



Leadership North Carolina

Class 32 Environment Session

April 8 – 10, 2025
Asheville

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Class 32 Environment Session

April 8 – 10, 2025
Asheville

Base Hotel

Renaissance Asheville Hotel
31 Woodfin Street
Asheville, NC 28801
(828) 252-8211
[Hotel Website](#)

Session Goals

1. Provide background on the geographic diversity of North Carolina's environment from the mountains to the sea.
2. Highlight the impact of Hurricane Helene on western North Carolina, exploring recovery barriers, successes, and opportunities to support resiliency.
3. Demonstrate potentially competing interests and opportunities for fostering collaboration among government, industry, and nonprofits.
4. Issue a call to action: How do we leave the environment better than we found it?
5. Explore how the environment impacts and is impacted by government, education, health and human services, economic development, and inclusive leadership in NC.

Planning Committee

Steven Martin, Program Chair
President & CEO
Constellation Quality Health
Wake

Dr. Kathie Dello, Co-Chair *Wake*
Director of North Carolina State Climate Office/State
Climatologist
North Carolina State University

Venu Ghanta, Co-Chair *Wake*
VP, Regulatory Affairs and Policy
Duke Energy

Erin Crouse *Orange*
Field Representative, Southeast Region
The Conservation Fund

Jennifer Howard *Wake*
SVP, Director of Operations
Dogwood State Bank

Carolyn Keith *Mecklenburg*
President and CEO
Keith Consulting Group

Greg Lahrman *Wake*
Senior Director, Operational Excellence
Martin Marietta

Tyler McLauchlan *Buncombe*
Architect
Clark Nexsen

Melanie Taylor *Durham*
AVP, Healthcare Strategy, Planning, and Performance
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina

La'Meshia Whittington *Wake*
President/CEO
The Whittington & Staley Consulting Group

Dr. Kim Winter *Jackson*
Dean & Professor
Western Carolina University

Tres Wooldridge *Cabarrus*
Senior Director of Product Line Management
Corning

Each planning committee for the Class 32 program year is made up of members from LNC Class 31.

Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Optional Tour: French Broad Chocolate Factory & Cafe, 821 Riverside Drive, #199, Asheville.

Optional Reception: Center for Craft, 67 Broadway Street, Asheville.

2:00 – 4:00 pm French Broad Chocolate Factory Tour (Optional)
Advance RSVP required. Business casual attire.

Jael Skeffington
Co-Founder and CEO
French Broad Chocolates

5:30 – 7:00 pm Session Reception at the Center for Craft (Optional)
Advance RSVP required. Business casual attire.

Wednesday, April 9, 2025

Breakfast and Meeting: Ingles Mountain View Room in the Sherrill Center/Kimmel Arena, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 227 Campus Drive, Asheville.

Parking pre-registration and printed parking pass required for each day at UNCA. See directions page for details.

Dinner: Century Room at Pack's Tavern, 20 South Spruce Street, Asheville.

8:00 – 8:30 am Breakfast (Optional)
Advance RSVP Required

UNC Asheville

8:00 – 8:30 am William Garrett Fund Committee Meeting

8:30 – 9:05 am Setting the Stage

Steven Martin
President and CEO
Constellation Quality Health
LNC Class 31 Alumnus and Class 32 Program Chair

Dr. Kathie Dello
Director of North Carolina State Climate Office/State Climatologist
North Carolina State University
LNC Class 31 Alumna and ENV Session Co-Chair

Venu Ghanta
VP, Regulatory Affairs and Policy
Duke Energy
LNC Class 31 Alumnus and ENV Session Co-Chair

9:05 – 9:25 am Trivia Time

Environment Session Planning Team

9:30 – 10:15 am Land Acknowledgment and Cherokee Innovations in Sustainability

L. Shannon Swimmer
Director
Cherokee Center

10:15 – 10:35 am Morning Break
Snack and beverages will be provided

10:35 – 10:55 am Class Business

LNC Team

10:55 – 11:55 am Five Key Environmental Issues in NC

Bill Holman
Semi-Retired Environmental Leader
NC State Director, The Conservation Fund (2013-2023)
Secretary, NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (1999-2001)

11:55 am – 12:40 pm Lunch

12:40 – 1:40 pm	Sustainable Design Walking Tour <i>Comfortable shoes and weather-appropriate outerwear encouraged</i>	Tyler McLauchlan <i>Architect</i> <i>Clark Nexsen</i> <i>LNC Class 31 Alumnus and ENV Session Committee Member</i>
1:40 – 2:00 pm	Afternoon Break	
2:00 – 3:00 pm	Reflections from Hurricane Helene	Dr. Jennifer Runkle <i>Environmental Epidemiologist and Research Scientist</i> <i>NC State's North Carolina Institute for Climate Studies (NCICS)</i>
		Kirsten Barber <i>Deputy Director of Communications and Digital Media</i> <i>North Carolina Department of Public Safety</i>
3:05 – 3:50 pm	Water in NC: From the Headwaters to Your Faucet	Zachary Turner <i>Climate Reporter</i> <i>WFAE 90.7 – Charlotte's NPR News Source</i>
3:50 – 4:00 pm	Wrap-Up and Adjourn	LNC Team
4:00 – 6:30 pm	Free Time	
6:30 pm	Class Dinner <i>5-10-minute walk from the Renaissance Hotel</i>	Century Room at Pack's Tavern <i>20 South Spruce Street</i>

Thursday, April 10, 2025

Breakfast and Meeting: Ingles Mountain View Room in the Sherrill Center/Kimmel Arena, University of North Carolina at Asheville, 227 Campus Drive, Asheville.

Parking pre-registration and printed parking pass required for each day at UNCA. See directions page for details.

8:00 – 8:30 am	Breakfast (Optional) <i>Advance RSVP Required</i>	UNC Asheville
8:30 – 8:50 am	Morning Reflections	Steven Martin <i>President and CEO</i> <i>Constellation Quality Health</i> <i>LNC Class 31 Alumnus and Class 32 Program Chair</i>
8:50 – 10:10 am	Human Dimensions: Supporting Environmental Justice and Building Resilient Communities	Monica McCann <i>Resourceful Communities Program Director</i> <i>The Conservation Fund</i>
		Travis Klondike <i>Associate Director, Coastal Dynamics Design Lab</i> <i>Associate Research Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture & Environmental Planning</i> <i>North Carolina State University</i>
10:10 – 10:30 am	Morning Break <i>Snack and beverages will be provided</i>	
10:35 – 11:25 am	Leadership Profile	The Honorable Zeb Smathers <i>Mayor</i> <i>Canton, NC</i>
11:30 am – 12:30 pm	Hurricane Helene Response and Recovery	Jennifer Bennett <i>Government and Community Relations Manager</i> <i>Duke Energy</i>

The Honorable Maggie Ullman
Council Member, Asheville City Council
Founder and Principal, Ullman Consulting

Nathan Ramsey
Director, Mountain Area Workforce Development Board
Land of Sky Regional Council

12:30 – 1:50 pm	Lunch Keynote - Environmental Solutions: Imagining the Future	Elizabeth Biser <i>President, Biser Strategies</i> <i>Secretary, North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (2021 – 2024)</i>
1:50 – 2:00 pm	Closing and Adjourn	LNC Team