

PLENARY SPEAKERS:

Mary Gartshore

I was born and raised on a large farm in the Dundas Valley. We had show quality Angus cattle, Dorset sheep, Nubian goats, riding horses and fancy poultry. Most of the farm was the forested glacial drift hills of the Dundas Valley. I attended University of Guelph graduating in Honours Zoology in 1973. For the next 30 years I worked and travelled carrying out biological inventories, teaching and conducting research in Nigeria, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Australia and Canada, etc. In 1990 Peter Carson and I purchased an 80 ha farm in Norfolk County to produce native plant materials. At the same time, we started seed-based restoration using local seed sources. This work led to a deeper understanding of life history traits and how ecosystems function.

Stephen Murphy

Stephen has a breadth of experience in the field of ecological restoration being a part of the Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) almost since it began, having taught and researched ecological restoration at the University of Waterloo since 1996 in addition to being the current editor-in-chief of SER's journal Restoration Ecology.

SESSION SPEAKERS:

Aidan Curran, Nature Conservancy of Canada- *The Need for Speed vs. the Need for Seed*

Aidan is the Assistant Conservation Biologist with Nature Conservancy of Canada in their Eastern Lake Ontario Coast and Napanee Plains region. He has a background in landscape architecture and urban forestry and is interested in enhancing ecological restoration and community connection to nature through design and public engagement."

"Nature Conservancy of Canada has been active in the Rice Lake Plains and Lake Iroquois Plain for over two decades. The restoration of rare tallgrass Prairie ecosystems involves dedicated management of the landscape, strong partnerships, and an ever-increasing need for seed. Join Aidan as he discusses how NCC became established in the Rice Lake Plains, what their work involves, and how they hope to expand and develop partnerships in future."

Ainsley Taggett, Trent University- *What works best? An exploration of suitable growth media for biological soil crust propagation in the Yukon*

I am a recent graduate of the Ecological Restoration joint program from Trent University and Fleming College, and I am currently pursuing an accelerated Master of Science in the Environmental and Life Sciences program at Trent. My research is co-supervised by Dr. Shaun Watmough and Dr. Eric Sager.

Over the course of my studies, I developed a deep appreciation for some of the more overlooked members of our ecosystems: lichens and mosses. Their resilience and ecological importance drew me in, and they have become the focus of my work. My current research explores the recovery of moss and lichen communities in mine-impacted landscapes, with case studies on peatlands in Sudbury, Ontario, and alpine/subalpine regions in the Yukon.

Ali Giroux, Trent University- *Restoration SOS – a Plantation’s Plea for Help*

Ali Giroux has a Bachelor of Science in animal biology from the University of Guelph and a Master’s in wildlife science from the University of Queensland. Ali has worked for over 16 years in the environmental sector, with experiences spanning the Toronto Zoo, to environmental consulting and land conservation work. Most notably, Ali spent 13 years with the Nature Conservancy of Canada as a conservation biologist, caring for lands within the Frontenac Arch, Ottawa Valley, and Carden Alvar. Currently as the Land Stewardship Coordinator at Trent University, Ali’s role involves writing and implementing plans for how the university will care for the University Green Network and the eleven nature areas on the Symons campus. Ali is a mom of a curious seven-year-old boy, a hilarious one-year old girl, and a ball-obsessed thirteen-year-old border collie/Aussie shepherd. Yes, even at thirteen! She is happiest in a swamp or better yet, in a swamp in a canoe!

Andrea D’Silva, Swallowtail Native Plants- *Germination Codes: Methods for Local Ecotype Sedge Species*

Andrea D’Silva founded Swallowtail Native Plants in 2022. She uses her background in education, botany, and restoration ecology to teach anyone who will listen how to grow native plants from seed. She is particularly fond of asters, goldenrods and sedges.

Swallowtail Native Plants specializes in Ontario native wildflower and grass seeds for the Great Lakes – St. Lawrence Lowlands ecoregion. Their 13-acre property is in the heart of Toronto’s Greenbelt on the Oak Ridges Moraine. They locally source seed to ensure that it will be adapted to the environmental conditions and seasonal weather patterns of our region. Their seed has high levels of genetic diversity which helps to create resilient plant populations.

