

**Name:** Brenda Bates

**Organizational affiliation:** Westchester County Parks

**Your relevant background:** I have been working for the Westchester County Parks Department (Conservation Division) for 20 years at various facilities. At all of the parks, invasive species have been on the forefront of my conservation and land management issues. I have worked with hundreds of volunteers, provided interpretive programs, networked with numerous municipalities, governmental agencies and environmental organizations, collected biodiversity data for thousands of the County's owned and operated acres and compiled Natural Resource Management Plans for several of our Preserves. I was involved with the original (2006) Mile-a-Minute Weed (MAM) task force of which I spent unmentionable hours rolling mats of MAM from a newly reforested area, was part of the first group in the region to release *Rhinocominus latipes* or the Mile-a-Minute Weed weevil and used sheep grazing experimental control methods through the University of Albany. I participated in the USDA's Black Swallow-wort research projects and instituted invasive species management recommendations in Forestry Management Plans through the Watershed Ag Council. I assisted in the creation of a native species alternative to invasive species planting brochure and have attended numerous invasive species symposiums and workshops. I volunteered and served on the board for many years for the Bedford Audubon Society and the Pound Ridge Land Conservancy. My experience has mainly been focused in the Westchester County region.

**Interesting skills you bring to the PRISM/Steering committee:** I tackle invasive species management realistically and evaluate each situation based on the actual management need and desired outcome. I look for and implement various methods and seek out funding or free resources when appropriate. I am currently working on a business degree and have applied my gaining business knowledge in recruitment of resources and networking. I consider myself a knowledgeable (generalist) naturalist as I have a wide skill-set of the local flora and fauna, but don't specialize in one particular field. I ask a lot of questions and seek out a variety of alternatives for situations that arise, including "weighing" the most appropriate methods for management.

**Areas of interest:** I am particularly interested in trying to protect and restore native species as opposed to eradicating every invasive out there and believe preventing and controlling spread is crucial. I feel that our ecology has changed so drastically and in some circumstances we just need to accept invasives as part of it and look for the benefits they may be providing. For years I tracked Wood Turtles and more often than not, when they were on land, I would locate them deep under barberry bushes as that were basically the only protective understory shrub within their territory. I've seen all kinds of butterflies feed on Purple Loosestrife and all kinds of birds nest and feed in phragmites. I am, however, by no means accepting of invasives. I think the purpose and methods used for each invasive species management case needs to be evaluated thoroughly and the real threats they pose (or don't pose) recognized, remediated and maintained.

**Name:** David Strayer

**Organizational affiliation:** Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies

**Your relevant background:** I am a freshwater ecologist, and have conducted research on non-native species and their impacts for about 25 years. Along with cooperators at the Cary Institute and elsewhere, I have worked on the biology and ecological impacts of zebra mussels, water-chestnut, mystery snails, and rusty crayfish, as well as on predicting the spread, success, and impacts of non-native species in general, and have written more than 40 technical papers on these subjects. More detail is on my web page at <http://www.caryinstitute.org/science-program/our-scientists/dr-david-l-strayer>. In addition to my research publications, I often write or speak about non-native species to general audiences (e.g., *Poughkeepsie Journal*, Rotary clubs, etc.). I have served on Conservation Advisory Commissions for two towns, and was a member of my town's Comprehensive Plan Update Committee for several years. I have been attending meetings of the Lower Hudson PRISM regularly since it formed.

**Interesting skills you bring to the PRISM/Steering committee:** I'm not sure that I really have any interesting skills that would especially suit me for this position. I have worked on invasive species for a long time, and I've been a member of quite a few committees, from local to international, so I have some experience working with others. I also work primarily on aquatic animal invaders, which relatively few current PRISM members work on, so bringing this experience to the steering committee may be useful.

**Areas of interest:** It's hard for me to single out any special areas of interest, because I see so many good opportunities to take advantage of the skills and interests of PRISM partners to reduce the undesirable impacts of non-native species in our region. In addition, I'd see my role on the steering committee primarily as representing the interests of PRISM members rather than advocating for any particular points of view or activities. Personally, I think that there are especially good opportunities to reduce the rates of arrival, establishment, and spread of species that have not yet arrived or are just getting established in our area, so areas like vector management and early detection and eradication seem like especially attractive areas. Although I am a researcher, I think that activities like education, outreach, and public engagement are especially important if we are to make progress in these areas.

