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Water and Faith
Katrina D. Lashley

Water plays an integral role in our spiritual lives. It serves as a purifier to prepare the worshipper and sacred space for communion with a higher power. It anoints the believer as he prepares for his final journey. For some, water serves as a manifestation of the divine worthy of reverence itself. Despite the varied ways in which we incorporate water into our beliefs and expressions of faith, the common trait shared by various faiths is an instinctual understanding of the sanctity of water and other aspects of the natural world.

As communities face the issues in the growing debates and battles over the definitions and practices of environmentalism, the responsibilities and rights of residents, and the practicalities of creating healthy, sustainable neighborhoods, towns, and cities, the role of faith communities has come into focus.

What is our obligation to the natural world? Do we have dominion, or are we meant to be stewards? How can faith communities who have had a role as the leading moral forces in our communities make their environmental messages blend seamlessly into their moral teachings? Are faith communities an under-tapped source of authority in the efforts to “green” our communities?

The contributors to this issue have taken the teachings of their faiths and used them as a source of authority to participate in the movement for healthier communities, economic and social justice, and the reclamation of a natural world in which residents can find a source of renewal and pride. For some it requires reigniting a lost reverence for the natural world that has been lost, while others find themselves awakening the members of their faith communities to their roles as caretakers. Regardless of the ways in which faith communities help to lead the fight for environmental protection and change, the possible futures remain the same: global communities in which residents are leading healthy lives.
**When Religious Communities Speak Out for Creation, They Mean It**
Joelle Novey

Evonne Marzouk had never put up a yard sign before. But when the Jewish sustainability group she founded in her neighborhood got involved in the campaign to bring clean offshore wind power to our coast, she sent a note to her legislator, she spoke at a town hall meeting, and she put up her first yard sign.

“When you start a local group like this, you think of the water saved from people’s faucets and the lights turned off in their homes,” she wrote afterwards. “You think about building a space for people who care about the environment in the community, and a regular stream of events to educate, inspire and engage. You don’t think of this: the day when your community will be needed to make real political change.”

Across the DC area, Interfaith Power & Light (DC.MD.NoVA) is engaging religious communities of all faiths in educating their communities about environmental issues, and in helping them practically in “greening” their facilities. As religious communities learn about what is happening to our waterways and to our climate, and reflect on their own sacred teachings, they aren’t only moved to change the ways they operate their sanctuaries and use resources at home — they feel called to speak out as part of larger efforts to protect “God’s creation.”

Rev. Kip Banks of the East Washington Heights Baptist Church also got involved in the campaign to bring offshore wind power to our coast: “We have more than borne our share of the costs of Maryland’s dirty power habit,” he wrote, “and it’s time for us to move to cleaner alternatives.” Throughout the campaign, Rev. Banks reminded his community that the Bible calls on Christians to remember the most vulnerable people, the “least of these,” and that it is just such vulnerable folks who are suffering first and most the consequences of pollution and climate change.

Maybelle Kagy, Anglican Episcopal Church of the Ascension, speaking out against mountain-top removal coal mining.  
*Photo credit: courtesy of Interfaith Power & Light (MD.DC.NoVA)*
Over the past few years, religious communities in the DC area have rallied, testified, written letters and signed postcards in support of the environmental solutions they want to see in our city and nation. Multifaith religious “contingents” have joined large rallies in support of climate action and against mountain-top removal coal mining, the Keystone XL pipeline, and destructive hydraulic fracturing (“fracking”) for natural gas. They have testified in support of stronger clean energy legislation in the DC Council and Maryland legislature. They have participated in grassroots campaigns around specific dirty energy facilities, working to shut down coal-fired power plants in Alexandria and in Baltimore, and to stop a proposed natural gas export facility in Cove Point, Maryland. They have set up card tables after services to collect postcard signatures in support of new EPA safeguards that will protect people from mercury, coal ash, and carbon pollution. And they have come to hearings to speak out.

