

**2026 STATE OF THE SCIENCE MEETING**  
CHARLESTON, SC • MARCH 2-3, 2026

# *Change Among Our Working Waterfronts*



**STATE OF THE SCIENCE**  
Health and Safety of  
Gulf Coast and U.S. Caribbean Fishers



**Southeastern  
Coastal Center**  
for Agricultural Health and Safety

## ABOUT THE MEETING

The Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety hosts annual State of the Science (SOS) meetings to serve as a platform to seek science that answers relevant questions related to agricultural health and safety. The SOS meeting is an opportunity for scientists, policymakers, and community leaders from various disciplines to network and build valuable collaborations that will address future needs in agricultural health and safety.

The 8th Annual State of the Science Meeting is hosted in partnership with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Southeast Caribbean Disaster Resilience Partnership. The theme of this year's meeting is ***Change Among Our Working Waterfronts***, where attendees will explore evolving challenges faced by coastal communities and fishery workers. The event will explore the health and safety concerns derived from natural disaster impacts, while also presenting forward-looking solutions and opportunities.

## ABOUT THE CENTER

The Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety (SCCAHS) is part of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) / National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Agricultural Health and Safety Initiative. SCCAHS explores and addresses the occupational safety and health needs of people working in agriculture, fishing, and forestry in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico.



# WELCOME

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## Dear Colleagues and Friends,

We are so excited to welcome you to Charleston, South Carolina, and to the 8<sup>th</sup> annual State of the Science Meeting focused on **Change Among Our Working Waterfronts**.

We are delighted to gather with community leaders, researchers, practitioners, and industry partners who are deeply engaged in understanding and supporting working waterfronts during times of environmental, economic, and social change. This meeting is an opportunity to share the latest research, highlight innovative practices, and strengthen collaborations that help sustain the communities, livelihoods, and ecosystems that depend on these vital spaces.



Charleston—rich in maritime history and coastal heritage—offers a fitting setting for these conversations. Over the coming days, we hope you will engage fully in the sessions, exchange ideas across disciplines and sectors, and build new partnerships that extend well beyond this meeting.

**Thank you** for being part of this important dialogue and for the work you do to advance the science and practice of resilient working waterfronts. We look forward to the discussions ahead and to learning alongside you.

With appreciation,

**Farah Arosemena-Murfee**

**Ashley McLeod-Morin**

*Meeting Co-Chairs*

# SPECIAL GUEST

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## **K.C. ELLIOTT**

*National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)*

KC Elliott is the Coordinator for NIOSH's Office of Agriculture Safety and Health, which coordinates research and programs to prevent injury and illness in the agriculture, forestry, and fishing industries. Her research interests include the aquaculture industry, urban and vertical farming, rural worker populations, precarious work arrangements, risk communication, working hours and sleep, offroad vehicle safety, and neurodivergence in the workplace.

# AGENDA

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## **MARCH 02**

### **4:00 - 4:30 p.m. | Welcome and Opening Session**

*Farah Arosemena-Murfee and Ashley McLead-Morin, Meeting Directors,  
Gulf Coast & Caribbean State of the Science Meeting, Southeastern Coastal Center for Agricultural Health and Safety*

*K.C. Elliott, Program Coordinator, NIOSH Office of Agriculture Safety and Health NIOSH Agricultural, Forestry, and Fishing (AgFF) Program*

### **4:30 - 6:00 p.m. | Poster Session with Light Fare**

## **MARCH 03**

### **7:00 - 8:00 a.m. | Breakfast and Registration**

### **8:00 - 9:20 a.m. | Community Voices Presentations**

*Hosted and Moderated by Angela Lindsey*

#### **Sue Colson, City of Cedar Key**

*Leading Community Resilience in Cedar Key*

#### **Alyssa Ramsey Spence, NC Agromedicine Institute**

*Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network of North Carolina: Connecting People, Partners, and Care*

#### **Barbara Garrity-Blake, NC Catch and Duke University**

*Voices from the Edge: Oral Histories of the NC Commercial Fishing Industry*

#### **Tomás Ayala Feliciano, Asociación Pesquera de Culebra**

**Joined by Nicolás Gómez Andújar, Druso Daubon, Luis Suárez**

*Reclaiming our Working Waterfront: Community-Led Revitalization of Small-Scale Fishing in Culebra, Puerto Rico*

### **9:20 - 9:50 a.m. | Community Voices Panel Q&A**

### **9:50 a.m.- 10:10 a.m. | Community Voices in Action Award Presentation**

*Culebra's Story: Fishing Community Docu-Short Viewing*

*Community Voices in Action Award Presentation to the Asociación Pesquera de Culebra*

