

## ***Keynote speakers***

### **CRAIG PITTMAN**

Craig Pittman is a native Floridian who lives in St. Petersburg with his wife and children.

Born in Pensacola, he graduated from Troy State University in Alabama, where his muckraking work for the student paper prompted an agitated dean to label him "the most destructive force on campus." Since then, he has covered a variety of newspaper beats and quite a few natural disasters, including hurricanes, wildfires and the Florida Legislature. Since 1998, he has covered environmental issues for Florida's largest newspaper, the Tampa Bay Times. He has won the Waldo Proffitt Award for Distinguished Environmental Journalism in Florida four times, and twice won the top investigative reporting award from the Society of Environmental Journalists. Stories he has written for Sarasota magazine have won three first-place awards from the Florida Magazine Association.

Craig is the co-author, with Matthew Waite, of "Paving Paradise: Florida's Vanishing Wetlands and the Failure of No Net Loss" (2009), which won the Stetson Kennedy Award from the Florida Historical Society. His second book, "Manatee Insanity: Inside the War Over Florida's Most Famous Endangered Species" (2010), was named one of 21 essential books by the Florida Humanities Council. His third book, "The Scent of Scandal: Greed, Betrayal, and the World's Most Beautiful Orchid" (2012), earned a silver medal from the Florida Book Awards. His new book, "Oh, Florida! How America's Weirdest State Influences the Rest of the Country," was published this summer and is, according to the New York Times, "compulsively readable."

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### **RIDHI D'CRUZ**

Ridhi is the associate director and "placemaking" co-director of the non-profit City Repair Project in Portland, Ore.

Ridhi is in her fifth year working with City Repair and the Village Building Convergence. As an intercontinental cross-pollinator, sociocultural anthropologist, and permaculture educator who has been living in Portland since 2010, Ridhi participates, facilitates and supports various initiatives in the areas including: "Placemaking" capacity building; houseless advocacy; cultural sustainability; diversity, equity and inclusion; and social permaculture.

She is also a passionate herbalist, urban wild-crafter, natural building enthusiast, participatory technology activist, animal lover, and permaculture urban homesteader.

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## ***Featured speakers***

### **RYAN BEAMAN**

Ryan Beaman is the director of food resource management at All Faiths Food Bank. Before joining the food bank, Ryan spent nearly two decades in the fields of grocery retail and restaurant management, and several years as a food service specialist in a K-12 child nutrition program. He helped implement the "Healthier US Schools Challenge Award" with the USDA's "Team Nutrition" campaign.

Ryan joined All Faiths Food Bank in 2013 to develop and manage the innovative and popular Sprout Mobile Farm Market program, which provides fresh fruits and vegetables to those who are in need throughout Sarasota and DeSoto counties. After devoting more than two years to developing the Sprout program, Ryan transitioned into his current role, in which he procures fresh produce for the growing Sprout program and helping to find more food resources for other programs at All Faiths Food Bank.

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### **PAUL CARAGIULO**

Paul Caragiulo was elected to the Sarasota County Commission in 2014, after serving as a Sarasota City Commissioner from 2011 to 2014. During his time as a city commissioner, Paul used his perspective as a small business owner to advocate for strong economic development in the area. He welcomes investment to the community and has not been afraid to tackle difficult issues, from the city's sound and noise policy to the elected mayor question. He is known for his careful study of issues and strong work ethic.

Paul was recognized by The Business Review as one of the area's "Best Bureaucrats," was runner-up for "Best Citizen" in Sarasota Magazine's "Best Of The Best 2013," and has been voted "Best City Commissioner" by SRQ Magazine for 2012, 2013 and 2014.

Paul and his wife, Nikki, live in the Granada neighborhood with their two daughters, both of whom attend Sarasota County Schools.

