

2022 EBC Ascending Leader Award Recipients

Megan Aki

Deputy Director, Browning the Green Space

Megan Aki is the Deputy Director of Community Development at Browning the Green Space (BGS), a Boston-based nonprofit working to advance Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in clean energy and climate tech. At BGS, Megan leads the development and execution of organization-wide standard operating procedures and systems, directs the design and implementation of marketing and communications strategies, and works to advance organizational effectiveness through team development, adaptive strategic planning, and program evaluation. Through her work, Megan seeks to build a community-first approach to program design and engagement at BGS that incorporates deeper insights through community engagement methods that are transparent, trust-based, and collaborative.



Prior to joining BGS, Megan served as the Clean Energy and Climate Systems Manager at the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) where she designed Department operations systems and resources and led the development of their net zero planning practice with cities and towns. During her six years at MAPC, Megan's contributions spanned many interdepartmental leadership roles including co-leadership of the BIPOC Staff Affinity Group, serving on the Staff Advisory Group on scenario planning for MetroCommon 2050 (the new regional plan for Metro Boston), and co-authoring the clean energy transition policy recommendations for MetroCommon 2050.

Outside of her established roles, Megan is involved in multiple industry and civic engagements. She is a contributing author and working group member for the procedural equity element of the Energy Equity Project, an effort led by the Urban Energy Justice Lab out of the University of Michigan School for Environment & Sustainability. Megan also served as an appointed member of the New Mobility Technical Advisory Group for the City of Cambridge in an advisory capacity to city staff as they evaluated and planned for the impacts new travel options and evolving technology would have on ways of getting around the City. She is also a member of the Women's Business League, Sudbury Chapter, for her entrepreneurial endeavors.

Megan received her Bachelors of Science Degree from Northeastern University in Political Science. She graduated Summa Cum Laude with a minor in Urban Studies. In her free time, Megan is an avid recipe developer, cake and cookie decorator, and illustrator with a dream of publishing a children's book one day.

Katie Elich

Project Engineer, Woodard & Curran

Katie Elich is a Project Engineer at Woodard & Curran in Andover, Massachusetts with 8 years of experience in the environmental consulting industry. She earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering in 2013 from Cornell University and her Master of Science degree in Environmental Engineering in 2014 from the University of California Berkeley. She is



experienced with working on a variety of environmental investigation, remediation, litigation, and compliance projects for clients in the public and private sectors. Her primary responsibilities include data management, evaluation, and reporting for site investigation and remediation programs.

By the time Katie joined Woodard & Curran in 2019, she was creating geologic models via Leapfrog Hydro, using ArcGIS to conduct geostatistical analyses of environmental data, developing groundwater models using MODFLOW, and managing environmental databases.

Her extensive background in data science and visualization combined with a variety of project experiences paved the way for her to use her leadership skills to re-structure Woodard & Curran's data workflows with a forward-looking perspective that has streamlined the level of effort needed to enhance project performance associated with data-specific evaluations. She was quickly recognized as a strong leader and transitioned into a broader organizational role as a leader of Woodard & Curran's Data Management Initiative team, whose primary objective is to develop and put into place a scalable and sustainable framework that advances an improved data management structure.

Concurrent with the Data Management Initiative, Katie has started a grass-roots Citizen Developers program at Woodard & Curran to facilitate communication and collaboration of experienced and novice programmers across Business Units and geographies. This program draws on the teaching aspect of Katie's success internally and has led to a broader training and education program that continues to inspire and connect with staff interested in data science.

Katie has utilized her skills in data management and data science to become a leader and key resource in guiding project teams when it comes to data-specific applications based on client/project objectives. She has been integrated into a variety of diverse project teams to emphasize data "lifecycle" concepts in a manner that are consistent across the company. She has been able to accomplish this using a lead-by-example approach while working with cross-platform data types to consolidate and present data in a meaningful way to support decision making. She has used her data analysis work to develop remedial designs, evaluate remedial performance, and identify data gaps for site investigation activities.