Website: <https://www.swallowtailnativeplants.ca/> Instagram: @swallowtailnativeplants

Autumn Watkinson, Trent University- *Theory-Guided Restoration: Insights from the RESTART Lab*

Dr. Autumn Watkinson is an Assistant Professor at Trent University and PI of the RESTART (Restoring Ecosystems using Successional Theory, Assembly Rules, and novel Trajectories) Lab. She and her students conduct research focused on restoring degraded landscapes across a diverse range of ecosystems^{3/4}from urban greenspaces to boreal forests and tallgrass prairies. Autumn teaches ERSC 4520 – Restoration Ecology, ERSC 4530 – Reclamation & Remediation of Sites, and ERSC 4830 – Community Based Research Projects and is the Program Coordinator for the Ecological Restoration (ERES) BSc program offered by Trent School of the Environment. She also serves as faculty liaison for the Trent Student Chapter of the Society for Ecological Restoration.

Basil Conlin, Haliburton Micromeadows- *Micromeadows: Small spaces with big impacts*

Basil Conlin is a lifelong naturalist who runs Haliburton Micromeadows, a small native plant nursery located in Lochlin, ON. The nursery has been operating since 2024 with the goal of

propagating local ecotype native plants for gardens and rewilding. Website: haliburtonmicromeadows.ca , Social @haliburtonmicromeadows.

Cara Steele, Abbey Gardens- *Abbey Gardens: a model for socio-ecological restoration in rural communities*

Cara Steele is the Ecologist at Abbey Gardens and oversees restoration projects on the property including design, plant sourcing, implementation, volunteer management, and community outreach. She brings 15 years of experience in the restoration field and has completed forest, grassland, shoreline, pollinator garden, and wetland restoration projects.

Cass Stabler, Parks Canada- *Ecological Restoration Along the Lakes and Rivers of Ontario Waterways*

Cass Stabler is the ecologist for Ontario Waterways, Parks Canada, including Trent-Severn Waterway and Rideau Canal National Historic Sites. Cass studied at the University of Guelph. Her career with Parks Canada has included supporting resource conservation in national parks across Ontario and the first national urban park. Since 2019, Cass has contributed to environmental protection of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems within the waterways.

Colin Cassin, Invasive Species Centre- *Early Detection and Rapid Response to Invasive Species Introductions in Ontario*

Bio incoming

Daniel Vandeloo, Trent University- *Green Alder as a Nurse Plant for Mine Site Restoration*

I am currently enrolled in the Environmental and Life Sciences M.Sc. program under the supervision of Dr. Autumn Watkinson. My research explores how alder shrubs improve the microclimates of constructed soils and encourage vegetation development in post-mining landscapes. After the first year of my M.Sc., I have fulfilled all course requirements and earned six academic scholarships. I am currently preparing the first chapter of my thesis for publication this fall, and plan to complete my degree in August 2026. My academic journey began at Fleming College, where I earned a diploma in Ecological Restoration. I continued my education at Trent University, earning a B.Sc. in Ecological Restoration, where I graduated with one of the highest GPAs across my college and program and secured eight academic scholarships. While I have performed a lot of research field work, my experiences predominately come from a student and researcher perspective.

David Beamer, Tallgrass Ontario- *Tallgrass Ontario Projects and Programs*

David Beamer has held several positions managing and restoring habitats for various environmental organizations in Ontario and Nunavut. While acting in these positions, David managed local and provincial environmental programs designing and implementing wildlife

habitat restoration projects such as riverine, wetland, forest, and prairie restoration. David is currently the Executive Director with Tallgrass Ontario.

Tallgrass Ontario was formed in 1999 to guide and evaluate the progress of Tallgrass Communities of Southern Ontario: A Recovery Plan, and provides leadership in areas of communications, information-sharing, and education related to tallgrass communities. Today, Tallgrass Ontario's board includes some of Ontario's top experts in tallgrass prairies and savannas in Ontario, which are in turn supported by their experienced and knowledgeable supporters and members. Tallgrass Ontario has become one of the primary resources that Ontario prairie managers and landowners interested in natural restoration go to for advice, and support. More information on Tallgrass Ontario can be found at www.tallgrassontario.org

Dylan Radcliffe-Civil Engineering Skills for Restoration

Dylan Radcliffe is a Trent University Graduate from the Environmental Science Program and Sustainability Studies Program and a Fleming Graduate from Environmental Technology. Dylan has been extensively involved in environmental initiatives in Peterborough for the past 15 years. He was the former president of the Peterborough Field Naturalists and is the current Chair of the Peterborough Environmental Advisory Committee. He is also one of the founding members of the Odoonabii Watershed Stewards. He was recognized in 2024 for his volunteer efforts as a recipient of Peterborough's 40 under 40. He is currently employed as a water resources technician at Engage Engineering, and was previously employed as the water programs coordinator at GreenUP and the Love Your Lake Coordinator at Watersheds Canada. He also likes pizza, beer, and fpv drones. Sometimes all at once.

