Sustainable and Healthy Communities Presenter Bios

Michael Slimak

National Program Director, Sustainable and Healthy Communities (SHC)

Michael Slimak is in his 43rd year of service to the US EPA and has served as the National Program Director for SHC since 2011. He is widely recognized as an authority on ecological risk and the importance of ecosystems in determining our well-being. He has managed programs that include the ecological and health consequences of climate change, the ecological impacts of nonindigenous invasive species, the impact on aquatic ecosystems from mountaintop mining, the ecological connectivity of isolated waters, the environmental impacts of biofuels, the remediation and restoration of contaminated sites, the development of methods for the sustainable reuse of waste products, and EPA's Report on the Environment. Dr. Slimak holds a Ph.D. in Environmental Science, an MS in Wildlife Ecology, and a BS in Biology.

Andrew Geller

Principal Associate National Program Director, SHC

Andrew Geller is the Principal Associate National Program Director for SHC and ORD's Executive Lead for Lead (Pb) Research. He recently co-led the cross federal agency workshop on Research for the Federal Lead Action Plan for the President's Task Force on children's Environmental Health. His portfolio includes engagement with the Agency's Children's Health Protection Advisory Council, the EPA-NIEHS Children's Environmental Health Centers, and the Superfund Research Program. Andrew was the primary author of EPA's Environmental Justice Research Roadmap; his research includes the development of community and tribal decision support tools, the impacts of environmental exposures on older adults, and neurotoxicological assessments of the impacts of environmental exposures on visual development and function. Andrew received his undergraduate degree from the University of Pennsylvania and earned his Master's degree and PhD in Cognition and Perception Psychology at the University of Michigan. He did post-doctoral training in Neurotoxicology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's Center for Environmental Medicine and Lung Biology and with EPA through a National Research Service Award from the NIEHS.

Marc Russell

Research Area Coordinator, Research Area 9 "Benefits from Remediation, Restoration, and Revitalization"

Ph. D., Assistant Center Director, Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure

Dr. Marc Russell is responsible for his Center's planning and implementation of research in EPA's Sustainable and Healthy Communities and Sustainable and Safe Water Research Programs. He works with other EPA centers, offices, national research programs, and communities to develop innovative, scientifically sound, and sustainability focused decision support tools. These tools assure that the integrated research vital to the future of environmental protection is robust, defensible and useful. Dr. Russell specializes in landscape system ecology with foci in estuarine net ecosystem metabolism, freshwater inflow, landscape characterization, net anthropogenic nutrient budgets, system dynamics models, functional equivalency, ecosystem services, and natural capital accounting.

Susan Yee

Output 9.1 Lead, Research Area 9 “Benefits from Remediation, Restoration, and Revitalization”

Ph.D., Ecologist, Gulf Ecosystem Measurement and Modeling Division

Dr. Susan Yee is an ecologist with expertise in ecosystem services, ecological and statistical modeling, and socio-ecological systems thinking. Dr. Yee is the output lead for two ORD projects: one focused on improving methods for measuring restoration effectiveness within the context of revitalizing remediated sites (Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Area 9, Output 1) and a second aimed at developing approaches to facilitate setting attainable biological goals for protection and restoration of aquatic resources (Safe and Sustainable Water Research Area 1, Output 3). She started as a postdoc at EPA modeling impacts of climate stressors on coral reef health, and most recently led a case study assessing impacts of ecosystem services on human health and well-being in Puerto Rico. She earned a Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Chicago, an M.S. in Mathematics from the University of Tennessee, and a B.S. in Mathematics from Texas Tech University.

Matthew Harwell

Output 9.2 Lead, Research Area 9 “Benefits from Remediation, Restoration, and Revitalization”

Ph.D, Senior Ecologist and Special Assistant, Gulf Ecosystem Measurement and Modeling Division

Dr. Matthew Harwell is a Senior Ecologist and Special Assistant at ORD’s Gulf Ecosystem Measurement and Modeling Division in Gulf Breeze, Florida USA. Matt’s areas of specialization include ecosystem services, ecosystem assessment, integration and communication of science for decision makers, adaptive management, and ecosystem restoration. In the last StRAP, Matt co-led a significant portion of SHC’s national research portfolio on ecosystem services. In the current StRAP, Matt was involved in developing and leading multiple scales of the SHC portfolio looking to connect ecosystem services to contaminated cleanups. Matt has a B.S. in Biology from University of South Florida and a Ph.D. in Marine Sciences from Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences (College of William and Mary).

Joel Hoffman

Output 9.3 Lead, Research Area 9 “Benefits from Remediation, Restoration, and Revitalization”

Ph.D., Chief of the Ecosystem Services Branch in the Great Lakes Toxicology and Ecology Division the Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure

Dr. Joel Hoffman is Chief of the Ecosystem Services Branch in the Great Lakes Toxicology and Ecology Division within the Center for Computational Toxicology and Exposure. Dr. Hoffman has been leading “R2R2R” research related to ecosystem services and contaminated sites for the past six years, and throughout this period has been supporting the EPA Areas of Concern Program, which is led by the EPA Great Lakes National Program Office. Dr. Hoffman helped to develop the R2R2R portfolio in the current StRAP. Dr. Hoffman is a broadly trained coastal ecologist with expertise in ecosystem assessment, food webs and contaminant bioaccumulation, and ecosystem services.

