

# Manhattan Project National Historical Park Meeting



## **Seth Kirshenber**

For over 25 years, Mr. Kirshenber has been the Executive Director of the Energy Communities Alliance (ECA), the national non-profit organization of elected local government officials adjacent to nuclear facilities in the United States. He oversees the daily activities of the organization and ensures that DOE, industry and others understand and address local community issues and integrate them into policy decision-making.

He has published several books and articles and regularly speaks on renewable and advanced reactor energy development, environmental cleanup, spent nuclear fuel, public private partnerships, public participation, brownfields, and reuse of federal facilities and he regularly speaks at conferences and meetings. He has participated on several national federal advisory committees and boards on International Atomic Energy Agency, US EPA and US DOE issues and has participated on several national initiatives including those led by the Aspen Institute, Keystone Institute and others around the areas of the environment, public private partnerships, nuclear waste, spent nuclear fuel, nuclear energy production, and national defense.

He is also an attorney at Kutak Rock LLP where he has worked on over \$25 billion dollars of structured finance transactions in the US and abroad including those located on DOE and other federal government facilities, international nuclear fuel storage facilities and a small modular reactor.

Mr. Kirshenber holds a Juris Doctorate degree from the Washington College of Law at the American University and a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the University of Florida. He has been a Vice Chair of the Privatization, Outsourcing and Financing Transactions Committee for the American Bar Association and is an Executive Board Member of the Council of Development Finance Agencies.



## **Denise Derkacs**

Denise Derkacs is the chair of Los Alamos County Council. She has served on Council since January 2021 and served as vice-chair in 2022.

Denise is a retiree from Los Alamos National Laboratory after 20 years of employment, where she worked as a chief of staff to senior management most of her career. She previously worked as a technical writer and as a reporter and editor on newspapers in Texas, Iowa, and Hawaii.

Denise holds a Master's degree in Organizational Communication from the University of New Mexico and Bachelor's degree in Journalism from Rutgers University in New Jersey.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Denise has lived in 10 states and settled in New Mexico in 1982. She and her husband have three sons and seven grandchildren.

### **Padraic Benson**

Padraic Benson joined the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) Office of Legacy Management (LM) in 2013. He serves a program analyst and historian out of LM's Westminster, Colorado, office. Padraic began his federal career with the U.S. National Park Service in 2009 and spent 3 years in Washington, DC, at the Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, home of the famed nineteenth century abolitionist.



### **Wendy Berhman**

Wendy Berhman is the Superintendent for [Manhattan Project National Historical Park](#). The park includes three sites located at Hanford, Washington; Los Alamos, New Mexico; and Oak Ridge, Tennessee, and is administered through a collaborative partnership with the Department of Energy (DOE). Berhman has worked for the National Park Service for over 30 years, most recently as program planner for the National Park Service Washington Office. She began her new assignment as Superintendent in December 2022.

In this role, she is responsible for the daily operations and staff at each of the three park sites. Managed in partnership with the DOE, the park preserves and interprets the nationally significant historic sites, stories and legacies associated with the top-secret race to develop an atomic weapon during World War II. Her commitment to stakeholder and employee engagement and partnerships, her expertise in visitor use management and tourism, and her passion for the Manhattan Project story will be excellent assets in the park's next chapter. Outside of work, Wendy enjoys a good tennis match, hiking and enjoying all that Colorado has to offer.



### **Randall Ryti**

Randall was re-elected to the County Council in the November 2022 general election. Randall has lived in Los Alamos since 1992. He came to start a small business, Neptune and Company, with four other scientists. In addition to helping lead a successful small business and raising a family in Los Alamos, Randall has volunteered for community organizations such as the Pajarito Environmental Education Center Board and the Los Alamos County District Science Fair committee. He was a Los Alamos County Transportation Board member from 2012-2016 (Chair from 2014-2016).

Randall earned a bachelor's degree in biology from University of California Los Angeles and a Ph.D. in biology from University of California San Diego. Before retiring from Neptune and Company in 2018, he worked on basic and applied environmental problems,

including ecological and human health risk assessments for the Los Alamos National Laboratory, the Hanford Site, and other clients.

He enjoyed campaigning for re-election, particularly meeting voters while knocking on doors, and is committed to continue getting and using community input to help make decisions while on the Council.



### **Cheryl Abeyta**

Cheryl is the Program Manager of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park at Los Alamos National Laboratory. She has been at LANL for over 19 years, spearheading the Park's preservation and outreach efforts since 2019. Cheryl holds a master's degree in business administration from New Mexico State University.



### **Charlotte Bowers Cunningham**

Cunningham grew up in Oak Ridge. Her husband, Jerry Cunningham, worked at Oak Ridge National Lab for 28 years in nuclear waste. So she has been "exposed" to the ups and downs of communities where waste is an ongoing topic. She is the Executive Director of Clinch River Habitat for Humanity as her day job and a Roane County Commissioner, representing Oak Ridge, as her second job. Charlotte is a strong supporter of the nuclear industry as are most of her constituents.