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#### **ED CHILES**

Born in Lakeland, Ed Chiles has fostered a passion for all things Floridian from an early age. An avid outdoorsman, his favorite childhood memories are roaming the northern Florida woods with his father as they hunted game

Chiles has owned three waterfront restaurants on Anna Maria Island and Longboat Key since 1979, when the flagship The Sandbar opened. Mar Vista then opened in 1990, followed by The Beach House in 1993. Ed's restaurants long have featured the finest in Florida fare and products from around the country and world, but he recently has become a pioneer in the sustainable tourism industry. Seeing the value of sustainable tourism in his businesses and community, Ed and his partners continue to pave the way, and are determined to preserve the beautiful Florida culture and environment for generations to come.

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#### **STEVE FREEMAN-MONTES**

Stevie Freeman-Montes is the sustainability manager for the city of Sarasota, leading efforts to increase process efficiencies and conserve natural resources within city operations, as well as supporting community-wide efforts toward resiliency and sustainable development. Among her current responsibilities are conducting a climate change vulnerability assessment, facilitating energy efficiency upgrades for city facilities, integrating climate adaptation into the comprehensive plan, and collaborating on code improvements related to sustainability.

Stevie holds a bachelor of science degree in zoology and master's degree in sustainable development, with more than eight years leading sustainability initiatives in the public and non-profit sectors.

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#### **CAROL JEFFERS**

Carol Jeffers is the state program coordinator for Community-Based Disaster Coalitions, director of the Medical Reserve Corps of Sarasota, and responsible for the Vulnerable Populations planning and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Strategic National Stockpile/Medical Countermeasures programs for the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County. Carol's work focuses on providing leadership, building bridges of mutually beneficial collaborative and dynamic partnerships, and resolving strategic planning, project management and technical advising challenges for federal, state and local agencies, including non-profit, faith-based, educational, and health care institutions.

Carol is vice chair of the Suncoast Disaster Healthcare Coalition, which serves Sarasota and Charlotte counties. She graduated with highest honors and the graduate President's Award from the American Public University System, with a master of arts in Emergency and Disaster Management. She is currently pursuing a medical doctor's degree.

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#### **CHRISTINE JOHNSON**

Christine P. Johnson is a Manatee County native and president of the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. A fifth-generation Floridian, she shares the Foundation's vision of creating an emerald necklace of pocket parks and protected lands along the Gulf Coast. To date, Conservation Foundation has preserved almost 8,600 acres across 33 properties along the Gulf Coast of Florida.

After earning a bachelor of science degree in business administration from the College of Charleston and a master's degree in business administration from the University of Florida, Christine worked in management and consulted with Fortune 500 companies in fields ranging from manufacturing to media. Christine has worked in the nonprofit sector in this region for the past 10 years. She successfully completed the Girl Scouts of Gulfcoast Florida's \$7 million capital campaign to build a regional headquarters and then served as director of development for Ringling

College of Art and Design, overseeing their largest fundraising campaign, leading a team of five to raise over \$100 million.

Nature is where Christine's family – husband, Bill, and two teenage children – spends time together. They enjoy hiking, camping, backpacking, and being anywhere there is water to swim, fish, sail, or scuba.

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#### **JAY LEVERONE**

Dr. Jay Leverone is the staff scientist for the Sarasota Bay Estuary Program. He previously served as a research scientist at Mote Marine Laboratory, studying the ecology of west Florida estuaries, characterizing estuarine habitats and how they are impacted by physical disturbances and water quality degradation. More recently, he has turned his attention to developing improved techniques for enhancing populations of bay scallops along the Florida Gulf coast, and has led the way in restoring local oyster reefs.

Dr. Leverone received his doctorate from the University of South Florida College of Marine Sciences in 2007, focusing his studies on the effects of red tide on early life stages of local shellfish. His current focus has been the development of numeric nutrient criteria and a monitoring strategy for tidal creeks, both of which have regulatory implications for local governments.

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#### **JASON LIECHTY**

Jason Liechty is environmental projects coordinator with the Broward County Environmental Planning and Community Resilience Division, where he manages environmental policy and legislative issues and contributes to many of the county's climate and energy initiatives. He serves on the Southeast Florida Regional Climate Change Compact Staff Steering Committee and as the compact's policy and legislative coordinator.

