

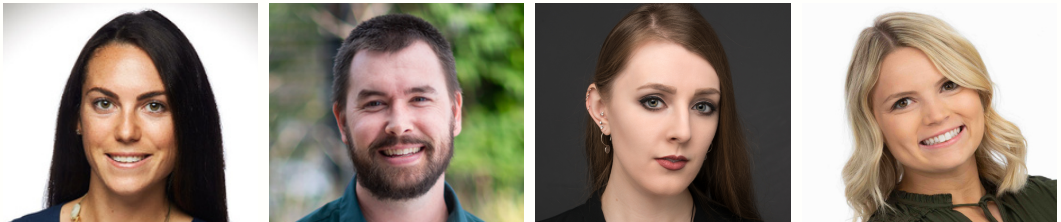


Arizona Forward

ESTABLISHED 1969

EMERGING LEADERS

Sustainability



CLASS OF 2022-2023

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MARIA ALTEMUS

HDR

As an Environmental Planner for HDR, Maria Altemus assists with environmental compliance and permitting related to transportation projects. Maria's professional focus on biological resources, the Clean Water Act, and the National Environmental Policy Act help to ensure that our natural resources are protected while also assisting with growing infrastructure projects. Maria received her MS in Wildlife Conservation and Management from the University of Arizona, where her passion for native wildlife and Arizona's biological resources began. In her spare time, Maria enjoys hiking, gardening, and playing with her dog. Maria looks forward to building her network of like-minded sustainability-driven professionals and learning about sustainable practices and solutions through the Emerging Sustainability Leaders Program.



MURPHY BANNERMAN

Western Resource Advocates

Murphy Bannerman is the Arizona Government Affairs Manager for Western Resource Advocates. In her role, she advocates at the state and local level for clean renewable energy, reduction in air pollution and carbon emissions, transportation electrification, and water conservation. Murphy is a long-time resident of Arizona. She grew up in Gilbert and graduated from Arizona State University with a Bachelor's in Sociology. When not working, she is playing with her pit bulls, Bennie and Blue. Murphy hopes to strengthen her relationships with fellow sustainability leaders and learn more about Arizona's developing sustainability industry.



BRYCE BECK

City of Sedona

Bryce is a Sustainability Coordinator for the City of Sedona, where he develops programs and policies geared towards Sedona's Climate Action Plan. Bryce specializes in greenhouse gas inventories and has compiled them for private businesses, local governments, universities, and communities. He is passionate about finding solutions that provide cross sector benefits in environmental and community resilience while facilitating emissions reductions. With the City of Sedona, Bryce created Sedona's first home weatherization program with the Home Energy Retrofit Project. He holds an MS in Climate Science and Solutions and a BS in Parks and Recreation Management, both from Northern Arizona University. Through the Emerging Sustainability Leaders Program, he is looking forward to meeting and learning from the passionate and dedicated people striving to create positive impacts for their communities.



REID BIRRELL
City of Avondale

Reid Birrell is the Wetlands and Aquaculture Coordinator for the City of Avondale. Reid treats the City's water supply using ecological processes and recharges it into an underground aquifer for future use. Reid is the principal designer and operator of Avondale's aquaculture system, which raises 6,000 fish annually to naturally control algae in the Crystal Gardens Wetlands. Reid is a former EMS helicopter pilot and certified flight Instructor. In 2013, Reid designed, built, and operated his own Aquaponics Farm, raising Tilapia and then using the nitrate-rich wastewater to grow vegetables for the community. The sustainability bug really grabbed Reid when he built his initial Aquaculture system and it has only grown with time in the industry. Through the Sustainability Leaders Program, Reid hopes to expand his knowledge of sustainability practices that he can then implement into real world working applications.



HILLARY BRYANT
Waste Not

As the Executive Director of Waste Not, Hillary Bryant leads food recovery work, rescuing excess food and delivering it to nonprofits that feed the hungry. Prior to her directorship, she was responsible for the launch and management of Waste Not's app-based food rescue volunteer program. Because of the program's success, the organization became more fuel-efficient and was recognized as a Climate and Health Champion by the Maricopa County Public Health Department. A fierce advocate for people and the planet, Hillary is dedicated to creating lasting, systemic change within the social benefit sector. She holds a B.S. in Public Health from Northern Arizona University. Hillary also served as Food Loss and Waste Work Group chair for the Maricopa County Food Systems Coalition. As a life-long Arizonan, she is excited to meet and learn from others invested in advancing sustainability efforts in our state.



