

Young leaders talk climate

Watch
live

Wednesday, May 19 – 6 p.m.

Joint meeting of the Environmental Quality Board (EQB) & Climate Change Subcabinet

Young Leaders Talk Climate: Our Realities, Our Futures

Wednesday, May 19, 2021, 6:00-8:00 p.m. | Location: Online

How to join

- **Members of the public:** Watch live on YouTube, <https://youtu.be/csMh1DXPmrM>
- **EQB members, Climate Change Subcabinet members, and speakers:** Join via Zoom (see email)
- **All participants:** Interact virtually on the online platform Slido. To access the platform, please visit www.slido.com and enter the event code: EELSMAY19.

Join us for an interactive event to explore young people’s perspective on climate change – how it is impacting their current realities and how our actions today will shape their futures.

Young leaders will share their stories and engage with the Climate Change Subcabinet and the EQB to discuss the challenges they face, their approaches to climate action, and their priorities for a healthy climate future. This conversation will be led by members of the Emerging Environmental Leaders (EELs) program, which connects young adults in Minnesota with state environmental leaders on our most pressing environmental issues.

EELs is an ongoing collaboration between the EQB and the University of Minnesota’s Institute on the Environment.

Agenda

Welcome and Introductions

Laura Bishop

Chair, Climate Change Subcabinet
Chair, Environmental Quality Board
Commissioner, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency

Faith Krogstad

Director of Engagement & Communications, Environmental Quality Board

Emerging Environmental Leaders' Introduction

Members of the Emerging Environmental Leaders program will introduce their themes and facilitate discussion.

Emerging Environmental Leaders – Spring 2021 cohort

Akia Vang	Ethan Culver	Kendra Held	Rachel Zhang
Camila Merino	Gabrielle Johnson	Laura Ringeisen	Sam Rosemark
Camille Will	Kaija Schlangen	Nayana Gurung	Syd Bauer (host)
Corrine Lowmanstone	Kelly Saybe	Phounsith “Quincy” Yangh	Teghan Grulkowski

Biographies of EEL members included on page 3

Our Realities

EELs members will participate in a panel and reflect on how their lives are affected by climate change and how they want these realities to change. Speakers will highlight a range of unique perspectives young adults have on Minnesota’s changing climate.

Our Futures

EELs members will share a video collage of personal stories about their ideal futures and the paths to these futures. Following the collage, members will engage the EQB and Subcabinet in reflection and discussion.

Wrap Up & Discussion

EELs members will highlight themes from the meeting and host a discussion with Climate Change Subcabinet and EQB members about potential pathways for future collaboration.

Closing Remarks & Adjournment

Accessibility: *This material can be provided in different forms, like large print, braille, or on a recording. Please contact EQB staff at least one week prior to the event at info.EQB@state.mn.us to arrange an accommodation.*

Emerging Environmental Leaders Biographies

Akia Vang is the son of Hmong refugees and a student at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities in the environmental sciences program. He has seen some of the most pristine waters of the North Shore, but he has also seen some of the most environmentally degraded areas growing up in his home of North Minneapolis. He believes that while climate change is a critical environmental issue, it is also very much a social issue as well. There is vast disparity throughout the state on environmental protection and consequently human health implications which is manifested especially in marginalized communities. To begin to address a history of inequitable decisions, he is involved with his city green zone task force, local watershed, and the Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers Program to take space and make his voice heard. There are many solutions to the environmental challenges ahead and he wants to get there by working with the communities on those solutions that are by us for all of us.



Camila Merino is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota with a degree in Ecological and Environmental Engineering. She was born in Colombia and moved to Minnesota in 2010. Her passion for environmental sustainability came about after seeing the effects of water shortages and polluted drinking water in her family and her life growing up. She has led water quality research projects throughout Minnesota and worked as an intern for the Metropolitan Council wastewater treatment plants. Her goal is to pursue a masters degree in Environmental policy and work in international environmental development. In her free time she enjoys camping, cooking, and making art.

Camille Will is currently attending Gustavus Adolphus College and is double majoring in Biology and Environmental Studies with a minor in English. She is passionate about mitigating the effects of global climate change and stopping the spread of invasive species. Some of her more notable accomplishments include being trained and authorized by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to search watercraft for aquatic invasive species, creating a short documentary on global climate change, and representing her heritage with pride as a Czech Ambassador. Camille has also created a photography website (<https://www.viewbug.com/member/Mary18>) that has over 10,000 awards and almost 4,000 followers. This has allowed her to connect with passionate photographers and environmentalists from around the world. This summer, in addition to working as an intern for the Prior Lake - Spring Lake Watershed District, she hopes to inspire other youth in her community to take an active role in combating environmental issues.