Jason also has worked as a planner, legislative aide, nonprofit director, and office manager of a craft distillery. He earned a bachelor of arts degree in international studies from American University, a Fulbright Fellowship to Germany, and a master's in urban planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Jason also serves as the vice-chair of the City of Fort Lauderdale Sustainability Advisory Board and the co-director of the Broward County chapter of New Leaders Council, a nonprofit leadership training organization.

He is the proud human servant of two rescue cats, Clark and Cora.

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#### **PATRICK LUI**

Patrick Lui is the bicycle, pedestrian and trail coordinator for Sarasota County Public Works and Transportation Planning. In this role, Patrick is responsible for planning physical infrastructure that provides and encourages multi-modal transportation options such as bike lanes, sidewalks, urban multi-use paths and primitive trails. Additionally, Patrick's role has a high level of citizen engagement through activities such as organizing and implementing bicycle and pedestrian education programs for children and adults.

Patrick has a diverse education in the fields of marketing, geography and urban planning, and has more than 12 years of public sector planning experience, with time as a school board planner, parks and environmental planner, and tree-by law officer.

Patrick met his wife, Megan, in graduate school at the University of Hawaii, and they now have two young children, and an English Bulldog. An animal lover who grew up playing the piano and swimming competitively, Patrick now spends his free time playing softball and day dreaming of hitting game-winning 3's in the NBA.

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#### **KARIN MURPHY**

Karin Murphy is the director of Sarasota's Urban Design Studio, hired to write the citywide form-based code. She has more than 20 years of private and public-sector planning experience within the Sarasota area, garnered in part through positions with the City of Sarasota and the Sarasota and Manatee county governments.

Karin has participated in numerous planning and sustainability projects as president of her own firm Karin Murphy

Planning & Consulting Inc., and collaborated with Dover Kohl & Partners to produce the 2012 Dreihaus Award-winning form-based code for Bradenton. A large part of her professional career has involved working with many stakeholders, jurisdictions, and multi-disciplinary teams to create and implement quality plans and codes. Karin is an accredited member of the Congress of New Urbanism, with specific skills in sustainable development; economic, commercial, and cultural development; urban planning; and form-based codes.

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#### **ALLEN PARSONS**

Allen Parsons is manager of the Sarasota County Planning Division, with responsibilities covering current and long-range planning, neighborhood services, and the Englewood Community Redevelopment Area.

After a successful recording career\*, Allen has dedicated himself to collaboratively planning for better places and better futures. He has been involved in community and land-use planning for almost 20 years in the Sarasota area, with experience in both the public and private sectors. Allen cares passionately about Sarasota's future and he looks forward daily to engaging with the community on its important topics and issues and helping to make Sarasota the premier community where people choose to live, work and play.

*\* Full disclosure: Not Allen Parsons recordings, but those of British progressive rock band The Alan Parsons Project.*

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#### **SOPHEE PAYNE**

Sophee Payne is a community health planner with the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County. Sophee's work focuses on areas where urban planning and public health overlap, providing leadership and coordination for planning and public health policy development and the implementation of strategies to address community health.

In her unique position, Sophee seeks to ensure that equity and social justice concerns are represented in public health initiatives that involve land use, the built environment, and community environmental health. Sophee is the main coordinator for Protocol for Assessing Community Excellence in Environmental Health program (PACE-EH), assists with Healthy Sarasota Initiative Program, and serves as a communication liaison between the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County and other public, non-profit, and private agencies. She also directs the activities that seek to bolster sustainability within DOH and the community at large.

Sophee graduated Summa Cum Laude from Florida State University with a Master of Science in Planning and she is currently pursuing a Master in Public Health at University of South Florida.

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#### **DAVE RANDLE**

As the first ordained environmental minister in the nation, Dave Randle has successfully coordinated a national campaign to preserve water, wildlife and wilderness areas on behalf of Pitkin County (Colorado), served as political and environmental advisor to John Denver, and the first program development coordinator for John Denver's Windstar Foundation.