JOÉL CARRASCO
City of Phoenix

Joél Carrasco is an Urban Planner with the City of Phoenix Planning and Development Department, where he leads a variety of projects, including developing policies and plans focused on Transit Oriented Development. Joél has a B.S. in Landscape Architecture from California Polytechnic University, Pomona; as well as a dual Masters of Landscape Architecture and Urban Design from Arizona State University. With over a decade of Long Range Planning and special projects, Joél has developed a passion and takes initiative to encourage sustainable and resilient land use, transportation and infrastructure decision-making. Currently Joél enjoys family time after work and on the weekends with family bike rides, tee ball, swimming, soccer, and other recreational activities at nearby parks. Through this program, Joél hopes to network and learn from others who are interested in creating a sustainable and resilient Arizona.



JULIA COLBERT
Arizona State University

Julia Colbert is the Program Manager for Project Cities, a program within the Sustainable Cities Network in the Global Institute of Sustainability and Innovation at Arizona State University. Project Cities connects faculty and students with community partners to co-create sustainability solutions. Julia holds a Master of Arts in Sustainability, Bachelor of Arts in Sustainability, Bachelor of Arts in Geography, and a Certificate in Environmental Education from Arizona State University. Prior to joining Project Cities, Julia served as Programs Director for the Arizona Sustainability Alliance, a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization based in the Phoenix Metro Area. Julia is also a member of the Board of Directors for the Arizona Association for Environmental Education and a Faculty Associate for Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College at ASU. She is looking forward to connecting with other professionals to collaborate on developing cross-sector sustainability solutions.



SOPHIA DESSART
Florence Copper

Sophie Dessart is the Manager of Communications and Public Affairs at Florence Copper, an innovative copper recovery operation. Sophie heads Florence Copper's community/media relations, charitable initiatives, and communications strategy. Sophie is passionate about giving back to her local community and serves on the Board of Directors of the Greater Florence Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Pinal County. She also is President of the Florence Copper Community Foundation, Advisor to the Executive Director of the Clarisse Machanguana Foundation, and a member of the Florence Lions Club. Sophie holds a Masters of Global Management from the Thunderbird School of Global Management. Sophie is a proud resident of Florence and enjoys reading, cooking, and volunteering in her free time. Sophie is eager to broaden her network of fellow sustainability-minded professionals and work together to make a positive change in Arizona and beyond.



ANDY ESCOBAR
City of Tempe

Andy Escobar works for Tempe's Sustainability and Resilience Office as a Climate Justice and Energy Equity Coordinator. In her role, she works to create programs, policies, and infrastructure that address the needs of the most vulnerable residents. She graduated from Arizona State University with a Masters in Sustainable Tourism. During her studies, she interned for several international-based organizations specializing in sustainable tourism development. Andy also spent time with the City of Tempe as a Sustainability Communications Fellow, where she helped co-author the city's 2022 Climate Action Plan Update which was adopted by the City Council in March 2022. She is passionate about work related to building and improving communities and is looking forward to expanding her skill sets through this program to help continue Tempe's commitments to climate action and sustainable development.



SARAH FITZGERALD

Salt River Project

Sarah Fitzgerald is a Senior Sustainability Program Analyst for Salt River Project. She attended Northern Arizona University where she earned a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration with an emphasis on Marketing and was inducted into The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi. Sarah began her career at SRP 10 years ago in the Market Research department before moving to the Sustainability Policy and Programs team three years ago where she is able to fulfill her passion for sustainability. Currently, Sarah oversees the progress towards SRP's 100% employee engagement in sustainability by 2035 goal and manages various employee educational opportunities, events, and programs, such as Ride Share and Green Team. Sarah is excited to participate in this program so she can further promote positive change through what she does in her work, in the community, and our state to continue to build a better future.