### **Amy Fitzgerald**

Amy Fitzgerald serves as the Government Affairs and Information Services Director for the City of Oak Ridge, Tennessee. In that capacity, she oversees the City's Information Services, which includes intergovernmental relations and information technology. She manages the development and implementation of the City's legislative agenda, manages special projects involving the U.S. Department of Energy, and analyzes state and federal policies that may have an impact on Oak Ridge. She is also a member of ECA.

### **Katy Watt**



### **Niki Stephanie Nicholas**

Niki Stephanie Nicholas is the Superintendent of both the Big South Fork National River and Recreation Area and the Obed Wild and Scenic River and is the Site Manager of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park. Prior to taking her current National Park Service assignment she served as Chief of Resources Management and Science at Yosemite National Park for seven years. Before that Nicholas was Senior Manager for Environmental Impact Reduction Technologies with the Tennessee Valley

Authority. She has a B.A in biology from Northwestern University, a M.S. in ecology from the University of Tennessee, and a Ph.D. in forestry from Virginia Tech.

Over the years Dr. Nicholas has worked on a number of forest health research projects looking at methods of evaluating multiple stressors of forest communities and evaluating predictive response models.

More recently she has been researching user capacity issues related to natural and cultural resource management on public lands. Dr. Nicholas has served on the adjunct faculty of Utah State University's Department of Forest Resources, Auburn University's School of Forestry and Wildlife Sciences, East Tennessee State University's School of Public Health, and the University of Tennessee's Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.



### **Alan Lowe**

Alan Lowe serves as the Executive Director of the American Museum of Science and Energy, and the K-25 History Center, both located in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Prior to serving in Oak Ridge, Lowe was an archivist at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum; Director of Operations in the Office of Presidential Libraries at the National Archives; Executive Director of the Howard Baker Jr. Center for Public Policy; and Director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt, George W. Bush, and Abraham Lincoln Presidential Libraries and Museums. He obtained his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Kentucky.



### **Brent Gerry**

Brent Gerry is serving his third term as Mayor / CEO of West Richland. His first term began on January 1, 2014. He previously served as a West Richland City Council Member for four years, from January 2010 to December 2013. Besides administrating the day-to-day operation of the City of West Richland, Mayor Gerry is also the Chair of the Energy Communities Alliance, Chair of the Hanford Communities Administrative Board, Chair of the Tri-Cities National Park Committee, a TRIDEC Board Member, a METRO drug task force Board Member, a Benton County Emergency Services Board Member, and a Police Information Network (BIPIN) Board Member.

He has been married to his best friend, Denise, for 36 years. They have lived in West Richland for 29 years and have two daughters and four grandchildren. Brent and Denise are second-generation owners of Richland AutoCare Center, having purchased the family business from Denise's grandfather 33 years ago.



### **Kevin Lewis**

Kevin Lewis is the President & CEO of Visit Tri-Cities, the destination marketing organization responsible for marketing and promoting the Tri-Cities region in Southeastern Washington.

Kevin's career started in broadcasting and his portfolio includes national advertising awards for television, print, multi-media and

web campaigns. He's spent the past sixteen years as a leader in destination marketing driving economic prosperity through effective messaging and strategic events. In that time, he's helped transform destinations through award winning campaigns, and he's championed iconic events including the IRONMAN and IRONMAN 70.3 World Championships.

Kevin grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah. He and his wife, Kayron, both have degrees from Southern Utah University. They have three children and two grandchildren.



### **Colleen French**

Colleen French is the program manager for the Manhattan Project National Historical Park at the Hanford Site in southeastern Washington State. In this role, she manages Hanford's five National Historical Park facilities, operates them for broad public access, and preserves the historic properties for the benefit of future generations. Colleen has developed partnerships that enhance the park at Hanford, including working with area tribal nations, local community and state leaders, members of Congress and their staffs, and the Washington State Department of Archaeology and Historic Preservation. She is the Hanford Site representative to the DOE-

NPS Joint Park Management Team, which has policy decision-making responsibility for the three-site park and works with other senior leaders at DOE and NPS to develop and manage one of the nation's most complex national parks.

As the facility manager of the B Reactor National Historic Landmark starting in 2009, Colleen has driven and overseen transition of the facility from nearing demolition as part of Hanford cleanup to welcoming more than 10,000 visitors each year via public tours and special events. She has been a fierce advocate for providing broad public access to Hanford's historic facilities and worked across the DOE organization to eliminate age and citizenship requirements for national park visitors in 2015. This work was honored with the Chairman's Award from the President's Advisory Council on Historic Preservation in 2011, and community "Tourism Champion of the Year" awards in 2008 and 2015. She was also awarded the Preservation Excellence award from the Washington State Historic Preservation Office in 2018 for the rehabilitation of the historic White Bluffs Bank.