Sometimes, religious voices in environmental campaigns raise eyebrows. “People have asked me why a religious person has gotten all mixed up in the issues of renewable energy and the environment,” Maryland’s Episcopal Bishop Rev. Eugene Sutton said at a town hall meeting about clean energy. “I did, because I believe that I am called, as all people of faith are called, to protect life — life in all its forms. For too long, we have been getting our state’s energy from sources that make our neighbors sick and disrupt our climate. We can do better.”

Lutheran Pastor Sarah Scherschligt has donned her collar more than once to testify in support of national limits on climate pollution. She told a panel from the Environmental Protection Agency that her church had made creation care a core ministry because “we trust that when God said [the created world] was good, God meant it. And God charged us with taking care of it.”

When religious communities speak out in environmental campaigns, they mean it, and the strength of their conviction shines through. DC’s religious communities don’t just join the chorus – we elevate and transform the environmental movements in which we participate.

Photo of Rev. Kip Banks, Sr., East Washington Heights Baptist Church, speaking at a rally in support of offshore wind power.
Photo credit: Josh Lopez
Down By The Riverside: Environmental Activism and the East Washington Heights Baptist Church

Pastor Kip Banks, Sr.

One of the favorite Spirituals that we sing at the East Washington Heights Baptist Church is a song entitled “Down By the Riverside.” The song says, “I’m gonna lay down my burdens, down by the riverside, down by the riverside, down by the riverside, I ain’t gonna to study war no more.” The song gives you the feeling that even though there may be trouble all over the world, that you can find help down by the riverside. The song alludes to the powerful impact that rivers can have on people’s lives and it is true that historically and biblically rivers have represented restoration, renewal, and revival.

Indeed, Paul and Silas in the Biblical book of Acts (Chapter 16) went “down by the riverside” because there by the riverside was a known place of prayer. Furthermore, during the days of slavery, African Americans would steal away and go “down by the riverside” to a place of prayer, restoration and revival.

This is also true of our local river, the Anacostia River. The Anacostia River has been a place where many East Washington Heights Baptist Church members have found refuge, peace and serenity. There’s just something special about being beside the Anacostia River. To sit there on a picnic bench or to walk alongside the river and to take in the water’s flow provides peace to one’s mind.

However, the sad reality is that we have not taken care of our rivers and in particular we have neglected to care for the Anacostia River. The Anacostia is the most polluted of our region’s rivers and this is in good measure due to the neglect and pollution coming from the community. The other sad fact is that too few churches and members of our community have gotten involved in Environmental Activism. In the Black Church, the connection between the community’s well-being and the environment is too seldom talked about or made a top agenda item.

A convert shouts as she is baptized by Rev. Charles Beck in the Washington Channel at Maine and O Streets SW; July 18, 1938. Reprinted with permission of the DC Public Library, Star Collection. © Washington Post
However, the sad reality is that we have not taken care of our rivers and in particular we have neglected to care for the Anacostia River. The Anacostia is the most polluted of our region’s rivers and this is in good measure due to the neglect and pollution coming from the community. The other sad fact is that too few churches and members of our community have gotten involved in Environmental Activism. In the Black Church, the connection between the community’s well-being and the environment is too seldom talked about or made a top agenda item.

Nonetheless, I do see more churches awakening to the importance of the environment and getting involved. At the East Washington Heights Baptist Church this year in celebration of our 120th Anniversary, we are planting a garden on our church grounds, which take up quite a bit of real estate at the corner of Branch and Alabama Avenues in Southeast, DC. Funds for the garden are being provided by a “Sacred Grounds” grant that we received from the U.S. Department of the Interior in partnership with the National Wildlife Federation. The garden, in addition to attracting butterflies and native birds, will also help protect the Anacostia River because it will enhance water absorption and this is important because water-runoff has been one of the Anacostia River’s biggest sources of pollution.
Kawainui Marsh in the Watershed of the Kailua Ahupua’a