ADIAS FOSTINO

Brown and Caldwell

Adias is an environmental engineer with Brown and Caldwell. She is an Arizona local and holds a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Engineering from Northern Arizona University. Since, Adias has supported clients across the Valley on water and wastewater infrastructure design and construction projects. She has had the opportunity to be involved in a number of Aquifer Storage and Recharge well equipping design projects. Adias is passionate about protecting our water resources, environment, and creating sustainable solutions for our communities. Outside of work, Adias loves spending time with her family, being outdoors, snowboarding, and creating art. Adias is also a member of the Wichita and Affiliated Tribes, and helps her grandfather keep the Wichita grass house tradition alive today. Through the Emerging Sustainability Leader's program, Adias hopes to further her education in sustainability and apply this knowledge to help our communities and preserve our natural resources.



NICOLE GILLETT

City of Tucson

Nicole Gillett is the Urban Forestry Program Manager for the City of Tucson. She is passionate about working at the intersection of people and the environment, and about building a more just and resilient future. Nicole grew up learning and experiencing the impacts of climate change, but still loving the outdoors and wanting to be part of the solution. Nicole has a B.A. in Environmental Science from Colorado College, a M.S. in Geography from the University of Massachusetts Amherst, and is a Certified Public Manager. She has worked in a wide variety of environmental fields including community conservation and flood resilience, nonprofit advocacy, and currently municipal solution building.



JEN KNORR
SmithGroup

Jen Knorr is an Architect and Medical Planner with SmithGroup, an interdisciplinary design firm that delivers innovative and sustainable design solutions. After completing a Bachelor of Science in Architectural Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Jen relocated to Arizona for architectural opportunities in the Phoenix Metro area. Not long after starting her professional career, Jen continued her education at Arizona State University, attaining a Master of Architecture. Now, with over 15 years of experience in the architectural field, Jen's primary focus is on Healthcare Facilities. Jen understands the importance of sustainability and is eager to learn how best to convey the importance to clients and other project stakeholders. She also seeks to discover how other industries in Arizona are tackling today's challenges. As an avid hiker and longtime member of the Desert Botanical Garden, Jen fell in love with the diverse landscapes of Arizona and all it has to offer.



JOSIE KOHLAN
Goodmans Interior Structures

Josie Kohlan is the Director of Sustainability at Goodmans Interior Structures in Phoenix. She was born and raised in Sedona, Arizona, and has always loved nature and animals. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Interior Design from Northern Arizona University, where she was passionate about researching and specifying sustainable products. She began working as a Designer at Goodmans shortly after graduating, and after working as a designer for a few years, she identified a need for a sustainability program at the company. Working closely with the CEO, whose passion is people, they collaborated to create the first sustainability program of its kind, which she has led since March of 2022. She loves being a part of the sustainability community, growing both personally and professionally, and blazing the trail for sustainability at furniture dealerships.



ARIEL LEBARRON
City of Phoenix

Ariel LeBarron is a Project Manager in the City Manager's Office of Environmental Programs, where she works on the Phoenix Resilient Food System Program providing resources to develop a stronger connected local food system with more sustainable food options for Phoenix residents. She has been with the City of Phoenix since 2019, where she held positions as a Zero Waste Specialist and a Management Intern. Additionally, Ariel currently serves as the Treasurer for the Arizona Recycling Coalition. She has an educational background in Sustainability and holds dual Global Sustainability Science degrees from Arizona State University and Leuphana University of Lüneburg. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, running, and cycling. Ariel is eager to work collaboratively with the network of emerging leaders and for the opportunity to be exposed to ongoing empirical and theoretical sustainability practices.



LANEY MEEKER

Arizona Food Bank Network

Laney Meeker is a Community Programs Manager with the Arizona Food Bank Network, the statewide anti-hunger coalition. In her role, she focuses on creating innovative and community-driven solutions to address the barriers to food access and security throughout the state. While engaging in this work, her approach is deeply rooted in the intersections of social justice, sustainability, and public policy. Laney is presently enrolled in the concurrent Master of Public Administration and Master of Sustainability Solutions graduate programs at Arizona State University and will graduate in Spring 2023. She holds a B.S. in Justice Studies from ASU. In her free time, she's an avid reader, enjoys hiking and camping around the Southwest, and travelling to new places. Laney is thrilled to be a part of the Emerging Sustainability Leadership program and is looking forward to collaborating with her peers to support a more vibrant and climate resilient Arizona.