In addition to leading Woodard & Curran's expansion of data management and data science resources and capabilities, Katie has become a key presence externally for Woodard & Curran. She has presented at the International Conference on Environmental Data Management (ICEDM) and is a Sub-Group Leader of the Interstate Technology and Regulatory Council (ITRC) Environmental Data Management Best Practices Team. This Team is focused on compiling various guidelines for data management best practices, with the objective of producing a toolkit focused on the fundamentals of environmental data management. She has also used her experience evaluating various types of remediation systems using USEPA's Spreadsheets for Environmental Footprint Analysis (SEFA) and ASTM's Standard Guide for Greener Cleanups to support her involvement as a member of the Sustainable Remediation Forum (SURF). Most recently, Katie was a co-presenter for a Learning Lab at the May 2022 Battelle Chlorinated Conference for a PFAS data analysis and visualization dashboard. She also recently co-taught a Python 101 class for GRA 101 Week.

Deanna Sassorossi

Sustainability Analyst, Eversource Energy

As a Sustainability Analyst, Deanna works on a broad range of projects to further advance Eversource's overall sustainability initiatives, including the company's goal to be carbon neutral by 2030. She is heavily involved in tracking sustainability rater performance, engaging cross-functional teams to improve company sustainability performance, as well as supporting the development of the annual sustainability report. Deanna has a strong passion for the energy sector and is proud to play a part in the drive towards a sustainable future.



Prior to joining the Sustainability group, Deanna supported the Licensing and Permitting group at Eversource as an Environmental Specialist. In this role, she was responsible for environmental permitting and regulatory compliance related to complex energy infrastructure projects, including the construction and maintenance of electric transmission and distribution lines throughout Connecticut and Massachusetts. Prior to working in environmental permitting in New England, Deanna worked as a Field Scientist for Terracon Consultants in Raleigh, North Carolina, completing Phase I Environmental Site Assessments, soil and groundwater sampling, and wetland delineations.

Deanna is half-Mexican and is a current participant in the Conexión Early Career Professionals Program, a mentoring and leadership program for Hispanic and Latino professionals. Growing up, Deanna's mother was very involved with the Hispanic community, serving on the boards of the Society of Hispanic Professionals and El Pueblo, teaching Deanna the importance of being proud of their Latin roots.

Deanna is also the Co-Chair of the New England Women in Energy and the Environment (NEWIEE) Rising Professionals group and member of Advisory Board for the Council on Women in Energy & Environmental Leadership (CWEEL). She is a member of the LGBT+ community and is an active member of Out in Energy- a professional network for LGBTQI+ people working in energy and climate.

Deanna received her Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from North Carolina State University in 2016 and she is currently pursuing a Master's degree in Energy and Environmental Management from the University of Connecticut. Outside of her professional career, Deanna is active in the CrossFit community where she coaches classes at a local gym in Easthampton, Massachusetts.

Mary Kate Schneeweis

Senior Environmental Planning Specialist, Beals and Thomas, Inc.

Mary Kate (MK) Schneeweis is a Senior Environmental Planning Specialist with Beals and Thomas, Inc. (B+T). MK's passion for the environment began at Wellesley College, where she tutored fellow students in writing and geosciences and participated in two summer research programs related to salt marshes. Upon graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Geosciences and English, she joined the B+T team in November 2012, quickly establishing herself as a reliable go-to team member.



Over her career, MK has developed a thorough understanding of a wide variety of Massachusetts land use and entitlement regulatory programs, which she has applied to a broad range of project types including ecological improvement efforts, large-scale energy facilities, and mixed-use

developments. She routinely leads project team, client, and regulator meetings in association with her projects. In addition to her permitting expertise, MK leads B+T's Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program, ensuring that the company stays abreast of industry and software advancements, and developing and implementing associated Quality Assurance Guidelines.