Corinne Lowmanstone (she/they) is a born and raised Minnesotan, currently studying molecular biology and biochemistry at Middlebury College in Vermont. They are an avid nature photographer with a passion for conservation. She currently works for her college's sustainability department on the outreach and justice team, ensuring access to sustainable transportation regardless of geographical, cultural, or socio-economic barriers. With a background in anti-racism and lifetime of experiences as a Black, queer and somewhat female identifying person, they love brainstorming up equitable solutions to pressing environmental issues. If she's not taking photos, desperately trying to identify an insect, studying, or practicing French and Spanish, you can usually find Corinne in the ceramics studio, doing improv, reading, drinking tea, or hanging with friends!

Ethan Culver is a third year student studying Environmental Policy and Sociology at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Originally from the suburbs of Chicago, Ethan has spent the last several years falling in love with everything Minnesota has to offer. He is passionate about environmental justice, Indigenous rights, food sovereignty and creating a more just and equal Minnesota. In the past Ethan has worked as a legislative intern with Fresh Energy out of St. Paul and is a current IDEC fellow with MN&IA Conservation Corps. Outside of climate and energy work Ethan enjoys baking, cooking, reading, and hiking throughout the Twin Cities region.

Gabrielle Johnson is currently attending the University of Minnesota School of Public Health to earn her Master's degree in environmental health studies with an emphasis in infectious diseases. Her primary interests in this field of study is how climate change is affecting diseases, such as vector borne diseases. She is also interested in food borne diseases and studying influenza pandemics. She recently became a member of a group through the University of Minnesota School of Medicine called CHAP (climate health action program) where she helps organize a monthly lecture series in order to raise awareness about the intersection between climate change and social determinants of health. Their goal is to showcase researchers' work in order to bridge the gap between education and practice.



Kaija Schlangen is from Two Harbors, MN and currently attends the University of Minnesota Duluth where she studies Psychology and Latin American Studies. She works for the UMD Office of Sustainability and communicates sustainability research and news with the campus community. She is invested in making the sustainability movement more just and equitable by deconstructing oppressive systems and recognizing and challenging all forms of privilege. This year, she has started speaking on panels addressing environmental justice and privilege in sustainability.



Kelly Saybe is from Arden Hills, Minnesota and is a junior at the University of St. Thomas majoring in Public Health. Additionally, Kelly has minors in women and gender studies, sustainability, and justice and peace. Kelly's focus on public health is on environmental health and bridging the gaps between health inequities. She currently works as a freelance journalist and is a journalist for the University of St. Thomas' two-year college, Dougherty Family College. Through her minors, Kelly has taken on opportunities to learn and engage in dialogue surrounding climate and environmental health with research and activism. Kelly hopes to expand her scholarship and apply her public health studies with non-violent action, intersectional environmentalism, and meeting culturally competent care.

Kendra Held is from Eagan, Minnesota and is currently studying Geography and Environmental Studies at Gustavus Adolphus College in St. Peter. A 2021 Udall Scholar, Kendra is passionate about synergizing sustainability across transportation, food, energy and waste systems. Her work as co-President of the Environmental Action Coalition has affirmed her commitment to peer education and collaborative activism in the fight against Line 3. As a Sustainability Intern for the Johnson Center for Environmental Innovation, Kendra engages her campus community in zero-waste initiatives, collaborates with members of the Sustainability Communications Team and advocates for environmental sustainability in administrative strategic planning. She enjoys helping students visualize their relationship with the environment and encouraging them to think critically about how they could advocate for more just, equitable systems in their communities.



Laura Ringeisen is from Goodhue, MN and graduated with an environmental science degree from UW-River Falls. She became passionate about the environment and climate change through her campus community and internship experiences. A goal of hers is to ensure that her life choices and career path make a difference in solving the environmental problems we face. Her areas of interest lie in invasive plant management, sustainable agriculture and water quality. She believes that land use management is a key component to mitigating environmental issues in MN. She currently serves as an invasive plant management corpsmember through the Conservation Corps of MN and IA, placed with the National Park Service in St. Croix Falls, WI.



