



Melanie Gárate

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PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

Melanie is an experienced bilingual facilitator and mediator primarily focused on oceans & coasts, climate adaptation & mitigation, and environmental injustices. She designs and facilitates complex public participation and multi-stakeholder engagement processes to address socio-environmental conflicts in the U.S. and Latin America. Her work focuses on the intersection of climate change, social justice, racial justice, community organizing, and advocacy. Melanie has extensive experience facilitating government agencies, local organizations, and community groups. She is a trained mediator, in accordance with Massachusetts General Law Chapter 233 § 23C.

EXPERIENCE

- 2023-present **Consensus Building Institute** Cambridge, MA/Latin America
Senior Associate
Facilitation services in the U.S. and Latin America focused on coasts and oceans, climate resilience and adaptation, mitigation, and social inequity issues.
- 2022-2023 **Stone Living Lab & Boston Harbor Now** Boston, MA
Director of Climate Engagement
Led and facilitated engagement strategies for scientific and policy research among multi-stakeholder groups on coastal nature-based climate resilience approaches.
- 2019-2022 **Mystic River Watershed Association** Arlington, MA
Climate Resiliency Manager
Led and facilitated regional climate resilience projects within the watershed focused on social resilience and racial equity.
- 2017-2019 **Mass Audubon** Boston, MA
Coastal Waterbird Education Specialist and Teacher Naturalist
- 2017 **New England Aquarium** Boston, MA
Visitor Education Specialist

EDUCATION

- 2016 **University of Rhode Island** Kingston, RI
M.S., magna cum laude, Biological and Environmental Sciences

Thesis: Nitrogen and warming effects on nitrous oxide production from coastal invertebrates. PI: Dr. Serena Moseman-Valtierra

2012 **University of Massachusetts Boston** Boston, MA
B.S., magna cum laude, Environmental, Earth, and Ocean Sciences
Honors Thesis: Spatial variation in microbial community functional group composition in surface water and sediments in Dorchester Bay of Boston Harbor.
PI: Dr. Alan D. Christian

TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS

2023 [Negotiation & Dispute Resolution](#), Harvard Law School, Program on Negotiation
2023 [Trained Mediator](#), 40-hour training in accordance with M.G.L 233 § 23C, MWI
2022 [Facilitative Leadership for Social Change](#), Interactive Institute for Social Change
2021 [Community Leadership and Social Change](#), Tufts University & Institute for Nonprofit Practice

LANGUAGES

English and Spanish native fluency in speaking, reading, and writing.

VOLUNTEER

- [Sustainable Solutions Lab, UMass Boston](#) Board Member, 2023-2024
- [Climate Adaptation Forum](#) Steering Committee Member, 2021-2024
- [Latino Outdoors Boston](#) Founder and Program Coordinator, 2021-2023
- [Professionals of Color in the Environment](#) Founder and Officer, 2021-present

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

- [Gárate, M.](#) (2022) For coastal communities, the canary is a sparrow. The Hill. <https://thehill.com/opinion/energy-environment/3665685-for-coastal-communities-the-canary-is-a-sparrow/>
- Davis, R., [M., Gárate.](#) (2021) Gearing up to cope with extreme heat. Commonwealth Magazine. <https://commonwealthmagazine.org/opinion/gearing-up-to-cope-with-extreme-heat/>
- [Gárate, M.](#), S. Moseman-Valtierra, A. Moen. (2019) Nitrogen and warming impacts on nitrous oxide emissions from marine bivalves. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*. 146: 236-246.
- Szura, K., R. McKinney, C. Wigand, A. Oczkowski, A. Hanson, J. Gurak, [M. Gárate.](#) (2016) Burrowing and foraging activity of marsh crabs under different inundation regimes: a mesocosm experiment. *Journal of Experimental Marine Biology and Ecology*. 486: 282–289.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2022-2023	Public Voices Fellow for the Climate Crisis, The OpEd Project with the Yale Program on Climate Change Communication
2022	Environmental Justice and Equity Expert Award, Urban Waters Learning Network, Funded by EPA
2020-2021	Tufts University: Institute for Nonprofit Practice Community Fellows Program
2019	Commonwealth Seminar Fellow
2014-2017	National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship Program <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three-year stipend and tuition coverage• Total award amount: \$132,000
2014-2016	The Nature Conservancy URI Student Marine award <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Two-year funding for costs associated with mangrove project• Total award amount: \$24,000
2015	URI Enhancement for Graduate Research Award <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total award amount: \$1,000
2014	SACNAS National Conference Outstanding Graduate Oral Presentation Monetary Award in Environmental Science
2013	American Academy of Underwater Sciences/ Hollis Dive Gear Award <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Funding to support research diving gear costs• Total award amount: \$1,250
2012	SACNAS National Conference Student Travel Scholarship
2012	American Society of Limnology and Oceanography Conference NSF Multicultural Program Scholarship
2011-2012	UMass Boston Undergraduate Honors' Research Grant <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Total award amount: \$1,000
2010-2012	National Institutes of Health Initiative for Maximizing Student Diversity Fellow, Harvard University
2011	SACNAS Conference Undergraduate Student Research Best Poster Monetary Award in Environmental Science
2011	SACNAS National Conference Student Travel Scholarship
2011	American Society of Limnology and Oceanography Conference NSF Multicultural Program Scholarship
2010	NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates Fellow, University of Massachusetts Boston
2009	NSF Summer Research Fellow, Mass Bay Community College