Dr. Charles K. Burrows

Over a thousand years ago, Polynesian canoes sailed into a large inland pond along Kailua Bay on the windward coast of Oahu. As they settled the Kailua ahupua’a (traditional land division that ran from the mountains to the sea) they cleared the fertile land to plant their crops, diverted water from the many streams to irrigate their fields of kalo (taro), and converted the pond known as Kawainui (great fresh water) into a 450-acre fishpond. Water was the foundation of Kailua’s abundance and a subsistence system that supported a large population of ali’i (chiefs) and maka’ainana (those who fished and farmed). The construction of heiau or temples of worship to the ancestral deities ensured the productivity and fertility of Kailua’s resources. This was truly a paradise in a Hawaiian Garden of Eden.

At the time of Captain James Cook’s arrival in Hawaii in 1778, the indigenous native population of the Islands has been estimated as anywhere from 250,000 to a million people. These islanders had developed a self-sustaining lifestyle and spiritual kinship with their environment. But with the introduction of western diseases and goods, there was a drastic reduction in the population by the mid 1850s followed by an abandonment of many of the traditional agricultural fields and fishponds, including those at Kawainui and within the Kailua ahupua’a.

By the late 1800s, the land use around Kawainui was changing rapidly. As Chinese immigrants fulfilled their contracts on the sugar plantations, many turned to rice farming, using the fields formerly planted in kalo. Japanese immigrants became truck farmers growing vegetables and fruits on the slopes around the wetland.

The valuable water of the Kailua ahupua’a was also part of these changes. Water was diverted from the streams and Kawainui pond by flumes and pumped to neighboring ahupua’a for agriculture. This lowered the water table of Kawainui, creating more dry land for the raising of horses and cattle and the introduction of alien grasses for grazing pastures.

The end result is that Kawainui is a marsh today and quickly moving towards a swamp as the floating vegetation mat covers the water and trees become established. In the 20th Century, Kawainui Marsh has become ecologically degraded, being used in conjunction with landfills and quarries, stockpiling old automobiles, and serving as water basin to prevent flooding of Kailua town and residences.
With increasing urbanization and population growth in the 1960s came community awareness about the value of Kailua’s wetlands and waterways with action being taken to prevent further destruction of the wetland ecosystem. Beginning with community planning in the 1970s and the State’s Master Plan for Kawaiui Marsh in 1994, the focus now is conserving and restoring the cultural and natural resources within the 1,000 acres of the Kawaiui-Hamakua Marsh Complex. The State Department of Land and Natural Resources has established a wildlife sanctuary for Hawaii’s endangered waterbirds and is actively restoring waterways, wetland ponds, and native vegetation.

Hawaiian organizations have assumed their cultural responsibility to restore and care for their sacred places at Kawaiui, such as Ulupo Heiau and Na Pohaku o Hauwahine, and are collaborating with State government and the community to integrate and perpetuate Hawaiian cultural practices and conservation values with western ecological concepts of environmental sustainability. Opportunities are provided for residents in the community, school groups from K-12 and college levels and interfaith groups to volunteer for scheduled service projects at these sites and elsewhere in the marsh. Educational programs, tours and forums to inform and educate the community and visitors about the rich natural and cultural histories of the Kawaiui/Hamakua wetlands and to steward the caring of their environment are offered and promoted. Through these tireless efforts, women inmates, youthful students, seniors and tourists have been given the opportunity to interact with Nature and learn about the sensitive yet resilient wetlands at Kawaiui.

In 2005, the Kawaiui-Hamakua Marsh was recognized as a Ramsar wetland of international importance, one of only 39 in the U.S. and 1,900 throughout the world. As the largest extant wetland in the Hawaiian Islands, the significance of Kawaiui-Hamakua is not just its size and abundance of waterbirds but the role it continues to play in the culture of Hawaii’s indigenous people, the perpetuation of their cultural traditions, and the effective management of a water system that can support the growing food as well as sustaining its natural resources.