Elliot Groen, Ontario Woodlot Association- Challenges and opportunities for wood products to generate revenues for ecological restoration

Elliott is a graduate of Fleming College's Forestry Technician program and is a R.P.F. in training with scope. As the Sustainable Forestry Coordinator for the OWA and KLT he is focussed on the continued development of a private land silviculture and restoration program which builds on successful pilot projects that focused on plantation thinning and invasive species control. He has previously worked as a tennis coach, chef, carpenter and market gardener and holds a chartered herbalist diploma. He grew up between Holland and Southern Ontario and has also lived in Sweden and Sinixt tumxula7xw in BC's interior.

Ewa Bednarczuk, Neighbourhood Habitat School- Backyard Ponds and Rain Gardens: Lessons in Urban Habitat Restoration

Ewa Bednarczuk is an ecologist, gardener, and backyard habitat restoration coach based in Picton, Ontario, with over 25 years of experience in ecological restoration and stewardship. Her work blends science, creativity, and community to help people reconnect with the land right outside their doors. Through her on-line Neighbourhood Habitat School, Ewa guides nature-loving homeowners to transform urban backyards into thriving pockets of biodiversity. Her approach is designed to empower everyday people to help them and nature heal—starting exactly where they are.

Ewa works as a conservation biologist for the Nature Conservancy of Canada in the Rice Lake Plains, in Northumberland County. Her past roles have included working with land

trusts, conservation authorities, municipalities, and environmental NGOs in Ontario as well as abroad, where she has led on-the-ground restoration work, designed stewardship programs, and built partnerships.

Graham Buck, Tallgrass Ontario- *The application of Floristic Quality Index (FQI) to track the restoration of an oak savanna and woodland remnant in Brant County Ontario*

Graham is a subject matter expert in the preservation of native landscapes and their recovery through ecological restoration and naturalization. His area of expertise is the identification of plants with a focus on tallgrass species. He has also participated in numerous tallgrass prairie restoration projects, particularly in Brant, Hamilton and Waterloo counties.

Jason Phoenix, University of Waterloo- *Effects of Agricultural Legacies on Tallgrass Prairie Restoration*

I am a 3rd year PhD student at the University of Waterloo. My area of study is restoration ecology in tallgrass prairies, with a special focus on the interactions between agricultural legacies and prairie restoration techniques.

Jennifer Gagne, Nature Conservancy of Canada- *Managing Cedars, Cattle and Conservation at the Napanee Plain Alvar*

Jen is a conservation biologist with the Nature Conservancy of Canada (NCC) and has a master's degree in forest conservation and a professional certificate in ecological restoration.

Jennifer Nantais and Sam Whiteye, Carolinian Canada- *Building a sustainable inclusive native seed supply in southern Ontario*

As the Healthy Habitat Manager with Carolinian Canada, Jennifer co-authored the Southern Ontario Seed Strategy by facilitating a collective of diverse rights holders and stakeholders using a Two-Eyed Seeing approach. She also leads the In The Zone program, a collaborative effort with World Wildlife Fund-Canada, connecting ecosystems, people, knowledge, and action through healing the landscape with native plants. Her role allows her to work with a network of leaders connecting science, community and business to grow healthy landscapes for a green future in the spirit and practice of reconciliation.

Samantha Whiteye is a community leader from Eelūnapéewi Lahkéewiit. She is very passionate and dedicated to her work within Southern Ontario and the Indigenous Communities she actively serves. Samantha comes from grassroots immersed experiences which she utilizes her lived experience and understandings to create space, advocate and lead conversations centering on Truth and Reconciliation. Leading with an ethical two eyed seeing approach Samantha demonstrates leadership as a changemaker in the

Samantha is very knowledgeable and connected to her Lunaapeew/Lenape culture as she continuously weaves the medicine and teachings into her work and daily lifestyle. She is also passionate about ancestral seed sovereignty and hopes it helps build bridges back to

identity for her people.