As a leader in B+T's resiliency services, MK particularly enjoys applying her educational background in coastal processes to the permitting of resiliency improvements, as well as facilitating discussions about planning for climate change. She participated in the first round of Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) training by the Commonwealth and has since helped to establish B+T's MVP and Hazard Mitigation Plan market sector services. She excels at engaging with large- and small-group input gathering and reaching consensus. She also provides our project teams and municipal clients with thoughtful and meaningful guidance to promote not only resiliency, but also approaches to encourage broad public engagement.

MK is also civically engaged outside of work. As a member of her previous community's Conservation Commission, she applied her regulatory expertise with the Massachusetts Wetland Protection Act to the review a variety of projects, from residential developments to trails and recreation areas. She also represented the Commission on the Charles River Dam Advisory Committee, whose purpose is to gather information, conduct public outreach, and reach community consensus on the future of this DCR-designated high hazard dam.

Robin Seidel

Resiliency Team Leader, Weston & Sampson

Robin Seidel, AIA is a Resiliency Team Leader and licensed architect at Weston & Sampson where she leads climate resilience design projects. As an industry leader in adaptation and resilient buildings, she specializes in urban resilience, adapting the built environment, multi-hazard vulnerability assessments, sustainable design, mitigation strategy development, and stakeholder engagement. Her ability to navigate the complexity of climate change combined with her practical approach to design challenges helps clients develop concepts and advance plans through design and construction that mitigate risk to flooding and heat. She is also a strong advocate for equity in resilience.



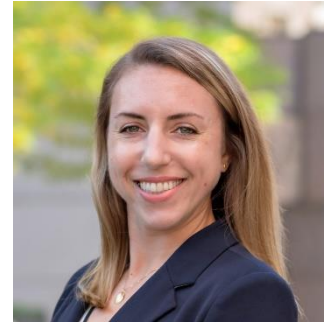
Robin has developed community resilience plans for over 10 different municipalities throughout the country and has worked closely with Massachusetts state agencies and private residential, commercial, and university clients on climate initiatives. Robin is a trusted advisor to clients and develops effective, innovative solutions that successfully gain stakeholder buy-in.

Her industry influence also involves her work as the 2022 National Chairperson for the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Resilience and Adaptation Advisory Group, where she is an active contributor to several guidance documents. Robin also recently edited the AIA's "Risk and Vulnerability" education series, based on her professional experience providing those services to clients. She co-authored an article for the AIA on an architect's role in identifying climate risk on projects. She is certified under the AIA Post-Disaster Safety Assessor Program (SAP) to provide building and structural evaluation if called to action following a natural disaster. In addition to her work with the AIA, Robin was an appointed Commissioner on the Salem Traffic and Parking Commission for several years and is an adjunct professor at Suffolk University.

Kathryn Swanson

Water Resources Engineer, CDM Smith

Katie Swanson is a Water Resources Engineer and Project Manager in Training at CDM Smith. She works on a wide variety of water resources projects, ranging from drought planning studies to extreme flooding, geographically spanning the United States coast-to-coast. Katie is passionate about using computer models to answer fundamental questions about the availability and movement of water both above and below the ground surface. She also enjoys serving as a mentor within the CDM Smith structured mentorship program and is actively committed to the training and development of junior engineers.



Katie earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Environmental Engineering from Tufts University in 2012. After graduating from college, Katie worked in the Watershed Division of the City of Cambridge Water Department (CWD), where she performed field work in support of the Surface Water Quality Monitoring Program. After two years in the field, Katie left CWD to pursue a graduate degree and obtained a Master of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, in 2016. Katie is a licensed Professional Engineer in the States of Massachusetts and Illinois.

Katie has been actively engaged with the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section (BSCES) since 2016. She has served as chair of several BSCES committees, including the EWRI Boston Chapter, Awards Committee, and Newsletter Committee. Katie is currently serving as Senior Vice President on the Executive Committee and was presented with the Boston Society of Civil Engineers Section (BSCES) President's Award in 2019 for her service.

Outside of work, Katie enjoys walking her pet corgi, Scout, cooking new recipes (especially those from New York Times Cooking), and going on the occasional run.