

# About the Panelists

## Government & Resiliency Panel

Saturday, November 4, 2023, 1 - 2:30 PM

Museum of Northwest Art | 121 1st Street, La Conner, WA, 98257



Image Credit: (detail) Nina Vichayapai, Restoration of the Fir Island Farms Estuary, 2023, Hand sewn fabric on wood panel, 144" x 48" x 1"

### **Richard Brocksmith, *Mount Vernon Councilmember***

Richard's serving his second term as the at-large Mount Vernon City Council Member. He has a Bachelor's of Zoology and a Master's of Fisheries Science from the University of Washington. He has worked for the last 23 years on salmon recovery and habitat protection and restoration in Puget Sound including the last 10 years as the Executive Director of the Skagit Watershed Council. This work tightly aligns with the goal and implementation of climate change adaptation for our watersheds, rivers and marine shorelines. He's also focused on energy efficiency and public works planning in Mount Vernon to adapt how human communities address climate change challenges and our impacts on the natural environment.

### **Heather Spore, *MSc. Environmental Policy Analyst for Swinomish Indian Tribal Community***

Over the last 15 years Heather has cultivated a diverse background in marine biology, salmon research and management, environmental policy, ESA/NEPA, and habitat conservation in Alaska and Washington. Heather holds a MSc degree in Zoology/Ecology, Evolution and Conservation Biology from the University of Hawaii and a BSc in Marine Biology from the University of Rhode Island. She currently works as an Environmental Policy Analyst for the Swinomish Indian Tribal Community focusing on the conservation and protection of aquatic resources, climate resilience, and coastal policy.

**Karlee Deatherage, Sr. Community Affairs Rep (Skagit & Snohomish County) for Puget Sound Energy**

Karlee Deatherage joined Puget Sound Energy over two years ago as a Senior Community Affairs Representative for Skagit and Snohomish County. Prior to joining PSE, Karlee worked for Congresswoman Suzan DelBene's office as a community liaison and at an environmental nonprofit working on land use and water policy at the local and state level. Karlee holds a degree in Urban Planning & Environmental Policy from Western Washington University.

**Peter Browning, Skagit County Commissioner District #2**

Commissioner Browning was first elected to the Board of County Commissioners in 2020. Prior to his election, he worked as Executive Director of the Burlington Chamber of Commerce and previously worked as a Director in the Skagit County Health Department. He also serves as a Skagit Regional Health Commissioner.

Commissioner Browning's health and business background brings a unique perspective to the board. In addition to his work experience, he has served terms as the President of the Skagit Rotary, Chairman of the United Way of Skagit County, member of United General Hospital Quality Control Team, and the Skagit County Substance Abuse Board. Currently, Peter serves on the board of EDASC, Skagit Watershed Council and Chinook Enterprises. Commissioner Browning and his spouse chose Skagit Valley to raise their two kids and have lived here for over 30 years.

**Ronda Strauch, Seattle City Light**

Dr. Ronda Strauch is the Climate Change Research and Adaptation Advisor for Seattle City Light, where she helps the utility increase climate resilience. Prior to this position, she was a postdoctoral fellow with the Northwest Climate Adaptation Science Center hosted by University of Washington (UW) Climate Impacts Group. Her Ph.D. research with UW Civil and Environmental Engineering focused on landslide modeling in the Skagit River watershed and the vulnerability of transportation to climate change on federal lands in the North Cascades. Ronda has worked as a supervising engineer at King County Department of Transportation and as an ecologist for consulting firms and federal agencies in the Pacific Northwest, specializing in environmental and biological assessments. She has an MS from UW College of Forest Resources, where she studied the effects of climate and other factors on high elevation tree establishment following fire.