Over the past year Samantha has worked closely with Carolinian Canada Coalition and continues her work in a new role as Indigenous Leadership Director to help shift the narratives in conservation.

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/carolinian-canada-coalition> <https://caroliniancanada.ca/>

<https://www.instagram.com/caroliniancanada/> <https://www.facebook.com/caroliniancanada>

<https://www.youtube.com/caroliniancanada>

Jess Livingstone- *Creating a Restoration Plan for Brook Trout Habitat: A Community Based Approach*

Jess Livingstone is a recent graduate of the Ecological Restoration program at Trent University. Her passions lie in aquatic ecosystems and building meaningful community relationships in the hopes of preserving the natural world for generations to come.

Jonathan Scholtens & Renee Twyford, Nature at McMaster University- *Expanding the Eco-Corridor: McMaster University's Watershed Restoration Efforts*

Nature at McMaster works to steward McMaster University's natural lands. Nature at McMaster manages invasive species, promotes biodiversity, engages the community in restoration work, and advocates for nature on campus. Through these efforts, Nature at McMaster has removed hundreds of hectares of invasive species, planted thousands of native plants, and engaged over two thousand community members in restoration events and interpretive hikes.

Jonathan Scholtens is a Natural Lands Coordinator at Nature at McMaster. He has had a lifelong interest in nature and recently graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Science. He has been working for Nature at McMaster for three years in a variety of roles and helps manage day-to-day restoration efforts.

Renee Twyford is a recent graduate of McMaster University with a bachelor's degree in biology, with a focus in plant pathology. Renee has worked as a Restoration and Natural Lands Coordinator at Nature at McMaster since 2024, starting as an intern in May 2024. Renee has a passion for plant ecology, animal welfare, and engaging the community with nature and the environment.

Josh Noiseux, Evermeadow Farms/ALUS- *Shared Ground: Seeing opportunity at the interface of agriculture and ecology*

I am an ecological restoration practitioner operating across the landscape of east central Ontario in two capacities: in my role as ALUS Peterborough Program Coordinator I help other farmers deliver ecosystem services through restoration projects on agricultural land; in my role as owner of Evermeadow Farm I, along with my wife Janita, steward 175 acres under our management, working towards a dynamic tall grass savannah ecosystem managed primarily by grazing animals. I have 15 years professional experience in natural

resource management, and also have a background in academia where I taught about the philosophy of ecology and building cultures of sustainability.

Karlotta Grasse & Radek Odolczyk, Alderville Black Oak Savanna- *Igniting the restoration of terrestrial ecosystems- the principals of planning a prescribed burn*

Karlotta is the Invasive Species Technician at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna, where she leads invasive species management across the site. She has recently started a new project focused on removing invasive Phragmites from critical wetland habitats within Alderville First Nation.

With over six years of experience in ecological restoration, Karlotta has dedicated much of her career to working with non-profit organizations across Ontario. She holds an Ecosystem Management Diploma from Fleming College and a B.Sc. in Biology with a specialization in Conservation from Trent University.

Karlotta is a certified Burn Boss and has participated in over 30 prescribed burns, including one she led in the spring of 2025. Driven by a passion for protecting native biodiversity, Karlotta is committed to restoring ecosystems by removing invasive species and supporting the recovery of native plant communities.

Radek is the Ecological and Stewardship Coordinator at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna. He leads restoration work across the site and heads up the *Stream to Shore* project, helping connect healthy ecosystems from upland habitats to water's edge.

For more than 15 years, Radek has been dedicated to conservation—11 of those right here at Alderville BOS. His experience stretches from restoring mangrove wetlands in Central America to promoting sustainable forestry in the ancient Appalachian Mountains of New Brunswick.

He holds a Technologist Diploma in Ecosystem Management from Fleming College and a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science from Trent University.

Since 2017, Radek has led the planning and execution of Ecological Prescribed Burns at Alderville BOS. A certified Low Complexity Prescribed Burn Boss (RX200), he has conducted over 40 prescribed burns and supported many more as an RX100 helper. His introduction to fire ecology began in 2014 under the mentorship of Rick Beaver — a moment he considers the spark that ignited his passion for fire stewardship.

For Radek, there's no better way to spend a day than restoring habitats, planting native species, and forging meaningful connections—with both the land and the people who care for it.