Britta Bierwagen

Output 9.4 Lead, Research Area 9 “Benefits from Remediation, Restoration, and Revitalization”

Ph.D., Branch Chief, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Britta Bierwagen is a Branch Chief in the Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment within the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Office of Research and Development. She is an Output Lead in the Sustainable and Healthy Communities National Research Program for “Case Studies to Apply and Analyze Use of Tools at Brownfield Sites.” Her research includes assessments of effectiveness of restoration and revitalization options, most recently working with brownfields sites and communities to facilitate redevelopment of abandoned gas station sites. Dr. Bierwagen earned a B.S. in Chemistry and Biology (College of William and Mary) and a Ph.D. in Environmental Science and Management (Bren School, University of California, Santa Barbara). She joined the EPA as a post-doc focusing on vulnerability assessments of aquatic ecosystems, design of monitoring to detect climate change-related impacts, and opportunities to increase resilience.

Susan Julius

Research Area Coordinator, Research Area 10 “Community-Driven Solutions”

Assistant Center Director, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Dr. Susan Julius is an Assistant Center Director in the Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment (CPHEA). She is also a Research Area Coordinator for the Community Driven Solutions area within the Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Program of U.S. EPA's Office of Research and Development. She applies a vulnerability assessment approach to understand and evaluate risks posed by climate change to urban environments. She also develops and evaluates management responses to increase resilience to projected changes using risk management techniques such as decision making under uncertainty. Susan served as Convening Lead Author for the U.S. Cities and Climate Change: Urban, Infrastructure, and Vulnerability Issues in support of the 2014 U.S. National Climate Assessment and as Convening Lead Author on the 2018 U.S. National Climate Assessment for the chapter on Built Environment, Urban Systems, and Cities.

Nicolle Tulve

Output 10.2 Lead, Research Area 10 “Community-Driven Solutions”

Ph.D., Physical Scientist, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Dr. Nicolle S. Tulve is an internationally recognized expert on young children’s exposures to chemical and non-chemical stressors found in their everyday environments and the influence these stressors have on their health and well-being. Dr. Tulve is the output lead for a cross-ORD project focused on exposures, health, and well-being for selected vulnerable groups, including children (Research Area 10, Output 2). Nicolle is also a product lead for selected research activities focused on children’s environmental health (e.g., the tribal childcare center study, children’s environmental health app, non-chemical stressor workshop, soil and dust ingestion). She received her Ph.D. in environmental engineering from Clarkson University, an M.S. in environmental health and toxicology from SUNY Albany, and a B.S. in biology from Oswego State. Nicolle is active in several professional societies, reviews for numerous refereed journals, and serves as an Associate Editor for the Journal of Exposure Science and Environmental Epidemiology.

Emily Eisenhauer

Output 10.3 Lead, Research Area 10 “Community-Driven Solutions”

Ph.D, Post-doctoral Fellow, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Dr. Emily Eisenhauer is a Post-doctoral Fellow with the Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment. She earned a PhD in sociology from Florida International University where she completed her dissertation research on socio-ecological vulnerability to climate change in South Florida, and has ten years of experience in community based research collaborations with grassroots organizations, social service providers and local governments. Her current research focuses on community resilience, social vulnerability, and environmental justice. As a founding member of the EPA Social-environmental Science Exchange she works to further integration of social science in ORD research and also contributes to translational research and program evaluation activities in ORD.

Thomas Johnson

Output 10.4 Lead, Research Area 10 “Community-Driven Solutions”

Ph.D., Hydrologist, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Dr. Thomas Johnson is a hydrologist at the U.S. EPA Office of Research and Development, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment. Research interests include assessing and managing the impacts of climate and land use change on water and watershed systems, resilient designs of urban and agricultural BMPs, and scenario-based decision support and modeling tools for water management. As an Output Lead in EPA’s Sustainable and Healthy Communities Research Program, Tom manages products related to extreme event impacts, vulnerability and risk. Prior to joining the EPA, he held positions with the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia and was an American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) Science and Technology Policy Fellow in Washington, DC. He has degrees from Penn State University (Ph.D.), Colorado State University (MS), and University of Colorado (BA).

Mike Nye

Output 10.5 Lead, Research Area 10 “Community-Driven Solutions”

Ph.D., Sociologist, Center for Public Health and Environmental Assessment

Dr. Mike Nye is a human geographer with expertise in resilience, risk and risky behavior, environmental policy, and social patterns. Prior to joining EPA, he worked in academia and for the UK Environment Agency. He now manages ORD’s Net Zero research program along with serving as an output lead and product lead in the SHC research program. His main areas of focus within ORD are community revitalization, resilience, and materials management.