It is hoped that in generations to come, the sustainable practices of the lifeways of the early Hawaiians and through how they effectively managed the natural and cultural resources in the Kawaiui-Hamakua wetlands and in the ahupua’a of Kailua will be revitalized. A cultural center envisioned at Kawaiui provides the venue for bringing these generations together in learning, practice, and stewardship for this very special place.
Native Americans, Urban Waters, and Civic Engagement: The L.A. River

Robert Bracamontes and Robert García

The Army Corps of Engineers drowned the Los Angeles River in concrete in the 1930s to prevent floods. The people of Los Angeles including Native Americans now have the opportunity to work with the Corps, the National Park Service, Department of Interior, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and state, regional, and local government to restore the lost beauty of the River with equal justice for all.

The Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum exhibit “Reclaiming the Edge: Urban Waterways and Civic Engagement” emphasized that greening urban rivers is not just about conservation values — as important as those are — it’s about the people who live along the rivers, and the range of values at stake, and the future of our children and our world. The exhibit covered the L.A. River and five others around the world. The New York Times highlights revitalization of the L.A. River as a best practice example for “more sustainable, livable and socially just cities.” Nicolai Ouroussoff, Reinventing America’s Cities: The Time Is Now, N.Y. Times (March 29, 2009).

Robert Bracamontes —‘Bob Black Crow’— writes about river revitalization and the L.A. River:

How should I turn back the clock for you to see through my Ancestors’ eyes? We sat on the banks of rivers waiting for the fish to bite. The basic necessities of life existed an arm’s length away. The water meant life. It still does today. The river, its water, is the life line of our people. For the present settlers it is a tributary for pollution, commerce and invasion. For us it is everything.

The Native American Village of Yaangna along the L.A. River

Great Wall of Los Angeles Judy Baca SPARC
United Coalition to Protect Panhe, an organizing campaign led by Native American including Mr. Bracamontes, working with The City Project helped stop a toll road that would have devastated the ancient village of Panhe and San Onofre State Park. The Sacred Site and Park lie along the San Diego and Orange County lines. Several other state parks are sites of Native American cultural resources, encompassing historic Native American villages, religious and ceremonial areas, and thousands of Native American burial sites.

Native American cultural resources are included in other parks and in schools as well. For example, El Pueblo de Los Angeles Historic Monument includes the area originally occupied by the Gabrieleño village of Yaangna. University High School in Los Angeles includes the site of Kuruvungna Springs, a village of the Gabrieleño people. Puvunga, a Sacred Site for the Gabrieleño as well as the Acjachemen or Juaneño people, is located at what is now California State University at Long Beach. Putiidhem is located at what is now Junipero Serra Catholic High School in San Juan Capistrano. Puvunga and Putiidhem are part of the annual Ancestor Walk.

Robert Bracamontes writes:

I am Acjachemen, Nican Tlaca, indigenous to this land. For us the land gives us food, a place to play peon, a place where we are put to rest in peace, a place for ceremony, a place where life and culture are one. Some have viewed the land as something to steal, to make great profit from by taking and selling it for selfish ownership. We need our land back, we need to protect it for future generations. I hope those of you speaking about helping realize this is not a novel or a movie. This is not about a movement. This is about a living breathing tribe thousands of years old. It is about all of my living relatives, my Ancestors, and the new lives entering the world today. We cannot think that History is not a continuous fluid event. I am Acjachemen.


