

Wednesday, March 10th

9:30-11:30am: Working Group Meetings

Clean Energy, Food & Agriculture & Creative Placemaking working groups will meet separately. These sessions are open only to regular participants of the working groups.

12:30-1:00: Welcome & CAN Update

Welcome & Update from the CAN Steering Committee

Over the past year, Steering Committee members have worked to restructure CAN into a more democratic and powerful network. During this session, we'll review the updated structure and define a new vision for the work ahead.

1:00-2:30: Keynote Panel

The Power of Stories: Creating the New Story of an Equitable Appalachia

Join us for a session that explores the normative stories about Appalachia and their relationship with diversity and equity. Participate in a conversation about the power and pitfalls of this deeply held Appalachian tradition and its ability to open or close new ways of thinking and acting. Participants will come away with some concrete next steps to advance their commitment to equity.

- Kenya Abraham - [Community Farm Alliance](#) Board member & owner of [Slak Market Farm](#)
- Hillery Glasby & Rachael Ryerson - both professors who co-wrote [Storytelling in Queer Appalachia: Imagining and Writing the "Unspeakable"](#)
- Tanya Torp - [convener, speaker, trainer, writer, and consultant.](#)

2:45–4:15: Innovation Session: Resiliency Through ReUse: Localizing Innovative Green Manufacturing and Upcycling in Appalachia

Jacob Israel Hannah, Coalfield Development Corporation: *The ReUse Corridor is a multi-state coalition of practitioners coordinating the collection, allocation, and transformation of landfill-destined materials in WV, OH, and KY. This emerging market sector has not only saved local businesses and communities thousands of dollars in waste management, but also strengthened and created new supply chains for innovative enterprises and organizations in Central Appalachia. This session will showcase some of the successes so far of our pilot program, as well as share some of the planning development for our overall regional strategy. After the presentation, we will hold space for our peer-to-peer discussion for any new/interested collaborators as well as for our preexisting teams to connect on 2021 goals and vision. This opportunity opens up the possibilities for innovative networking across multiple sectors, such as: Abandoned*



2021 CAN Regional Peer-to-Peer Convening
Bending not Breaking: Appalachian Resilience in Uncertain Times
Virtual Convening: March 10 – 12, 2021

Mineland sites being transformed into reuse resource centers, reuse materials as a resource supply chain for creative placemaking needs, higher education systems composting integration, and much more! So, join us for an exciting and open conversation on reuse in central Appalachia, you won't be disappointed.

4:30-5:15 Young Leaders in Community Economic Development (Under 35) Networking Session

A lightly structured opportunity to connect, share, and build relationships.

Thursday, March 11th

9:30 – 10:00: Welcome & Kick Off Of The Clean Energy Track

Members of the CAN Clean Energy Working Group: *Welcome everyone back to the Convening and share their vision for the clean energy economy and the opportunities that lie ahead for the region.*

The opening session will end with an overview of the various sessions in the clean energy track.

10:00 – 11:00: Clean Energy Finance Opportunities

Adam Wells, Appalachian Voices and other members of finance team: *This workshop session will begin with an overview of the current opportunities for innovative finance of solar/clean energy, with a focus on regional approaches. Specific opportunities that will be highlighted are the Solar Finance Fund and Invest Appalachia. Others may be added ahead of time, and there will be a call out during the session for other existing opportunities/new ideas/emerging needs. Once everything is "put out on the table", discussion will focus toward specific next steps, with an eye toward using CAN's structure/resources to support ongoing/new/evolved efforts. The goal of the session is to leave with an updated understanding of how CAN partners efforts in this space can be mutually supportive, and what implementation on a regional level in 2021 can look like.*

11:15 - 12:15: Innovation Session: Invest Appalachia Update

Andrew Crosson, CEO, Invest Appalachia: *Invest Appalachia is a collaborative regional investment fund that is designed to accelerate community-oriented investment into the region. Its analysis is informed by CAN, among other regional stakeholder groups, and the sector focus areas include CAN priorities such as Clean Energy, Food & Ag Systems, and Creative Placemaking. Since the IA open space session at the 2019 Convening, we are fully incorporated as an organization, have hired a CEO, and have contracted an Investment Manager. The CAN network and working groups are critical to IA's analysis and approach, so we want to share a series of updates and invite feedback on our focus and priorities for 2021 and beyond.*

1:00- 2:00: West Virginia’s Energy Future: Ramping Up Renewable Energy to Decrease Costs, Reduce Risks, and Strengthen Economic Opportunities for West Virginia

Tim Cronin, Fellow, Center for Energy & Sustainable Development, West Virginia University College of Law: *At the end of this tumultuous and historic year, WV’s electric utilities will publish plans showing the resources they intend to use to generate electricity for West Virginians over at least the next decade. Our electric utilities urgently need to consider a major ramping up of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Renewable energy is now cheap, and it’s continuing to get cheaper. Customers, businesses and individuals, overwhelmingly demand renewable energy. Diversifying our power resource mix is critical to competing in the growing regional renewable energy economy and securing a place in the 21st century energy economy. Major lenders and investors increasingly are withholding capital from utilities that aren’t transitioning away from emission-heavy resource mixes.*

2:30 -3:30: Clean Energy Policy Round-Up

Chelsea Barns, Appalachian Voices; Carrie Ray, Mountain Association; Autumn Long, Solar United Neighbors; Cortney Piper, Tennessee Advanced Energy Business Council; Kelly Bragg, WV Office of Energy; Emmett Pepper, Energy Efficient WV