**Name:** Erik Kiviat

**Organizational affiliation:** Hudsonia

**Your relevant background:** I began field science and environmental work at a serious level about 1971. My career has included a lot of natural history study, and a fair amount of quantitative ecological research, of plants and animals in the Hudson Valley and beyond (including observations on weeds all over the US and in several other countries). I have educated people of all ages from 3 to seniors, with a lot of parttime undergraduate and Master's student teaching and research collaborations as well as training and informing professionals. I have been a faculty member at Bard College, and have consulted for entities in all sectors of the environmental economy. My main responsibility now is administering and raising funds for Hudsonia, although I do a good deal of research, some of it in collaboration with students and interns. I work in environments that range from urban-industrial to wildlands. Phragmites, purple loosestrife, Japanese knotweed, and water-chestnut are the "invasive" species I know best; I'm moderately conversant with the ecology of Ailanthus and a few sometimes-overabundant native animals such as muskrat, beaver, and deer. My work on weeds focuses on their habitat functions for other organisms, and thus the weed impacts on biodiversity. One goal is to understand better where and how weeds should be managed to reduce their adverse impacts on particular native species of conservation concern – or, from a different angle, how to take advantage of the habitat functions and other ecosystem services that are provided by weeds. I'm interested in the missing information, misinformation, and useful information in the scientific and natural history literature on invasive species. I have also studied rare and vulnerable species of animals and plants including common gallinule, cerulean warbler, Blanding's turtle, bog turtle, an undescribed leopard frog species, giant silk moths, a rare clam shrimp, goldenclub, and eastern prickly-pear, and significant habitats including the estuarine wetlands, fens, and old forests.

**Interesting skills you bring to the PRISM/Steering committee:** My best developed skills are probably field taxonomy (plants and animals), broad experience with ecology and conservation of groups of organisms, and familiarity with habitats and species of the LH PRISM and neighboring regions. I know a lot about land use and other human impacts on nature. I have read widely in the relevant literature, have a reasonable facility with data collection and analysis, and know enough about herbicide toxicology to be concerned. I have analyzed human-environmental interactions in wetlands, which included forays into cultural ecology and ethnobotany.

**Areas of interest:** My interests include research, interpretation of research, attempting to create management approaches that work to reduce pest populations and do minimal nontarget harm, taking advantage of the traits of invasive plants (their ability to provide habitat functions and other ecosystem services, including products such as biofuels), and understanding and protecting conservation targets (habitats and biota). I would like to work on setting conservation targets for the Lower Hudson PRISM, as well as strategizing how PRISMS and other groups can innovate to solve challenging IS problems. I have strong interests in the differential effects of industrialization (e.g., shale gas development) and urbanization on different taxa and guilds (urban-sensitive and urban-tolerant organisms), and how microclimates and climate change create warm spots and cool spots that favor different species.

Also, on a humorous note, if I'm elected to the Steering Committee, I will campaign to create a LH PRISM motto "ROY G BIV Forever!"

**Name:** Jen Stengle

**Organizational affiliation:** Cornell Cooperative Extension, Putnam County

**Relevant Background:**

I have been with Cornell Cooperative Extension for about ten years. In my role as Environmental Horticulture and Natural Resources educator, my duties have ranged from working with the Putnam County Soil and Water Conservation District to devise a vegetative management plan for Lake Gleneida, advising commercial landscapers on their use of pesticides, and creating an Emerald Ash Borer outreach blitz to municipal officials in Putnam County. My community outreach programs have included hands-on Shiitake mushroom cultivation, build-your-own-rain barrels, and *Bug-ZOO-ka!* insect exploration.

**Additional skills I bring to the table:**

**A Nursery and Landscape Connection.** Before Cooperative Extension, I worked for twenty years as a commercial landscaper. The Nursery and Landscape industry is one I understand well, and look to develop those relationships to promote the use of native plants in the landscape. I believe it's important to enlist landscape professionals in Invasive Species outreach and education to effect change in home and commercial landscape preferences and perceptions. (See *ES Natives* campaign for an example of a partnership approach with the nursery and landscape trade: <http://goo.gl/nzsi57>) I have also developed and delivered Invasive Species outreach and education presentations to the trade.

**Extension's Network:** Through my connection to [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#), I bring leveraged resources focused on serving our region. Extension's network includes local and regional education and outreach professionals, statewide resources, connection with researchers, and the valued efforts of trained outreach volunteers (Master Forest Owners, Master Naturalists, Master Watershed Stewards, and Master Gardeners). Our mission explicitly includes collaboration with local, state and national organizations.

**Area of interest:**

**Science communication:** I am currently working on my Masters with a focus in *Science and the Public*; the communication and integration of science within our culture. Connecting with communities on Invasive Species management at a regional scale should take into consideration local values and history to better engage the public and increase buy-in from municipalities. LH PRISMs local engagement holds great promise for effecting change within our region: I look forward to working with the LH PRISM partners on many levels, and think we will be especially effective as a team.