Earlier in her career, she served as the Director of DOE Richland's Office of Communications and External Affairs, where she led a diverse set of external and intergovernmental programs including media relations, tribal affairs, cultural resource protection, local and state government relations, congressional affairs, site tour programs, and public involvement.

Colleen holds a Master's Degree in Journalism from Northwestern University in Chicago and a Bachelor's Degree from the University of California at Berkeley.



### **Michael Mays**

Michael Mays is former vice chancellor for academic affairs and currently professor of English and founding director of the Hanford History Project at Washington State University Tri-Cities.

In addition to numerous articles on Irish history and literature, he is the author or co-author of four books: *World War I and the Cultures of Modernity*; *Nation States: The Cultures of Irish Nationalism*; and

*A World Literature Reader*. His most recent book, *Legacies of the Reflections on 75 Years of a Nuclear World*, was published as volume 2 in the Hanford Histories book series which he edits for Washington State University Press.



### **Becky Burghart**

Becky Burghart is the Site Manager for the Hanford Unit of the Manhattan Project National Historical Park and has worked for the National Park Service for 21 years. Prior to her current position, she spent eight years at White Sands National Park as the Interpretation & Visitors Services Program Manager. She has also work in interpretation at Chamizal National Memorial and Grand Teton and Mesa Verde national parks. She holds an MS in Conservation Social Science from the University of Idaho and served as a Peace Corps

Volunteer in Ecuador.



### **Christy Rasmussen**

Port of Benton Commission president Christy Rasmussen holds a master's degree in Educational Administration. Rasmussen has spent the majority of her career in Education, and currently works as a Instructional Technologist - Training Specialist III at Energy Northwest. Rasmussen has been deeply involved in community outreach, including serving on the General Advisory Committee for Tri-Tech Vocational High School, Hanford site Initiative Lead in a

STEM focus in partnership with Battelle, Boeing, OSPI and Pacific Science Center, Tri-Cities Sunrise Rotary, Perfect Image Leadership Foundation, TriCities Gang Intervention Valuing Education & Service, Quest Center, Safe Harbor, My Friends Place, Benton-Franklin Community Health and Services, Center for Children Youth and Justice, and the TriCities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce. Rasmussen stated that serving as a Port of Benton Commissioner felt like a natural progression to being a public servant.

As Commission president, Rasmussen is involved in a number of committees and initiatives, including Hanford Communities, Washington Public Ports Association Economic Development and Legislative committees, American Association of Port Authorities, Benton-Franklin Council of Governments, Clean Futures Northwest, Pacific Northwest Waterways Association, Washington Policy Center and the Energy Communities Alliance.

Rasmussen indicated that her interest in the Port drove her to seek a better understanding of the Port and its mission in the community. “Being an example for my family and friends by stepping out of my comfort zone and serving our community in pursuit of building a stronger community through regional economic growth and prosperity inspires me.”



### **Maria Treviño**

Maria Fernanda Treviño is an Outdoor Recreation Planner with the National Park Service – Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTCA). She has been with the program for a little over 3 years serving primarily New Mexico. She has a multidisciplinary professional and educational background in the fields of Architecture, Environmental and Landscape Design, Historic Preservation, and Ecological Planning. Before joining NPS, she acquired experience working in the non-profit and private sector supporting projects ranging in scales from local, regional, to global.

Maria Fernanda is certified in Ecological Planning and Historic Preservation. She has a bachelor’s degree in Architecture and a Master of Architecture from the University of Texas at San Antonio. She also completed a post graduate degree in Environmental Building Design at the University of Pennsylvania.

Additionally, she is the co-chair of Hispanic Heritage Month at the Department of Interior’s employee resource group [National Association of Hispanic Employees \(NAHE\)](#). Maria strongly believes that creativity is a powerful tool, oftentimes underestimated, that can bring communities together to envision a sustainable future for generations to come.

### **Bill Blumenthal**



### **Robert Franklin**

Robert Franklin is an assistant professor at WSU Tri-Cities in the Department of History. His research includes 20<sup>th</sup> century U.S. History (Hanford Nuclear site and the “atomic world” of WWII and the Cold War), Archival Science, Oral History, and Public History. He serves as the President of the B Reactor Museum Association. As well as commissioner on Kennewick Historic Preservation Council. Robert is also a member of the Society of American Archivists, Western History Association, and Oral History Association.



### **Donald Leadbetter**

Donald Leadbetter is a tourism analyst for the National Park Service, where he facilitates collaboration with the travel and tourism sector in support of destination stewardship and responsible tourism that benefits parks, visitors, and communities. In addition to providing

external coordination and representation of the National Park Service at tourism industry forums, trade shows, and meetings, he collaborates with program areas throughout the agency to support tourism-related planning and management in alignment with the mission of the National Park Service.