### **10:10 a.m. | Break**

*Coffee/Tea/Cold Beverages*

### **10:20 - 11:20 a.m. | Research Presentations**

*Hosted and Moderated by J. Glenn Morris*

#### **Joel Fodrie, University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill Institute of Marine Sciences**

*Legislatively Mandated Study of the Health and Management of North Carolina's Marine Fisheries*

#### **Dave Love, Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future**

*Occupational Safety and Worker Wellbeing in the US Aquaculture, Commercial Fishing and Seafood Processing Sectors*

#### **Nadine Heck, East Carolina University**

*Storms and Marine Fisheries*

## **MARCH 03 (continued)**

**11:20 - 11:50 a.m. | Research Panel Q&A**

**11:50 a.m. - 12:45 p.m. | Lunch**

*Lunch Buffett*

**12:45 - 1:45 p.m. | Extension and Education Presentations**

*Hosted and Moderated by Ricky Telg*

**Emmanuel Maldonado-Gonzalez, East Carolina University**

*Fishing Communities at the Crossroads: Abandonment, Displacement, and Community Resilience*

**Matthew Gorstein, South Carolina Sea Grant**

*Working Waterfront Resilience in South Carolina During the ‘Squeeze:’ Addressing Pressures from the Land and Sea*

**Savanna Barry, Florida Sea Grant, University of Florida**

*Co-Design to Coastal Defense: How Cedar Key’s Community-Built Living Shorelines Performed During Major Hurricanes*

**1:45 - 2:15 p.m. | Extension and Education Panel Q&A**

**2:15 p.m. | Break**

*Coffee/Tea/Cold Beverages*

**2:30 - 3:50 p.m. | Opportunities and Solutions Presentations**

*Hosted and Moderated by Lisa Lundy*

**Mike Allen, University of Florida Nature Coast Biological Station**

*Exploring Successes and Contemporary Challenges for Fisheries Management in the Southeast USA*

**Julie Sorensen, Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety**

*IFISH7 and the IFISH Innovation Exchange*

**Joshua Stoll, University of Maine**

*Local Catch Network - Sustainable Fisheries and the Communities That Depend on Them*

**Shelby B. White, Virginia Institute of Marine Science**

*Virginia’s Young Fishermen’s Initiative: Training the Next Generation of Commercial Watermen in the Commonwealth*

**3:50 - 4:20 p.m. | Opportunities and Solutions Panel Q&A**

**4:20 - 4:30 p.m. | Closing Remarks**

# COMMUNITY VOICES

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## SUE COLSON

*City of Cedar Key*

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Sue Colson is a longtime civic leader in Cedar Key, Florida, with 22 years of service on the City Commission, including one year as mayor. She led the island community through multiple hurricanes and a major fire while advocating for resilient infrastructure, environmental protection, and water quality. Colson has been especially dedicated to safeguarding water and wastewater systems and protecting the local clam industry. After stepping down as mayor in 2025, she continues serving the community on the Water and Sewer Board.



## ALYSSA RAMSEY SPENCE

*NC Agromedicine Institute*

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Alyssa Spence is the Interim Director of the NC Agromedicine Institute. Raised in agriculture as the daughter of a first-generation Appalachian farmer and a member of a multigenerational farm family, her work is grounded in lived experience. She has served as an agriculture teacher and extension agent, shaping her focus on translating research into practical, non-regulatory solutions. Her research interests include agricultural safety and health, as well as work-family dynamics within agricultural communities.



## BARBARA GARRITY-BLAKE

*NC Catch & Duke University*

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Barbara Garrity-Blake is a cultural researcher and storyteller who amplifies the voices of fishermen, culture bearers, and community leaders across North Carolina's coastal plain. Her work centers marginalized perspectives to build empathy for food producers and working waterfront communities. By elevating lived experience and local knowledge, she challenges audiences to reconsider whose voices matter in discussions about sustainability, governance, and the future of coastal and fishing-dependent communities.





## TOMÁS AYALA FELICIANO

*Asociación Pesquera de Culebra*

Tomás Ayala Feliciano is a small-scale fishing leader from Culebra, Puerto Rico, and a third-generation commercial fisherman. He practices traditional artisanal fishing methods while advocating for marine conservation, fisher safety, and community stewardship. Over the past decade, he has guided his community through hurricanes, the pandemic, and ongoing marginalization of fisherfolk. In 2022, he co-founded and became president of the Culebra Fishing Association, helping establish a fishing center that supports education, ecosystem stewardship, and a solidarity-based blue economy.



