



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Native Plant Trust Announces June 21 Virtual Symposium: Seeing the Forest and the Trees: Exploring the Social History of the Outdoors

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(Framingham, MA) Native Plant Trust, the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants, will present a virtual spring symposium on June 21 focusing on aspects of the social history of natural spaces, from nature appreciation and inspiration to notions of territory, access, and participation. The symposium will explore humanistic and scientific approaches to this subject and how historical actions continue to affect societal and environmental change. Speakers include:

Mardi Fuller: Communities of Color & Access to Nature

People of Color face systemic barriers to accessing natural spaces for recreation and have limited visibility in the mainstream conservation movement. The reasons for this are layered and complex, but date back to the founding of the United States, the original sins of dispossession and slavery, and the colonial imagination that positioned white people as landowners with practical and figurative freedom of movement while restricting the rights and movement of People of Color. In this talk we will explore the founding policies, cultural norms, and illusions that have led to the entrenched exclusion that People of Color experience today.

Mardi Fuller advocates for racial equity through writing, speaking, and community building. A lifelong backcountry adventurer, in January 2021 she became the first known Black person to hike all 48 of New Hampshire's high peaks in winter. She lives in Boston, where she works as a nonprofit communications director and volunteers with the local Outdoor Afro network. She writes for *Outside* magazine, *SKI* magazine, *Melanin Basecamp*, and more. Mardi is committed to personal and corporate Black liberation and, thereby, liberation for all humanity. She believes deeply in nature's healing power.

Kendy Hess: Greening Politics

We tend to divide people into "liberals" and "conservatives" -- and sometimes "libertarians" and "progressives" -- and then often assume that only liberals and progressives care about the environment. Nothing could be further from the truth, and *any* political theory can be green. One does not need to be anything but human to care about the natural world, and the natural world is not interested in what political stripes we wear. It's possible to advocate for nature and the

environment without abandoning our existing political commitments, and it's possible to reach across the political lines that (seem to) divide us and agree about the needs of nature and the environment. You just have to know how to do it. Join professor and former environmental lawyer Kendy Hess for a conversation about politics and the natural world.

Kendy Hess is Brake Smith Associate Professor of Social Philosophy and Ethics, College of the Holy Cross, Worcester. She received her PhD in philosophy from the University of Colorado-Boulder, her MA from Northwestern University, her JD from Harvard Law School, and a BA from University of Missouri, Columbia.

Dr. Xan Chacko: When Life Gives You Lemons

In the early 20th century, the United States Department of Agriculture funded international expeditions with the aim of finding plant specimens for introduction into the agricultural landscape and new experimental projects in hybridization. One such agricultural explorer was Frank Nicholas Meyer, an immigrant from the Netherlands whose expeditions in Asia brought to the United States both celebrated fruit—such as the lemon named for him—and toxic weeds. The era of these plant explorers has ended, but their material trace remains in a variety of spaces and modes of existence that have hitherto been disregarded. Reading Meyer's letters shows the authority and discipline behind his transformation from gardener's apprentice to professional plant collector. These photographs and plants are understudied materials that enable historians to re-examine the means by which credit was received, given, and exchanged.

Xan S. Chacko is a Lecturer and Director of Undergraduate Studies for the program in Science, Technology, and Society at Brown University. In 2018, Chacko received a PhD from the Cultural Studies Graduate Group at the University of California, Davis, with emphases in Feminist Theory & Research and Science & Technology Studies. Chacko's co-edited volume, *Invisible Labor in Modern Science*, which explores the people and practices that are crucial to the production of scientific knowledge but remain uncredited and marginalized, was published in August 2022. For more information and to register, please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

ABOUT NATIVE PLANT TRUST

Native Plant Trust is the nation's first plant conservation organization and the only one solely focused on New England's native plants. We save native plants in the wild, grow them for gardens and restorations, and educate others on their value and use. We are based at Garden in the Woods, a renowned native plant botanic garden that attracts visitors from all over the world. From this flagship property in Framingham, Massachusetts, 30 staff and many of our 2,000 trained volunteers work throughout New England each year to monitor and protect rare and endangered plants, collect and preserve seeds to ensure biological diversity, detect and control invasive species, conduct research, and offer a range of educational programs. Native Plant Trust also operates a nursery at Nasami Farm in western Massachusetts and manages six sanctuaries in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont that are open to the public. Native Plant Trust is among the first organizations worldwide to receive Advanced Conservation Practitioner accreditation by London-based Botanic Gardens Conservation International (BGCI), which included an endorsement by an International Advisory Council representing six continents. Please visit www.NativePlantTrust.org.

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