. She holds a Bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Affairs, and is currently pursuing a Master's in the Outdoor Recreation Economy, both from the University of Colorado Boulder.

**Russ Carson, Community Impact Collaborative - [russ.carson@icollab.com](mailto:russ.carson@icollab.com)**

With a PhD in Health and Kinesiology, 250+ publications and presentations, and 25 years of experience across public, academic, and business settings, Russ speaks passionately about the importance of optimally using research and data for community health impact to share with his audiences.

**Sarah Bexell, University of Denver - [sarah.bexell@du.edu](mailto:sarah.bexell@du.edu)**

Sarah M. Bexell (PhD, MSW) is Faculty Director of the Center for a Regenerative Future in 2020. She is also Clinical Associate Professor with the Graduate School of Social Work, and the Director of Humane Education with the Institute for Human-Animal Connection all at the University of Denver. She teaches and does research in the areas of ecological justice, humane education, and animal protection.

**Sophie Brennan, Jefferson County Open Space - [sbrennan@jeffco.us](mailto:sbrennan@jeffco.us)**

Sophie Brennan is on the Planning Team at Jefferson County Parks & Open Space with a primary role of conducting visitor research to better inform park planning and management. She most enjoys it when her work includes collaboration with volunteers and community partners.

**Sophie Semenjuk, Colorado School of Public Health - [sophie.semenjuk@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:sophie.semenjuk@cuanschutz.edu)**

Sophie Semenjuk is a student at the Colorado School of Public Health, graduating this May from the Department of Community and Behavioral Health. Throughout her studies, she has thoroughly enjoyed the use of qualitative research methods in cross-sector program development, and she is deeply passionate about a variety of topics related to health equity and systems change.

**Virginia Visconti, Colorado School of Public Health and Passionate Professional Educator - [virginia.visconti@cuanschutz.edu](mailto:virginia.visconti@cuanschutz.edu)**

Virginia Visconti is a clinical teaching assistant professor in the Department of Community and Behavioral Health (CBH) at the Colorado School of Public Health. She is trained as a social-cultural anthropologist and educator and has an extensive background in ethnographic research, community-based participatory research, collective impact coordination, higher education service-learning, and community-academic partnership building in diverse settings.