ALEJANDRA MELGAR

Arizona Forward

As Arizona Forward's Operations Specialist, Alejandra Melgar facilitates the administrative, organizational and financial functions in support of the organizations mission to bring business and civic leaders together to promote cooperative efforts to improve the environmental sustainability and the economic vitality of our state and local regions. Since graduating from ASU, she has worked with C-suite executives in various capacities. Her expertise includes organizing educational panels, trade group conferences, and events, as well as project management with a non-profit organization. Alongside her husband, she is currently learning the ropes of parenting a baby girl, and loving every minute of it.



JENNA NORRIS

City of Peoria

Jenna Norris is a Water Resources Policy Analyst with City of Peoria where she assists with the management and strategic planning of Peoria's water resources portfolio to sustainably meet City water demand. She has focused her career in natural resources on water, with roles spanning multiple levels of government and most recently serving as Governor's Water Council Coordinator with Arizona Department of Water Resources. Jenna has a B.S. in Geology from Northern Arizona University. She understands that building and maintaining resilient water supplies is dependent on an immense amount of collaboration and creative problem solving. Managing a resource as precious as water in the desert presents a unique set of sustainability challenges, but Jenna is excited to expand her network and glean new insights and inspiration from her peers through the Emerging Sustainability Leaders program.



BEN PAULAT
Republic Services

As the Sustainability Analyst for Republic Services, Ben Paulet works to calculate the company's greenhouse gas footprint, assemble key performance indicators for the organization's various sustainability reports, and develop customer-facing sustainability metrics for the second-largest provider of waste disposal in the United States. Prior to joining Republic Services Ben was a Sustainability Consultant working with global commercial and industrial clients across a variety of industries. Ben holds a Bachelor's degree in Sustainability as well as an Executive Masters of Sustainability Leadership degree from Arizona State University. Outside of work, Ben enjoys gardening, sports, and spending time with his wife and son. He is looking forward to engaging with everyone in the Emerging Sustainability Leaders Program to drive meaningful change throughout our community.



ALEJANDRO RIANO
AECOM

Alejandro Riano is a Senior Water Resources Engineer at AECOM. In this role, Alejandro is responsible for developing plans, analyzing complex hydrologic/hydraulic infrastructure, and working on water resources projects. He specializes in 2-D modeling and developing solutions for complex H&H problems, including urban hydrology. Alejandro has many years of experience providing design and consulting services for clients in the Western United States and abroad. He holds a degree in Civil Engineering from Arizona State University. During his time at ASU, Alejandro wrote his thesis on the effects of climate change on precipitation statistics. In his spare time, he enjoys being outdoors and spending time with his kids.



MEGAN SHELDON
City of Glendale

Megan Sheldon is a Deputy Director in the City of Glendale's Water Services Department. She administers the Environmental Resources Division, where she strives to ensure facilities and operations comply with environmental requirements. Before joining the City of Glendale, Megan worked as an environmental consultant managing remediation and permitting projects for public and private sector clients. Megan has a Bachelor of Science from Western Michigan University and a Master of Science from Washington State University. Through the Emerging Sustainability Leaders program, she looks forward to gaining a better understanding of sustainability issues from diverse perspectives and improving collaboration in support of environmental protection, economic viability, and social equity.



ANDREA SIEGRIST-BAEZ

University of Phoenix

Andrea Siegrist-Baez is the Director of Veterans Affairs Operations at the University of Phoenix. She applies a natural curiosity and inquisitiveness to complex systems, processes, and ecosystems; and seeks to identify and implement improvements and efficiencies in her work and life. Andrea holds a Bachelor's degree in Outdoor Studies from Alaska Pacific University, an undergraduate Project Management certificate, an MBA in Human Resource Management, and a MAED in Adult Education and Distance Learning from the University of Phoenix. Outside of work, Andrea is a volunteer leader for the Sierra Club. In her free time, she enjoys hiking, running, rowing, adventures and traveling with her husband, and spending time with their two pups. Andrea is excited to be a part of the Emerging Sustainability Leaders program and looks forward to learning about creative strategies for integrating sustainability practices.