Kim Ong, Kawartha Lake Stewards Association- *Replanting Native Shorelands*

Bio incoming

Kassandra McKeown, Cambium Indigenous Professional Services - *Land Relationship Visioning as a Collaborative Tool*

Kassie is a proud Anishnaabe kwe from Alderville First Nation, ON, and is currently an elected Councillor. She is a graduate from Carleton University with a Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Law, double minor in Indigenous Studies and Psychology and also holds a post-graduate certificate in Environmental Planning from Fleming College. With over a decade of experience working in environmental conservation and planning, Kassie's experience includes stakeholder and rightsholder engagement, meaningful relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous government organizations, environmental assessment and restoration, as well as advisory and support for First Nations communities pursuing community land use planning through Land Relationship Visioning. Kassie is an active Community member of Alderville, and has served as treasurer on the Alderville Community Trust for over a decade, is a board member of Alderville Solar Incorporated, and serves as a member of the Lands Advisory Committee of Alderville. Kassie has previously served in roles at the Alderville Black Oak Savanna as a restoration field technician and education/outreach facilitator, lead field technician at Toronto Zoo's Turtle Island Conservation, and volunteer at the Ontario Turtle Conservation Centre. Kassie will be sharing an innovate tool and process for meaningful Indigenous engagement, co-developed with the Ontario Aboriginal Lands Association and Environment and Climate Change Canada.

Dr. Kayla R. S. Hale, Centre for Ecosystem Management, University of Guelph- *Local Interventions to Promote Resilience at Landscape Scales*

Dr. Kayla R. S. Hale is a theoretical ecologist and postdoctoral fellow working in the Centre for Ecosystem Management at the University of Guelph. Her research focuses on how the complex structure and dynamics of species interactions – among predators, herbivores, and mutualists – affect ecological systems across scales, from organisms' behaviour to emergent ecosystem services like agricultural yield.

Keira McManus, Ontario Parks and the City of Windsor- *Restoration in the Ojibway Prairie: Assessing success 40 years after implementation*

Keira is an incoming master's student at the University of Waterloo studying tallgrass prairie restoration under the supervision of Dr. Stephen Murphy. She has been a Guide at the Ojibway Nature Centre intermittently for the past 7 years between completing her undergraduate degree in the School of Environment Resources and Sustainability at Waterloo.

Kristen Harrison, North-South Environmental- *Ecological Restoration in Natural Heritage System Planning*

Bio incoming

Laura Wensink, Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority- *Connecting landscape, connecting people, connecting grants*

After graduating from Trent University in 2015, with a double major in Biology and Environment & Resource Science, Laura spent 10 years building skills in ecosystem restoration, aquatic ecosystem research and fish community monitoring. Since 2020 she has been working on a team, coordinating stream and river rehabilitation projects that bring together community, construction and conservation at Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority.

Laura is a Certified Ecological Restoration Professional with an interest in nature-based solutions, natural channel systems and community building that impact climate change and biodiversity loss.

Lindsay Nash- Quinte Conservation- *Quinte Conservation's experience engaging with the community*

"My name's Lindsay Nash and I'm the Outreach and Stewardship Coordinator at Quinte Conservation. In my role, I organize and attend events to promote watershed-based education. I coordinate naturalization projects/ initiatives throughout the community that improve our local environment. My education at Fleming College and Trent University had me studying environmental sciences and geography. I started my career journey ten years ago as a summer student at Quinte Conservation in the Aquatic Sciences/ Watershed Monitoring Department. From there, I went to Ducks Unlimited to work on wetland restoration projects, then to Kawartha Conservation to work on shoreline restoration & low impact development projects. I came back to Quinte Conservation in recent years to work in the Planning and Regulations department. For the last year and a half, I've been continuing my career journey at Quinte Conservation, sharing my knowledge and experience in my current Outreach and Stewardship role. I grew up approximately 30 mins from Belleville (45 minutes from Peterborough), therefore I'm a friendly neighbour. In my free time, you can catch me out on the water boating in the summer or out in the woods hiking.

Since starting in my Outreach and Stewardship Coordinator position at Quinte Conservation, I've learned that leveraging the help of volunteers can really take our projects to the next level. In my talk, I will cover the types of roles we have volunteers fill, where to find volunteers, success and challenges when engaging with the community, and our plans for the future."

Liam Doyle, Dougan Ecology- *Effects of seed source on biotic interactions*

Liam Doyle is an early-career landscape scholar and designer with Dougan Ecology, an environmental consulting and landscape architecture firm based in Guelph, Ontario. A recent graduate of the Master of Landscape Architecture program at the University of Guelph, Liam's work focuses on remnant ecosystem enhancement, native plant community analogues, and seed-based regeneration strategies in southern Ontario.