*Tribe Circle | Photo by Ricardo Duffy*
Environmental Heroes: Trevor Atkins’ 8th grade class at Halau Ku Mana Hawaiian Charter School

Katrina D. Lashley

The 8th grade students of Trevor Atkins are not dedicated to their school work…they’re dedicated to their school. At the Halau Ku Mana Hawaiian Charter School, teachers are not just focused on producing good scholars; their primary goal is to produce citizens who have a clear understanding of what it means to do the right thing for their community. It is important to understand that here community is a living breathing entity which encompasses students, teachers, parents, and the larger social and natural worlds. Students are taught the concept of respect and stewardship for the land, those around them, and for themselves. It is a fundamental mission of the school to combine this sense of pride and stewardship with an education that will prepare students for successful 21st century lives. To this end, each grade is charged with the care of a certain aspect of the school community. This sense of responsibility was evident as the students, after a brief introduction from Trevor, led their Smithsonian visitors on a tour of the school property. It was evident as they took us down to the stream which is a part of the school’s property and explained their efforts to keep it clean, to restore the natural balance of their surroundings. It was evident in the pride they showed as they pointed out the nursery, fish tanks, and school gardening which also fell under their purview. It was evident in the way students offered to help us up and down the stream’s banks, the respectful manner in which three young men approached Dr. Lowe and explained their curriculum, and in the gravel path created by students and their families as part of a recent community event at the school.

Most importantly it was evident as we later sat in a circle “telling story” when the students explained what they will take out into the larger community and world when they leave the school: the confidence that comes with the knowledge that they can feed and provide for their families and the awareness that if you don’t value and treasure what you are given the gods will take it away. One of the many debates surrounding environmental issues is the question of educating younger generations. “If you hook the students, then you have the parents.” The students at Halau Ku Mana Hawaiian Charter School are a reflection of such a belief in the power of children in their roles as teachers. They are also a reflection of the next step…an educated citizenry of the world who see their roles as stewards of a larger inter-connected community as a natural part of their places in the world.

Katrina Lashley is Project Coordinator of Urban Waterways at the Anacostia Community Museum. She received her B.A. in English Literature and Italian at Rutgers University. In 2011 she completed an M.A. in History (Public History track) at American University with a focus on the British Caribbean.
Noteworthy Events

Research Trip to Honolulu, Hawai‘i

As part of the Urban Waterways Project, Gail Lowe (ACM), principal investigator; R. Douglas K. Herman (NMAI), co-PI; and Katrina Lashley, project coordinator, conducted a preliminary research trip in and around Honolulu and the island of Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi. The trip served as an opportunity to introduce the principal researchers and the concepts and research initiatives of the Urban Waterways Project to groups and individuals working on Oʻahu for water rights, stream management, and responsible and sustainable land use and food production. Through group meetings and field tours the project team learned about and observed local efforts to regain control of compromised water resources and to foster community responsibility for reclaiming and restoring watercourses that serve urban and urbanizing areas.

During the week-long trip, the team met with five groups (or their designated contact persons) and toured three other on-site projects. The visits took the team to three districts in the city and county of Honolulu (Kona, Koʻolaupoko, and Waiʻanae) and allowed the team to experience a diversity of approaches to water and stream restoration and preservation.

The trip was highly successful in introducing the Urban Waterways Project to potential new partners and in allowing the team to see local efforts at work. The team is in the process of cementing relationships with new contacts, sharing the Urban Waterways newsletter, and developing next steps in the research on watershed management in Oʻahu.
**Citizen Scientists**

Education program Coordinator Tony Thomas and his students are continuing their exploration of the Anacostia Watershed. In collaboration with the University of Maryland’s Institute of Public Health, students will conduct surveys of the area’s fishermen to measure public awareness of the health of the Anacostia River. Students will also use the survey to recruit members of the public to take part in the collection of tissue samples from local fish. The results will be shared with the fishing community later in the summer.

![Citizen Scientist Program participant inspecting fish](Photo: Susana Raab, ACM)

**Sites of Contest East of the River**

In the spring of 2013, researcher Corianne Setzer conducted a study of the history of pollution in neighborhoods east of the Anacostia. She highlighted both historical and ongoing sites of environmental contest and the organized responses by local residents and organizations. The study is a reminder of the legacy of social and environmental injustice faced by many urban communities and the ongoing consequences of battles over access to healthy, sustainable communities.
Summer Series of Community Forums
Our Community Forums return for the summer!!