SELECTED LEAD PROJECTS

CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE

Maine Climate Council Community Resilience Work Group, Maine, 2023-2024. Plan and facilitate CRWG meetings with state of Maine co-chairs for the refresh of 2020's Maine Won't Wait Climate Action Plan. This includes regular planning meetings and development of detailed agendas with co-chairs, and facilitation of working group meetings.

Pisces NOAA Northeast Collaboration Design, Northeast US, 2023-present. Facilitated collaborative groups to build relationships and provide information and guidance to the Pisces Foundation's Environmental Education program (Pisces), NOAA's B-WET Program and NOAA's Office of Education's Environmental Literacy Program (NOAA) about what types of collaborative or network support would be helpful in the Northeastern United States.

COVID-safe Cooling Strategies Grant Program, Greater Boston Area, 2020-2023. Project managed the community-based organization part of the grant program. Coordinated with the Metropolitan Area Planning Council, who managed the municipal grantees. Managed the grant program refresh process in 2022-2023, including hiring consultants, co-facilitated in-person and virtual meetings with the grantees, and contributed to surveys. The program, funded by the Barr Foundation, provides funding and technical assistance to mitigate extreme heat impacts in seven communities most impacted by both COVID-19 and extreme heat.

Wicked Hot Mystic, Mystic River Watershed Association, Greater Boston Area, 2020-2022. Lead project manager for the extreme heat volunteer science campaign, which aimed to collect high resolution temperature and air quality data via volunteer scientists, create heat and air quality maps to identify the neighborhoods with highest extreme heat burden, increase community engagement around the rising concerns of extreme heat, and communicate the data to civic partners, community groups, and the general public. Project partners included the Museum of Science, Boston, CAPA strategies data analyst team, and local community-based organizations. Recruited and engaged community members to participate as volunteers.

Lower Mystic Climate Vulnerability Assessment, Greater Boston Area, 2019-2021. Project Manager and co-facilitator of the Social Vulnerability Assessment portion of the wider vulnerability assessment. The project involved multi-stakeholder groups of local, state, and federal agencies, community-based organizations, and residents of the Lower Mystic region. Created survey and focus group questions collaboratively with the project team. Significantly contributed to the final report of the assessment.

COASTS AND OCEANS

Lower Mystic Waterfront Visioning Process, Greater Boston Area, 2023-present. Lead community engagement for a new resilient waterfront along the Mystic River in Massachusetts. This involves process design, interviews and focus groups with community leaders, and on-the-ground community engagement, specifically with priority populations.

NOAA Interoperability Workshop, Greater Boston Area, 2023. Cofacilitated a three-day workshop with on-demand gear manufacturers, underwater acoustics experts, fishing industry leaders, federal and state fishery managers, and other relevant partners to discuss the development of draft acoustic communication standards, and data specifications, to support the interoperability of on-demand fishing.

Blue Corridors Conference, World Wildlife Fund, Washington, D.C., 2023. Planned, designed, and facilitated the first Blue Corridors Conference focused on whale conservation globally.

Worked closely with the US and Australian WWF teams to coordinate agenda, participatory workshop exercises, and support on next steps.

Stone Living Lab Conference: Nature-based Approaches to Coastal Resilience in Urban Settings, Boston, MA, 2022-2023. Project Manager and Chair for a three-day international conference hosted at UMass Boston. Led bi-weekly meetings with co-chairs, coordinated and curated keynote speakers, breakout sessions, field trips, volunteers, and communications. Hosted and “emceed” formal conference proceedings.