**Name:** Meredith Taylor

**Organizational affiliation:**

NYC Department of Environmental Protection – Water Supply

Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership – Executive Committee, Rapid Response Committee  
New York State Invasive Species Advisory Committee



**Your relevant background:** Growing up in Croton-on-Hudson, Westchester County, and having lived and worked in Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties I am very familiar with the diversity of the region and the invasive species impacts. While attending Cornell University, during summers, I worked locally for Riverkeeper ('03), Teatown Lake Reservation ('04) and Westchester County Parks ('06). After graduating with a degree in Natural Resources and a strong interest in invasive species I completed a 10-month SCA internship with NYSDEC's Hudson River Research Reserve coordinating the Mile-a-Minute Project of the Hudson Valley in 2008. As part of that internship I participated in the Lower Hudson PRISM and worked with many of the current partners to help slow the spread of mile-a-minute vine and lay the groundwork for the introduction of the biocontrol weevil. Since then I have worked for the Hudson River Estuary Program on biodiversity outreach to municipal officials, the Orange County Land Trust on stewardship of protected lands in Orange County, and most recently at the Catskill Center where I coordinated the Catskill PRISM, CRISP, from 2010 (before receiving the DEC contract) to 2012 with two full contract years under my belt. My work as CRISP Coordinator exposed me to a wide range of invasive species issues from forest pests to terrestrial plants to aquatic invasive species.

I am currently responsible for managing invasive species on lands and in waters in the New York City water supply watershed, which includes over 30,000 acres in the Lower Hudson PRISM region. My duties include coordinating with staff across the Bureau of Water Supply on invasive species issues, surveying and controlling priority species and providing technical oversight on survey and control work by contractors.

**Interesting skills you bring to the PRISM/Steering committee:** Some of the special skills that I would bring to the table as a member of the Steering Committee are my knowledge and experience managing a PRISM contract with NYSDEC Invasive Species Unit, my involvement with statewide invasive species initiatives and my experience working with local municipalities on biodiversity conservation and invasive species issues. I also bring the perspective from working for large agencies and small non-profits. I am an advanced iMapInvasives user, GIS user and have experience with volunteer coordination and consensus building amongst diverse partners.

**Areas of interest:** *The mission of DEP's Bureau of Water Supply is to reliably deliver a sufficient quantity of high quality drinking water and to ensure the long term sustainability of the delivery of this most valuable resource.* As a member of the steering committee I would advocate for decisions that would promote both aquatic and terrestrial ecosystem health across the region since healthy, diverse ecosystems provide the services necessary to sustain high quality drinking water for the future. I am also interested in promoting collaboration on larger invasive species initiatives across the state.

**Name:** Marnie Miller-Keas

**Organizational affiliation:** Field Biologist, West Point US Army Garrison Natural Resources Branch

**Relevant background:** In the beginning of 2008, after graduating with a general biology degree from Washington State University, I dragged my [then] fiancé across the country to Bear Mountain State Park where I secured an internship through AmeriCorps/Student Conservation Association. During my two terms as a field lead on a State Wildlife Grant turtle project, I gained experience with numerous invasive species including *Phragmites*, Japanese barberry, Mile-a-Minute, Japanese stilt grass, and multiflora rose, just to name a few. My knowledge of invasive ecology and management (as well as how to educate the public about invasive species) continued to grow the next two years while working at Bear Mountain's Trailside Zoo. After a few months of part time work for State Parks and the Hudson River Estuary Program, I was offered my current position at West Point. I have been a part of PRISM, in varying capacities, since 2008. Also since 2008, I have swam through 14-foot-tall stands of *Phragmites*, pushed (gingerly) through acres of barberry and rose, and felt a slight sense of privation for every Norway maple stand that is incapable of producing the prized syrup of the Northeast. I also witnessed (and assisted with management attempts during) the precipitous fall of our hibernating bats as white-nose syndrome, caused by an invasive fungus, began its rapid spread across New York, and now the country. After all of this, the greatest challenge seems to be how to understand invasive species and their effects on our native ecosystems. As the body of knowledge grows and evolves, our understanding of nature evolves; this is essential to making management decisions, especially in a world of tight and tighter budgets.

**Interesting skills you bring to the PRISM/Steering committee:** I possess an academic background, which is for making management decisions because of the ambiguous nature of invasive species eradication methods. More practical skills include ArcView GIS, networking with various groups throughout the lower Hudson Valley, a wide range of field experience, and the motivation to get things done.

**Areas of interest:** Although many know me for my passion (some may call it an obsession) for turtles, my main interest is in protecting critical ecosystems- without these, there is no reason to spend any time or resources trying to manage invasive species. I'm also very interested in urban ecology, especially dense urban centers such as Manhattan. The fact that two woodcocks are living in Bryant Park continues to amaze me.