June 20th 6:30-8:00 Summer along the Anacostia River
The purpose of this forum is to introduce local communities to the opportunities available to youth interested in discovering and exploring the Anacostia River and its environs. Whether students’ interests run toward the Arts, Ecology, Biology, Gardening, Community Service or all of the above, representatives from various organizations in DC, P.G., and Montgomery counties will be on hand to provide information on the various summer programs on and along the Anacostia River this summer.

August 15th 6:30-8:00pm Two Rivers, Two Communities
This forum will bring together members of communities along the Anacostia and Patapsco rivers to discuss their similar histories and experiences. The focus of the conversation will highlight the benefits and challenges they have encountered living along urban waterways. What are the specific challenges faced by the communities? What are residents concerned about? What are some possible solutions? How can residents of the two communities be of service to each other? Are there models that can be altered to suit each community? How can residents work to create networks of support?

Ryan Crowley, shown here in his inflatable orange kayak.
Photograph by Susana A. Raab, ACM
**Come Hell or High Water: The Battle For Turkey Creek**
(documentary film, 2013)

This film chronicles thirteen years of the efforts of community activists like Derrick Evans and Rose Johnson as they take on developer Butch Ward, Hurricane Katrina, the BP oil spill, and the indifference of public officials to preserve what is left of a community which is as integral to the American narrative as other urban communities who find themselves facing similar issues and fighting similar battles. PBS will be airing this documentary free through the month of May 2014. Watch and learn! [http://video.pbs.org/video/2365208862/](http://video.pbs.org/video/2365208862/)

**Houston Screening:**
Texas Southern University, building 151
Barbara Jordan-Mickey Leland School of Public Affairs Building
Houston, TX 77004

For more information: [http://www.screeninghq.org/screenings/details/26440#sthash.9lFFW0e6.dpuf](http://www.screeninghq.org/screenings/details/26440#sthash.9lFFW0e6.dpuf)

**Ubuhle Women: Beadwork and the Art of Independence**
December 9, 2013 - September 21, 2014

Anacostia Community Museum Main Gallery
Ndwango (means “cloth”) is a new form of bead art developed by a community of women living and working together in rural KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. The Ubuhle (means “beautiful”) artists’ community was established in 1999 by local resident Bev Gibson and master beader Ntombephi Ntombela [En-Tom-be-Fi En-tom-bell-la] to empower local women with the means to provide for their families through their art. The flat surface of the textile onto which the Ubuhle women bead is reminiscent of the Xhosa headscarves and skirts that many of them grew up wearing. Using black fabric as a canvas and different colored Czech glass beads as the medium of expression, the Ubuhle community has re-imagined the long-standing beading tradition as a contemporary art form. Twenty-nine works are featured, including The African Crucifixion.
Ubuhle: pronounced Uh-Buk-lay in Xhosa (Ho-Sa)
Contributors

The Reverend Kip Banks Sr. serves as the Senior Pastor of the East Washington Heights Baptist Church of Washington, DC. He is the church’s first African American Pastor and is working to build-up an intergenerational family of disciples who love God, love neighbors and transform the community with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A native of Los Angeles, CA and a graduate of that city’s public school system, Banks received a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from the University of California at Santa Cruz.

Selected as an Alfred P. Sloan Fellow, Rev. Banks also completed master of public policy and urban planning degrees from the University of Michigan. In addition, he holds a master of divinity degree from the Howard University School of Divinity. Among his many public and civic involvements, Rev. Banks has served as a senior aide to the U.S. Senate Budget Committee and Director of Government Relations with the American Public Transit Association. He also serves as the Progressive National Baptist Convention’s Capitol Hill liaison and on the board of the Nannie Helen Burroughs School.