## NICOLÁS GÓMEZ ANDÚJAR

*Asociación Pesquera de Culebra*

Nicolás Gómez Andújar is the co-founder and secretary of Asociación Pesquera de Culebra. He is a second-generation fisherman who grew up in Puerto Rico, and a scholar of coastal socio-ecological systems with a master's degree from Oregon State University.



## DRUSO DAUBON

*Asociación Pesquera de Culebra*

Druso Daubon is a fisherman and treasurer of the Asociación Pesquera de Culebra.



## LUIS SUÁREZ

*Asociación Pesquera de Culebra*

Luis Suárez is a fisherman and oyster harvester associated with the Asociación Pesquera de Culebra.

# COMMUNITY VOICES IN ACTION AWARD

The Community Voices in Action Award is presented to **Asociación Pesquera de Culebra** at the 2026 State of the Science Meeting in recognition of the organization's exceptional contributions to its community. Through steadfast leadership, collective action, and an enduring commitment to local fishers and coastal livelihoods, the association exemplifies the power of community-driven stewardship. Its vision and dedication are incredibly valuable, strengthening both working waterfronts and the social fabric that sustains them. This award honors the meaningful, everyday work carried out by Asociación Pesquera de Culebra and celebrates its lasting impact on people, place, and the future of coastal communities.

# RESEARCH

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## JOEL FODRIE

*UNC-Chapel Hill Institute of Marine Sciences*

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Joel Fodrie is an ecologist whose research examines fish and shellfish population dynamics and estuarine community ecology. He has authored more than 100 peer-reviewed publications and has become increasingly engaged in coastal research management in North Carolina. He serves as Director of the Institute of Marine Sciences and a Distinguished Chair in Public Policy. Fodrie earned his PhD in Oceanography and brings extensive experience bridging science and coastal management.



## DAVE LOVE

*Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future*

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Dave Love is a researcher whose work focuses on aquaculture, fisheries, and the environmental, social, health, and food system issues connected to those industries. His interests also include food waste, antimicrobial resistance, and worker and community health. He founded the Food System Lab at the Cylburn Arboretum in Baltimore, an urban agriculture teaching farm serving students of all ages. Love holds a BS in Biology and advanced degrees in microbiology and public health and resides in Asheville, North Carolina.



## NADINE HECK

*East Carolina University*

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Nadine Heck is an assistant professor in the Department of Earth, Environment and Planning at East Carolina University. Her research examines social-ecological dynamics related to fisheries, marine protected areas, and nature-based adaptation. Using mixed geospatial and social science methods, she collaborates closely with communities and agencies to address governance and resource management challenges. She earned her PhD in Geography from the University of Leeds and previously held postdoctoral positions at Cornell University and UC Santa Cruz.



# EXTENSION AND EDUCATION



## EMMANUEL MALDONADO-GONZÁLEZ

*East Carolina University*

Emmanuel Maldonado-González is an environmental sociologist and a PhD student in Integrated Coastal Sciences at East Carolina University. His work focuses on fishing communities, coastal displacement, tourism, and community-based resilience in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. He has led and collaborated on projects with fishers, conservation organizations, Sea Grant programs, and federal agencies, using participatory methods to integrate local knowledge into research, education, and policy. His research centers on the social dimensions of coastal change and supports fishing communities as they navigate economic, environmental, and cultural transformation.



## MATTHEW GORSTEIN

*South Carolina Sea Grant*

As the South Carolina Sea Grant Consortium's Director for Development and Extension, Matt coordinates the efforts of extension staff members. The work of the extension team encompasses a wide range of topics, including community resilience and adaptation to changing climate; natural resource planning and protection; wise use and conservation of living marine resources and coastal water resources; risk communication; and fostering sustainable economic development opportunities. He has a MS in Food and Resource Economics and a BS in Economics, both from the University of Florida; and he has been working professionally in coastal science and education for over 11 years.



## SAVANNA BARRY

*Florida Sea Grant, University of Florida*

Savanna Barry serves as a Regional Specialized Extension Agent III with UF/IFAS Extension and Florida Sea Grant. She is based at the UF/IFAS Nature Coast Biological Station in Cedar Key, Florida. Her work focuses on the intersection of environmental management and applied research and supporting community-driven coastal science and adaptation. Savanna grew up on a small farm in central Virginia and discovered her interest in marine ecology during family vacations to small fishing towns along the Chesapeake Bay. After earning her B.S. in Biology from the University of Virginia, Savanna split her time between Gainesville, FL and Little Cayman Island to earn her M.S. in Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences (FAS) through the University of Florida. While in Little Cayman, Savanna also completed her SCUBA Divemaster certification. After earning her M.S., Savanna received a Ph.D. from FAS at the University of Florida by studying the influence of water quality on the ecosystem function of seagrass meadows.

