

# CONNECTICUT Land Conservation Council

## Our Advancement Initiative Facilitators – Bringing Equity and Inclusion to Land Conservation



**Ashley Stewart** is a civil engineer with 10 years of experience specializing in water management and infrastructure. Her expertise spans the gamut of water management: distribution, storage, discharge and flood planning. She has distinct experience in environmental planning, permitting, funding, negotiation, construction management, community engagement and leadership experience. Ashley is a trained race dialogue facilitator and has served as an Equity Coach for

Sustainable CT since April 2019. Ashley has served the State of Connecticut in many ways, supporting municipal planning, protecting the state through management of dams, and through community outreach and engagement. Ashley grew up in and loves Connecticut and works with towns to implement equity into their sustainability goals and projects.

Ashley is a graduate of Yale's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, where she earned her Masters conducting research around equity and environmental decision making for the Black community. Ashley lives in Manchester, CT. In her spare time she enjoys experiencing cultures through food, mentoring teens, and creating weekend adventures with her family.



**David Sutherland** brings his experience as a diversity and equity trainer to help organizations create a greater awareness of the ways in which certain behaviors and communication styles - often grounded in gender, racial, or other identities - can overtly or subtly diminish members of a team. He fosters a non-judgmental, occasionally uncomfortable, often fun climate in which people can examine their organization's culture,

openly share their own biases and presumptions, and explore new ways of talking and working with all of their colleagues and different communities. Previously serving as The Nature Conservancy's (TNC) Director of Government Relations in Connecticut, David worked and negotiated with scores of elected officials, corporations, non-profit organizations, and agencies to craft policies affecting natural habitats, real estate law, water planning, utility rates, tax incentives, and public financing.

For the last eight of the 30 years he spent with TNC, David also served as a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainer and leader for the organization. He was the founding Co-Chair of TNC's first State Chapter Diversity and Inclusion team, for the 35-staff member Connecticut Chapter. After moving to Cape Cod in March 2020, David transitioned out of his TNC career, into broader diversity work. He is a network partner with [The Collective 180 consulting firm](#), working with their corporate and non-profit clients, such as Warner Media, Oxfam, and the Atlanta Botanical Gardens. David is also a DEI facilitator with Bentley University's Center for Women and Business. Whether it is in the diversity and inclusion, public policy, or organizational administration context, David strives to create with others a climate in which difficult issues and discomfort can be addressed honestly, negotiations and decisions are transparent, and next steps are clear; all with a good dose of humor and mutual understanding.