Robert Bracamontes is a second generation trucker, published poet, journalist and blogger. He is a member of the Native American Acjachemen Nation, Juaneno Tribe. Bob was a columnist for Our Times, a section of the Los Angeles Times. His column focused on the local neighborhoods of Pico Rivera, Montebello, East LA, Downey, City of Commerce, and Whittier. Bob’s writing turned into more than just a weekly column, it became a way for him to connect with community members.

Bob and his wife, Patricia, were married in 1977 and currently reside a few blocks from where they grew up. They have raised five children who have graduated from Harvard, Stanford and UC Berkeley Law School.

The Acjachemen / Juaneno people have lived in the area of the Sacred Site of Panhe for over 9,000 years. In 1769, the Portola expedition came across the 350 residents of Panhe. This is where the first baptism in California was performed, the site now marked with a large white cross. The Acjachemen / Juaneno people built the San Juan Capistrano Mission.

Dr. Charles Pe’ape’a Makawalu Burrows received his BA in Biology and Chemistry from Linfield College in 1958, M.Ed, in Biology in 1962 and a M.S. in the Earth Sciences in 1966 from Oregon State University. In 1973 he received his Doctorate in Education, majoring in Instructional Development Research and Science Education from Indiana University. In January 2000 he retired from the Kamehameha Schools after serving 35 years as a science educator.

Dr. Burrows is the president of, a native Hawaiian environmental non-profit organization and serves on the boards of various Kailua community organizations that have and continue to advocate for the protection, conservation and restoration of the cultural and natural resources in the Kailua Ahupua’a. His is also a member of the Kaho’olawe Island Reserve Commission, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs Native Hawaiian Historic Preservation Council, the Hawaii Interfaith Power and Light and serves on the United Church of Christ National Energy and Environment Committee.
Robert Garcia is an attorney who engages, educates, and empowers communities to achieve equal access to public resources. He is the Executive Director, Counsel, and founder of The City Project, a non-profit legal and policy advocacy organization based in Los Angeles, California. He received the President’s Award from the American Public Health Association in 2010. Hispanic Business Magazine recognized him as one of the 100 most influential Latinos in the United States in 2008, “men and women who are changing the nation.” He has extensive experience in public policy and legal advocacy, mediation, and litigation involving complex social justice, civil rights, human health, environmental, education, and criminal justice matters. He has influenced the investment of over $41 billion in underserved communities, working at the intersection of equal justice, public health and the built environment. He graduated from Stanford University and Stanford Law School, where he served on the Board of Editors of the Stanford Law Review.

Mr. García’s work in the past decade has focused on equal access to park, school, and health resources throughout Los Angeles and California. He is a nationally recognized leader in the urban park movement, bringing the simple joys of playing in the park to children in park starved communities. He has helped communities create great urban parks and preserve public access to beaches and trails in Southern California.

Joelle Novey A native of Baltimore, Ms. Novey is a magna cum laude graduate of Harvard University with a B.A. in social studies and a minor in the study of Religion. She is a firm believer in connecting faith and social justice to raise environmental consciousness. Her sense of social responsibility is based in an understanding of tikkun olam (repairing the world) and a belief in its place at the core of Judaism.

Ms. Novey is one of the organizers of Tikkun Leil Shabbat, an independent Jewish community in Washington, DC which focuses on social and environmental activism. The group regularly holds vegetarian pot-luck dinners.

Prior to her time at Greater Washington Interfaith Power & Light, Ms. Novey worked at Green America where she screened applicants to the Green Business Network and wrote articles about greener living for the organization’s newsletter and magazine. She has also counseled hospital patients of all backgrounds and led interfaith worship services through a chaplain training program at Washington Hospital Center.

Katrina Lashley is Project Coordinator of Urban Waterways at the Anacostia Community Museum. She received her B.A. in English Literature and Italian at Rutgers University. In 2011 she completed an M.A. in History (Public History track) at American University with a focus on the British Caribbean. Lashley has worked on projects for the National Museum of American History and Arlington House. In addition to her public history work, Lashley has been a teacher of English Literature and Language for the past twelve years.