Little Mystic Channel, Boston, Open Space Park Design, Boston, 2019-2022. Facilitate the community engagement for the design of a climate resilience public park adjacent to public affordable housing in Charlestown, a neighborhood of Boston. This included leading virtual and in-person meetings (mostly during the height of the Covid-19 pandemic), creating presentations and surveys, and led the process for creating an Advisory Committee that was representative of the community. Facilitated subsequent quarterly Committee meetings.

EPA Stormwater Residual Designation Authority and Green Infrastructure TA, Boston Area, 2023-2024. Assisted EPA Region 1 with developing and implementing a Communications and Engagement Plan for new residual designation authority (RDA) permit that regulates certain stormwater discharges from privately-owned commercial, institutional, industrial, and multi-family residential properties of one acre or greater in three watersheds in the Boston Area. Provided facilitation support for EPA Region 1 and UNH Stormwater Center for three RDA EJ communities around the use of small-scale green infrastructure projects.

RENEWABLE ENERGY AND CLIMATE MITIGATION

Mid-Hudson Hubs, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York, 2023-present. Working closely with partners to develop and implement a stakeholder engagement and equity strategy to inform the Regional Assessment and Barriers Analysis (RABA) and then use the outcomes from the RABA and the stakeholder engagement process to develop the Equitable Engagement Plan by early 2024. Significant community engagement, stakeholder facilitation, and synthesis.

New York State Energy Research and Development Authority Environmental Justice Technical Working Group, New York, 2023- present. Lead facilitator for the first EJ TWG for the state of New York. Developed annotated agendas, meeting summaries and coordinated with community groups, state, and other stakeholders.

Massachusetts Offshore Wind Habitat Working Group, Massachusetts, 2023-2024. Worked closely with Massachusetts’s office of Coastal Zone Management to coordinate each working group meeting, created meeting agendas, and facilitated discussion with working group to highlight important issues in regards to offshore wind development in the Commonwealth.

BOEM Offshore Wind Stakeholder Engagement, Gulf of Maine, 2023-2024. Coordinated and co-facilitator of state task forces on wind energy development for the Bureau of Ocean Energy

Management in the Gulf of Maine. Facilitated meetings, prepared logistics, communicated with multi-stakeholder groups, and developed meeting summaries.

Climate Action Teams, Paris Agreement, Article 6, Chile, 2023. Facilitated multi-sector meeting to build a shared vision of how Chile might augment its climate ambition via Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement, including considering CAT as an enabling instrument for doing so. This work included discussing and agreeing upon aspects such as overarching process objectives and outputs; identification of priority stakeholders; and key aspects of process design and methodology.

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Title VI Informal Resolution Agreement Joint Session, Scituate, MA 2023-2024. Co-facilitator of meetings with complainants and recipients in the Title VI civil rights case. The purpose of the meetings are to provide a space for the complainants to express their concerns and findings to recipients that will help inform the Informal Resolution Agreement between EPA and the recipients.

Title VI Informal Resolution Agreement Joint Session, North Brooklyn Pipeline & Liquefied Natural Gas Facility, Brooklyn, NY, 2023. Co-facilitator of meetings with complainants and recipients in the Title VI civil rights case in Brooklyn, New York, amongst New York Department of Environmental Conservation, New York Department of Public Service, and National Grid. The purpose of the meetings are to provide a space for the complainants to express their concerns and findings to recipients that will help inform the Informal Resolution Agreement between EPA and the recipients.

Resilient Mystic Collaborative Social Resilience Working Group, Greater Boston Area, 2019-2024. Facilitated the working group, which was composed of municipal leaders, community-based organizations, and public health officials for the purpose of co-creating projects that are focused on both social and climate resilience. Led bi-monthly meetings, created agendas, performed stakeholder outreach and wrote three proposals based on group consensus.

SUPERFUND AND TOXIC CLEANUP

Northrop Grumman Bethpage Facility and Naval Weapons IRP Community Participation Work Group, Bethpage, NY, 2023-present. Established members of the CPWG, facilitated member meetings, including agenda design, coordination, and implementation. The Navy Grumman groundwater plume originates from the former Navy and Northrop Grumman sites located in the Town of Oyster Bay.

GE-Pittsfield/Housatonic River Cleanup – Environmental Protection Agency, Pittsfield, MA, 2023. Plans and conducts public outreach and stakeholder engagement in sever municipalities related to the EPA's efforts to remediate river sediment and soil sites in and along the Housatonic River from PCBs from the operations of General Electric manufacturing facilities.