This session will offer an overview of current policy issues, campaigns, and initiatives being undertaken by members of the CAN Clean Energy Working Group. Session attendees will gain insight into the breadth and depth of policy work our Working Group members are undertaking in order to advance the region’s clean energy ecosystem. This session will be structured as a series of flash talks (5-10 minutes each) during which each panelist will report on a priority policy issue, project, or initiative for their organization. Some panelists have received funding for their work through the CAN Clean Energy Rapid Response Advocacy Mini-Grant Fund. Attendees will hear about how these funds are being deployed to support time-sensitive advocacy, public communications, and policy change efforts to advance and defend critical clean energy policies in Central Appalachian states. Additional panelists will round out the session in order to provide attendees with a sweeping overview of the range of clean energy policy developments in the region today.

3:30 -4:00: Clean Energy Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps

Friday, March 12th

9:00 – 9:30 Welcome Back & Kick Off Of The Creative Placemaking Track

Welcome back! An overview of the Creative Placemaking Working Group that includes a focus on 1) Downtown Redevelopment 2) Nature-based Tourism, and 3) the intersection of Arts & Entrepreneurship

The opening session will end with an overview of the various sessions in the Creative Placemaking Track.

9:30 – 10:30: Identity, Adaptability, & Collaboration: A field-based conversation about community-based Creative Placemaking in West VA.

Michael Tierney, Step by Step. Lauren Kemp, RenewAll. Melissa McKinney, The One Voice Project at STAGES Music School: *This session will feature a few of the grantees from CAN’s WV Creative Placemaking Peer-learning Cohort; they will share some of their successes, challenges, and open the floor for a discussion about how to move the work forward. Framed by the findings from the peer-learning cohort’s field building report, the group will discuss engaging youth, finding creativity in unexpected places, and embedding racial justice into creative placemaking practice.*

10:45 -12noon: Let’s Go Downtown!

Ray Moeller, Northern Brownfield Assistance Center at WVU; Hannah Vargason, Natural Capital Investment Fund: *We will provide an overview of the Downtown Appalachia Redevelopment Initiative program. Then present several key program highlights, including photos and impacts, followed by a project profile on the Downtown Appalachia contribution toward relocation of a community clinic in Bluefield, WV, driven by redevelopment of a historic downtown building in Bluefield. We will then provide an overview of the broader development of a “Rural Downtown Redevelopment Playbook.”*

12:00-12:15: Creative Placemaking Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps

Lunch Break

12:45-1:15: The State of the Local Food Economy

Alison Davis, Executive Director at the Community and Economic Development Initiative of Kentucky: *Kick off the Food & Agriculture track with a session that examines what a vibrant local food system is, what the emerging trends and landscape look like for the sector, and how we capitalize on the unique opportunities that exist in the current moment.*

1:15-2:15 - Shared Use Kitchens and COVID: The Value of Shared Spaces during the Pandemic

Adam Kody, Food Enterprise Coordinator at the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks: *We've known the value of having an inspected, well equipped food production facility to be shared by small business owners since we opened the doors to the Food Ventures Center in 1996. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, we were a shared space used by over 80 farmers, processors, restaurants, food trucks, and other food-based businesses. This session will provide a general overview of the Food Ventures Center at ACEnet in addition to discussing our response to the pandemic and how we have remained open for the entirety. Recognizing the vitality of our production space for so many local producers, ACEnet staff doubled down on all of our safety precautions. Additionally, our facility users had to buy in and do their part. By adopting a strategy of high-communication, high accountability for all facility users we were able to continue offering a safe workspace to so many businesses who had no other options.*

2:30– 3:30 Healthy Food Access Project Flash Talks

Martin Richards, Community Farm Alliance; Healthy Food Access Project Leaders: *This session will explore the goals and outcomes from CAN's Healthy Food Access project. We'll hear from six project leaders about their project goals, outcomes, lessons learned, and their advice for other communities engaging in this work. Panelist includes representatives from Northfork Local Food's, Pop-up Community Market; Menifee County Farmers Market, FarmRX Program; Community Food Initiatives, Veggie Van Mobile Market; Rural Action, Nelsonville Country Fresh Stops; WV Farm & Food Coalition, WV Grocer Lab 2.0, Appalachian Sustainable Development, Healthy Families – Family Farms. We will discuss some of the overall project highlights, challenges, successes, and the economic impact that the projects had on their respective communities.*

3:45– 4:45 Beginning Farmer Training & Responses to COVID-19

Alexis Close, Appalachian RC&D; others TBD: *Many food and agriculture focused organizations in Appalachia run training programs for beginning farmers. These programs are often place specific, focusing on the needs of local farmers and locally available markets and resources. Covid-19 forced many programs to temporarily suspend operations or to quickly pivot to online training platforms. This has the potential for programs to reach farmers far outside of their traditional regional boundaries. As a vaccine begins to be distributed, there are still many unknowns for what training programs will look like through 2022. This session aims to facilitate a discussion between practitioners to share how training has changed during COVID-19, what the near future will look like, and what new practices they plan to keep utilizing for the long-term. This session will be an open discussion forum, with opening questions and prompts provided by a facilitator. Anyone affiliated with a training program or interested beginning farmer training is welcome to attend and share ideas.*

4:45-5:00 pm Food & Agriculture Track Wrap-Up Highlights and Next Steps