NATALIE SMITH

U-Haul

As an Energy Analyst for U-Haul Corporate Sustainability, Natalie Smith tackles energy procurement, city benchmarking, grant projects, and electric vehicle/charging station implementation internationally. She graduated from ASU with a B.S. in Sustainability, with a focus in renewable energy and physical geography. Natalie worked as a Sustainability Intern for the City of El Paso, Texas, before returning to her home state of Arizona. Natalie is passionate about energy, technology, and feasible ways to make the shift from non-renewable to renewable resources. She wishes to create a culture of minimizing wasteful behaviors while maintaining a high quality of life for her daughter and generations to come. In her free time, she loves water activities and adventuring with her husband. Natalie is eager to learn and network with her cohorts as they pave the way for sustainable solution exploration and implementation.



DAKOTA SPEAKER

Arizona Community Foundation

Dakota Speaker is a Philanthropic Advisor with the Arizona Community Foundation (ACF), where she has worked since 2018. In her current role, Dakota collaborates with individuals, families, and organizations to strengthen communities and help connect donors with causes and nonprofits that they are passionate about supporting. As a community member herself, Dakota is passionate and committed to creating a better and more sustainable Arizona for all. Dakota holds a bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice from Northern Arizona University and is a recent graduate of Valley Leadership's Ready Together program. She shows her passion for the environment by leveraging her time, talent, and network to support sustainable efforts and shifting her daily practices. She loves getting outdoors, hiking, camping, and volunteering her time.



CHELSI TRYON
WillScot Mobile Mini

Chelsi Tryon is the Director of Environmental, Social, and Governance for WillScot Mobile Mini, a global temporary storage and office space provider. She is currently working on establishing emission reduction and circular economy efforts across all 280+ branches. Chelsi has over a decade of experience leading integrated projects. As a mentor for GBCI and W.P. Carey, she enjoys collaborating and cultivating altruistic change management initiatives, which all started during her former days working for Arizona State University in the University Sustainability Practices office. She holds a B.A. in Business and a Master's Degree in Sustainable Solutions from Arizona State University. Chelsi is a certified Lean Six Sigma Green Belt and currently acts as a board member on the College of Global Futures Alumni Board. She is looking forward to expanding her network and partnering to foster a more sustainable future for Arizona and her children.



JEREMI VAN WAVE
RSP Architects

As a sustainability specialist and project architect in RSP's Phoenix office, Jeremi Van Wave defines the path toward a more sustainable world. His expertise covers third-party certifications such as LEED, energy modeling and analysis, daylight simulations, whole building life cycle assessment, and determining the economic impact of selected building systems and architectural features. Jeremi attended Arizona State University where he received his bachelor's in Design Management with an emphasis in Industrial Design before getting his Master of Architecture. In 2021, he worked on The Beam on Farmer in Tempe, the first cross-laminated timber office building in Arizona and a project that is paving the way for other resilient design solutions across the country. Jeremi is also becoming an important thought leader, having published articles in WorkDesign Magazine and RSP's Insight's platform.



HILARY WATERMAN
APS

Hilary Waterman is an ESG Reporting Consultant for Arizona Public Service, where she works to help facilitate the company's Clean Energy Commitment with a focus on environmental science, technology evaluation, and data analytics. Hilary holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemical Engineering from Arizona State University, where she attended as a National Merit Scholar. Hilary has spent the last decade of her career in engineering design and system management, including serving as the Senior Environmental Engineer at APS. In her free time, Hilary enjoys traveling, photography, and reading – especially mystery novels. She is honored to be part of this year's Emerging Sustainability Leaders cohort and looks forward to learning from and collaborating with the group to help create a sustainable energy future for all in Arizona.



AMIE ZEMER
Jones Studio

Born and raised in Phoenix, Amie Zemer has always had a special love and connection to Arizona. She is a Project Designer at Jones Studio in Tempe, an architecture firm dedicated to innovation, sustainability, and resilience in each project they design. Amie received her Bachelor of Architecture from the College of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture at the University of Arizona. She is passionate about how architecture and beautiful design can positively affect the health and well-being of the people and the environment around them. Amie is currently pursuing her architecture license, is a member of the American Institute of Architects, is involved in the Urban Land Institute AZ Partnership Forum, and enjoys talking to kids about architecture and sustainability. Amie loves traveling, supporting all of the Arizona sports teams, and spending time with her husband, friends, and family.



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