# SOLUTIONS

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## MIKE ALLEN

*University of Florida*

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Mike Allen is a Director of the UF Nature Coast Biological Station and professor of Fisheries and Aquatic Science in the School of Forest, Fisheries, and Geomatics Sciences at the University of Florida. His research has focused on population dynamics and ecology of fishes. He uses field studies and computer models to explore population dynamics of fishes that support important recreational fisheries. He has evaluated habitat requirements for fish populations, and identified fisheries management strategies for recreational fisheries in lakes, reservoirs, and marine environments.



## JULIE SORENSON

*Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety*

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Julie Sorenson is Director of the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety: Agriculture, Forestry, and Fishing. Her work focuses on developing affordable, culturally relevant safety solutions for workers in high-risk industries. She has led national initiatives such as the Rollover Protective Structure Program for farmers and safety interventions for commercial fisherman. Dr. Sorenson holds a PhD in Epidemiology and has more than 25 years of experience in occupational health and safety research.



## JOSHUA STOLL

*University of Maine*

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Joshua Stoll is an environmental social scientist and oyster farmer who was born and raised in coastal Maine. He co-founded the Local Catch Network, owns and operates the Georgetown Island Oyster Company, and leads the Social Oceans Lab at the University of Maine. His work aims to sit at the intersection of science, policy, and applied research, reflecting a strong commitment to building and sustaining collaborative, inclusive, and impactful initiatives.



## SHELBY B. WHITE

*Virginia Institute of Marine Sciences*

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Shelby White is a socioeconomist from North Carolina. Her family has been involved in commercial fishing and the seafood industry for generations. Shelby is currently the Marine Business Specialist in the Marine Advisory Program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science where she works closely with industry through research and extension, and serves as a liaison for commercial fishing, seafood processing, aquaculture and working waterfronts. Her specific interests include workforce development, livelihood diversification and participation within and outside of marine business, as well as the sociocultural aspects of fishing and impacts of policy and management.



# POSTERS

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## **Navigating Gaps: Implementing a Healthcare Navigator Program to Improve Access to Healthcare and Quality of Life Among Gulf Coast Shrimpers**

*Bibiana Toro Figueira, Hayden Hunt, and Shannon Guillot-Wright*

## **Work-Related Musculoskeletal Symptoms and Associated Ergonomic Risk Factors Among Seaweed Workers in Zanzibar, Tanzania**

*Dorothy Ngajilo, Shahieda Adams, Kim Dunleavy, Alicia Turner, Nina Dunleavy, and Mohamed Jeebhay*

## **Occupational Safety and Worker Wellbeing in the US Aquaculture, Commercial Fishing and Seafood Processing Sectors**

*Dave Love, Elizabeth Nussbaumer, and Allie Wainer*

## **Effectiveness of Disaster Early Warning Systems in Reducing the Impact of Extreme Weather- and Climate-Related Events: Lessons Learned and Next Steps**

*Elizabeth Adjoa Kumah, Margherita Musella, Caitlin Vaughan, and Nancy Hey*

## **Psychological Recovery in Agriculture Following Extreme Weather: Lessons from Hurricane Helene**

*Alyssa Spence and McKayla Robinette*

## **Meeting Workers Where They Are: Improving Hypertension Awareness Through Worksite Health Screenings**

*Peyton HerrNeckar, Bibiana Toro Figueira, and Shannon Guillot-Wright*

## **Need for Solutions to Address Musculoskeletal Pain in Fishing and Aquaculture – A Major Gap in the Literature**

*Kim Dunleavy, Alicia Turner, Jane Morgan-Daniel, Jason Beneciuk, Boyi Hu, Janeen McCormick Blythe, Heidi Radunovich, Maria Vargas, and Madeleine Gastador*

## **Exercising Fishers' Rights of Access to Social Protection: Reinvigorating SSF Guidelines on Social Development, Decent Work and Social Protection**

*K.H.Kaumi Lakmali Piyasiri and Oscar Amarasinghe*



# STATE OF THE SCIENCE

HEALTH AND SAFETY OF GULF COAST AND  
U.S. CARIBBEAN FISHERS

**SPECIAL THANK YOU TO THE  
SOUTHEAST CARIBBEAN DISASTER RESILIENCE PARTNERSHIP**



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**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH**