

Climate Experts to Discuss Wildfires and its Impact on Midwestern Air Quality

Midwestern experts will convene and explore climate and community issues at the annual Green Soapbox event on March 20th, hosted by nonprofit Delta Institute.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, UNITED STATES, February 21, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- On Wednesday March 20, 2024 experts will discuss the increasing issue of drifting wildfire smoke on air quality, and its directly related health and wellbeing impact, at the Green Soapbox annual event held by nonprofit Delta Institute.



GREEN SOAPBOX 2024
WILDFIRES & MIDWESTERN AIR QUALITY

Olga Bautista
Co-Executive Director of the Southeast Environmental Task Force

Mackenzie Siren
Moderator
Co-founder & Community Organizer, Chicago Climate Connect

Krista Thomason
Physical Scientist, Air Monitoring & Analysis Section, Air & Radiation Division for US EPA Region 5

Kyra D. Woods
Climate & Energy Project Manager, Department of Environment, City of Chicago

Wednesday March 20, 2024
5:00pm - 7:00pm CT | Hybrid event
<https://delta-institute.org/events>

This event is generously presented by:
William Blair

Please join us on March 20th; tickets available now for this hybrid event

This year's theme of "Wildfires and Midwestern Air Quality" will convene climate experts to discuss this pressing issue. Last year, many communities throughout the Midwest found themselves bracing for the negative impacts of Canadian wildfires brought by wind currents and weather patterns. As smoke polluted the atmosphere, many found themselves asking: How does this impact our public health? Should we anticipate more hazardous air quality days in the future? This event will explore those questions along with mitigation strategies and wider context of this growing issue.

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Green Soapbox gives an opportunity for us to listen to and learn from experts—while staying on the couch—about a wide array of pressing sustainability issues facing the Midwest and beyond.”

Bill Schleizer, CEO, Delta Institute

“While we continue to focus on the increased frequency of natural disasters due to climate change, we sometimes forget about the severity of their impacts to communities until we directly experience them. It is important to focus

on these impacts to truly understand their threat and create solutions that benefit those most impacted,” said Bill Schleizer, CEO of Delta Institute. “I’m eager for our panelists to share their expert insights about last year’s wildfires and their real-world consequences and discuss how

our region can address these types of events in the future.”

Panelist Olga Bautista is the Executive Director of the Southeast Environmental Task Force (SETF), a longstanding community organization dedicated to mitigating pollution, holding polluters accountable, and protecting the residents and green spaces in the Calumet Region. Before joining SETF, Olga worked with the Alliance for the Great Lakes as the Community Planning Manager for the Southeast Side of Chicago and was one of the lead organizers for both the Southeast Side Coalition to Ban Petcoke and the Campaign to Stop General Iron.

Event moderator Mackenzie Siren serves as the Head of Product at Cloverly, a digital platform that’s empowering businesses to scale their climate action. She is also the Co-founder of Chicago Climate Connect, Chicago’s largest recurring climate event and a place for climate-minded Chicagoans to meet, inspire, and support each other.

Panelist Krista Thomason is a Physical Scientist with the Air and Radiation Division’s (ARD) air monitoring team at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 5 office serving Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, Wisconsin and 35 Tribes. In her role, she provides technical support to the Region’s air monitoring programs, evaluates exceptional event demonstrations, and tracks wildfire smoke, local meteorology, and ozone concentrations. Prior to joining EPA Region 5, she worked for EPA’s Region 8 Office in Denver, CO and Ohio EPA. Krista has a bachelor’s degree in Meteorology and a master’s degree in Environmental Studies from Ohio University.

Panelist Kyra D. Woods works as a Program Manager in the City of Chicago’s Department of Environment. In her role, she supports environmental and climate policy development including leading the development of the City’s 2022 Climate Action Plan. Additionally, she supports other departments in managing climate equity projects such as the 2023 community heat mapping campaign with the Chicago Department of Public Health. Prior to joining the City of Chicago, Kyra worked with the Sierra Club Illinois Chapter as the Ready for 100 Chicago campaign coordinator and served as a U.S. Peace Corps Volunteer.

The annual Green Soapbox event brings together a panel of thought-leaders to explore and discuss sustainability, conservation, and economic topics. The event is organized by the Delta Emerging Leaders, the associate board of Delta Institute, a 501c3 nonprofit who collaborates with communities to solve complex environmental challenges throughout the Midwest.

“I am proud of our team for highlighting such a hot (pun intended) topic and ensuring we have a panel that represents our diverse experiences, knowledge, and community,” shared Haroula Kyriacou, Delta Emerging Leaders Board Co-Chair.

Grace Snider, fellow Co-Chair, added, “The impact of poor air quality is especially felt by communities that have been marginalized and people with compromised immune systems. We have the opportunity to mitigate its negative effects and support healthier communities, and

how we do this will reverberate through generations.”

This year’s Green Soapbox event is generously hosted by and presented with support from [William Blair](#), which is dedicated to partnering with clients, colleagues, and communities to create a healthier, more sustainable world.

David Fording, a member of Delta Institute’s Board and Partner and Portfolio Manager for William Blair, shares, “While William Blair’s history is deeply rooted in Chicago, today, we are a global firm with more than 20 offices worldwide. As extreme weather events and natural disasters become increasingly common, William Blair seeks to engage with the local communities in which we live and work to build stronger awareness of the challenges and contribute to possible solutions. Partnering with Delta Institute allows us to do both, and we are delighted to host this year’s Green Soapbox event.”

[Please join us for this hybrid event](#), with both in-person and online attendance options. Details are:

Date: Wednesday March 20, 2024

Time: 5:00pm-7:00pm Central

Accessibility:

- o In-person attendance: The William Blair-hosted event space is ADA compliant, and attendees will receive arrival guidance.
- o Virtual: Automated closed captions will be provided for the online audience via Zoom.

Cost: \$10-50 contribution to nonprofit Delta Institute; Refreshments will be served at the in-person event.

Delta Institute exists because environmental, economic, and climate issues hit communities—urban and rural—through disinvestment, systemic inequity, and policy decisions. We collaborate at the community level to solve our home region’s new and legacy issues, by focusing on the self-defined goals and needs of our partners. [Delta Institute is a 501c3 nonprofit](#) with a Platinum Seal of Transparency from GuideStar and is rated Four Stars by Charity Navigator.

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