He currently directs the sustainable tourism concentration for the University of South Florida (USF) College of Global Sustainability, and serves as president and executive director of the WHALE Center, and managing director of the International Ocean Institute Waves of Change initiative. He serves on the Global Sustainable Tourism Council International Knowledge, Networking, Education & Training Working Group, The International Ecotourism Society (TIES) Research and Education Council, and the board of directors for the Florida Society of Ethical Ecotourism. Currently, Dave is leading a team for four USF faculty to share best practices in sustainable tourism and marine science with counterparts in Cuba.

Dave holds a bachelor of arts degree from California Lutheran University, a divinity master's degree from the Iliff School of Theology, and a doctorate in Spiritual Disciplines, Wellness and Environmental Concerns from the University of Northern Colorado.

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#### **JOHN RIFE**

John Rife is native to Central Florida and a passionate supporter of the small businesses and food entrepreneurs that are making the area a vibrant and tasty place to live.

John is the owner of East End Market, a neighborhood market and food hub in the Audubon Park Garden District of Orlando. The two-story structure is home to a dozen food merchants, a large event space, a market garden, a demonstration kitchen, an incubator kitchen, offices, retail shops, a full-time, award-winning caterer and a world-class restaurant. He also founded the Winter Park and Winter Garden Harvest Festivals, operates the Winter Park Urban Farm and Apiary, and is the co-founder of a pedal-powered backyard farming initiative called FLEET Farming.

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#### **WILLIE SHAW**

Willie Shaw is the mayor of the city of Sarasota, with a long-time connection to the city: his family has lived here for 110 years. Currently, Mayor Shaw represents District 1 on the Sarasota City Commission. He also serves as associate minister at Mount Tabor Missionary Baptist Church, providing bereavement counseling, and is a proud U.S. Air Force Vietnam-era veteran who also spent 28 years with the U.S. Postal Service. His experience lays the foundation for strong stances on social justice and smart growth principles.

Willie is the father of nine children, 17 grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren.

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#### **JON THAXTON**

As senior vice president for community investment at Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Jon Thaxton creates and implements key strategies for transforming our region's nonprofit community and providing leadership on emerging issues. Jon joined Gulf Coast in 2012 as director of community investment while completing his 12th year of service on the Sarasota County Commission, and he was promoted to senior vice president in 2015. In this role, Jon works with nonprofit organizations, donors, and other community partners to invest Gulf Coast grants and resources in projects that will transform our region and improve public policies. His knowledge of the region and the relationships he built as a public servant are tremendous assets to his work. Jon is also recognized throughout Florida as a leading advocate for protecting the natural environment.

A fourth-generation Floridian, he was raised on a farm near Osprey and began working at his family's real estate company at 14. Jon began his environmental advocacy at Venice High School in 1974 as a founding member of the Ecology Club.

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#### ***Emcees***

#### **COOPER LEVEY-BAKER**

Cooper Levey-Baker is an associate editor at Sarasota Magazine and has written about food, politics, civic issues, the arts, and music in Southwest Florida for a decade. His work has won an honorable mention from the Julia Child Foundation and a Bronze Award for Best In-Depth Reporting from the Florida Magazine Association, and he was named a finalist for Best Public Service Reporting by the Florida Society of Professional Journalists.

Cooper lives in Sarasota with his wife, Rachel, and two sons.

Follow him on Twitter: [@LeveyBaker](https://twitter.com/LeveyBaker).

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#### **NIKKI LOGAN CURRAN**

Nikki Logan Curran has spent her career trying to make our planet a better place to live, work and play. She was the Whole Foods Market Marketing Director for seven years, and has spent the last four as the Community Outreach Director for Mattison's Restaurant Group. She also co-owns Hitched and Honey with her husband, David, where they curate locally sourced, sustainable events as fundraisers for area non-profits.

Nikki has been on the board of directors for Rotary Club of Sarasota, Chefs 4 Kids, Transition Sarasota, and Siesta Key Chamber of Commerce, and served on committees for Embracing Our Differences, Boys and Girls Club, All Faiths Food Bank and many others. Her passions lie in all things promoting kindness, equality and love.