

FRAMEWORK

Taking the Vital Signs of the Planet's Health: Wildlife, Humans, and the Environment

CONTEXT AND RATIONALE

<https://shepherdstownrotary.org/world-affairs-seminar/>

- Over the past 38 years, the Rotary Clubs of Shepherdstown, Martinsburg, Charles Town, and Berkeley Springs have organized an annual World Affairs Seminar that addresses relevant global and national issues, with the participation of leaders from the local high schools in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. World Affairs Seminars address issues by providing participating students with a balanced understanding of the topic, including the various issues and opportunities arising in the Eastern Panhandle.
- The connection between planetary health and human health is complex and increasingly important as human fates become ever more intertwined with the future of wildlife and global resilience. By examining issues of health, invasives, rewilding, and possible technological solutions, this seminar provides a multifaceted and even hopeful approach to creating a better tomorrow for our students and their habitats.

OBJECTIVES

The primary objectives of the seminars are threefold:

- To increase awareness and understanding of the main issues and opportunities at the international, national, and local levels.
- To engage participating students from the local high schools in constructive dialogue about the issues and emerging impacts, and the role and responsibility of individuals, communities, and governments in developing and implementing sound and balanced policies and programs.
- To encourage follow-up “engagement” by participating students in the Eastern Panhandle, in addressing constructively some aspects of the issues and opportunities.

APPROACH AND STRUCTURE

The structure is interactive, stimulated by five expert panel members, sharing their diverse experiences and perspectives. The seminar focuses on listening, learning, and constructive dialogue about a topic with participation from student leaders (80–120 students) and faculty advisers from local high schools (10); including follow-up engagement through community volunteer service, travel, essays, and other avenues.

PANEL MEMBERS

- **Chris Lemon**, Associate Director for the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Planetary Health
- **Chris Marshall**, Senior Administrative Manager for the Johns Hopkins University Institute for Planetary Health
- **Andrew Moore**, journalist and author of *The Beasts of the East. The Fall and Rise of America's Eastern Wilderness*
- **Heidi Ruffler**, Manager of the Office of International Agreements and Partnerships at U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- **Kimberly Fraser**, Outreach Specialist at the National Black-footed Ferret Conservation Center

AGENDA

- Brief Introduction and Overview
- Plenary Talks by Panelists
- Roundtable and Interactive Discussion with Students
- Small Group Discussions with Focus Questions
- Summaries of Group Discussions and Interaction with Panel Members
- Opportunities for Follow-Up Engagement by Students



September 24, 2026, 8:00 am to 1:30 pm (including lunch);
National Conservation Training Center,
Byrd Auditorium
698 Conservation Way, Shepherdstown, WV

**Open to high school students from
Jefferson, Berkeley, and Morgan Counties**