Nayana Gurung is a climate and social justice advocate who is passionate about living in a capitalist-free society. They are a high school senior who does PSEO at the University of Minnesota in the Twin Cities, and they plan to continue their education as a history major. They are doing a climate campaign with YEA! Climate, a branch of Climate Generation, as well as some work with the organization they started in June 2020, 197 Students for Change, a group that put out anti-racist and anti-prejudice demands to District 197. They also enjoy protesting, getting outside when possible, and reading! They're looking forward to taking a gap year where they will travel with their family and independently, and hopefully focus on mutual aid + community building efforts when they get home.



A child of Hmong immigrants, **Phounsith "Quincy" Yangh** (he/him) was born and raised in Saint Paul, Minnesota. He is a current senior at Gustavus Adolphus College, studying Geography and Political Science with a focus on climate change, public policy, and migration. As a Doris Duke Conservation Scholar at the University of Washington-Seattle, Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholar, and member of Gamma Theta Upsilon, the international honor society in Geography, he is a scholar-activist who is committed to improving the living conditions of historically marginalized communities and Earth's ecosystems. At Gustavus, he was appointed as the inaugural Environmental Sustainability Chair of Student Senate and was a voting member on the President's Environmental Sustainability Council.



Quincy is a firm believer that climate change is a global problem that requires a global response and holds a plethora of academic and professional experiences abroad. While a student at the School of International Training Nepal (fall 2019), he conducted fieldwork on Indigenous Ecological Knowledge and ecological changes in Tsum Valley, Nepal. Additionally, he's interned at iProbono India, an international humanitarian NGO providing pro bono legal assistance to marginalized communities, where he researched statelessness and climate change-driven migration. In the future, Quincy plans to pursue a joint Juris Doctor and Masters in Environmental Management degree with the aspiration to harness the agency and power of marginalized communities in the climate movement.

Rachel Zhang is from Rochester, MN and will be attending the University of Pennsylvania this fall to study Business Economics and Public Policy. She became passionate about environmental justice after seeing how the climate crisis disproportionately affected her grandparents' health who live in a low income area in Beijing, China. This past summer, Rachel pushed for environmental justice initiatives as a national delegate at the 2020 DNC. She is currently working on starting a community garden for low income neighborhoods through her nonprofit [RCI](#): a youth led 501(c)3 dedicated to improving their community through amplifying youth voice, intersectional advocacy, and community education.



Sam Rosemark is a senior at the University of Minnesota Morris studying political science and economics while also minoring in environmental leadership and stewardship. Sam has served as the University's Student Body President for two years and leads the Morris Campus Student Association. As the Morris Model Intern for the UMN Morris Office of Sustainability, Sam does a lot of community engagement work on and off campus on initiatives regarding resiliency, sustainability, and renewable energy. The Morris Model is an award-winning community partnership for progress made up of community organizations in academia, health care, local government, and business all working to make the Morris community more of a model in sustainability. Sam was a member of the Climate Smart Municipalities student delegation that traveled to Germany in January 2020 to learn about Germany's renewable energy transition and meet with experts. He is from Oakdale, Minnesota and is very passionate about environmental public policy and public engagement so that we can build a more sustainable and equitable future.



Syd Bauer (she/they) is a recent graduate of the University of Minnesota Morris with a degree in Biology and a minor in Environmental Leadership and Stewardship. During her undergraduate career, she worked as an Energy Intern in the Office of Sustainability partaking in projects relating to district heating, microgrid management, solar installations, and community resilience. Syd currently spends their time driving for the Morris Transit, organizing the West Central MN Climate Network, and venturing into the prairie with their dog, Norma. Syd describes herself as a snack enthusiast, lover of people, and friend to all birds.



Teghan Grulkowski is a recent graduate, originally from Winona, Minnesota. She moved to Bemidji, Minnesota in 2017 to attend Bemidji State University majoring in Environmental Studies and minoring in Economics and Indigenous Sustainability. It was there she had the opportunity to attend Stewards of the Wilderness on Mallard Island where the focus was sustainability, Anishinaabe culture and knowledge, and the island's original owner Ernest C. Oberholtzer. This introduction to indigenous knowledge led her to a Niizhoo Gwaykochigewin internship with Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe where she gained an appreciation for traditional management practices. Currently, she resides in La Crosse, Wisconsin tutoring and putting on environmental events with WisCorps and continuing a lifelong relationship with the Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation as an island Caretaker.