An alumnus of the Restoration Ecology program at Trent University, Liam is excited to return to the Trent Restoration Ecology Conference as a presenter. His professional experience since leaving Trent spans urban ravine and waterfront restoration, including contributions to high-profile projects such as the Port Lands Flood Protection and Enabling Infrastructure project in Toronto. His work blends technical design with place-based ecological knowledge

and long-term stewardship.

As a native seed collector, Liam also played a key role in establishing the Toronto Seed Orchard—an initiative that increases access to regionally appropriate native seed for local restoration and landscape practitioners.

Living and working in Guelph, Liam acknowledges with respect that this work takes place on the traditional territories of the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe, Mississaugas of the Credit, Mississaugas, and Neutral peoples, territories which have been and continue to be stewarded by those peoples. His practice aims to respect these ecological legacies and ongoing relationships through thoughtful, reciprocal approaches to research and design.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/liam-d-281b0b97/>

Lucy Martin-Johnson, Trent University- *Biocontrol of Canada Thistle*

Lucy Martin-Johnson is an alumna of Trent University's Restoration Ecology BSc program. She has experience in tallgrass prairie restoration, native plant horticulture, and aquatic plant ecology.

After several years working as a restoration technician, she has returned to Trent to pursue a master's degree. She is currently a first-year MSc candidate in the Environmental and Life Sciences department, supervised by Dr. Autumn Watkinson.

Her research focuses on biotic resistance, using greenhouse experiments to explore how plant functional traits influence the suppression of an invasive species called Canada thistle.

Matt Mair- *Sand Barren Restoration in Northumberland County*

Matt is an ecologist working for the Northumberland County Forest – a 2,225 hectare greenspace that balances multiple land uses including sustainable timber harvesting, recreation, and ecology. Matt has a degree in Biology and Environmental Science from Trent University and a specialized diploma in Restoration Ecology from Niagara College. In addition to his career in the field of ecology, Matt is the current president of the Willow Beach Field Naturalists, a nature club based out of Northumberland County. Matt feels truly blessed to be able to work within such an interesting area as Northumberland County with such unique ecological features such as the Rice Lake Plains, The Oak Ridges Moraine, Rice Lake, and a large swath of Lake Ontario shoreline.

Meghan Ward, Trent/MNRF- *From Suppression to Smothering: the Unintended Consequences of Restoring Wetlands via Rolling Phragmites*

Meghan Ward is a PhD candidate at Trent University in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry. Her research integrates wetland ecology, invasive species management, and restoration monitoring, with a focus on Great Lakes coastal ecosystems. Meghan's work bridges science and application, addressing critical gaps in the evaluation of invasive plant treatments and their impacts on native biodiversity. She has led long-term field experiments assessing the outcomes of manual and mechanical control methods, using rigorous before-after-control-impact designs to inform restoration best

practices.

Beyond research, Meghan is committed to accessible ecological monitoring frameworks that empower community groups and non-specialist land stewards to evaluate treatment effectiveness and support evidence-based wetland restoration. Her broader interests include science communication, applied conservation, and the development of standardized tools for measuring ecosystem recovery. Meghan's work aims to strengthen connections between academic research, government policy, and grassroots conservation efforts across the Great Lakes region.

Meredith Carter & Candace Clark, Otonabee Region Conservation Authority- *Recent Restoration Projects at Otonabee Regional Conservation Authority*

Bio incoming

Dr. Mike McTavish, rare Charitable Reserve -*Non-native earthworms as granivores and seed dispersers with implications for restoration*

Dr. Mike McTavish is the Conservation Scientist at rare where he is responsible for the research and ecological monitoring programs (<https://www.raresites.org/>). He is an ecologist and educator with a background in the fields of invasion science, ecological restoration, and biological control. His recent research focuses on the ecology of invasive earthworms and biological control of introduced Phragmites and garlic mustard. Mike is also a folk musician, science fiction and tabletop game enthusiast, and avid outdoor explorer with his wife and daughter.

Natasha Hirt, Wildlife Indigenous Science and Ecology Lab & Young Lab, University of Guelph - *Monitoring Alvar Pollinators using a Land-based Monitoring Approach*

Natasha Hirt (she/they) is a Master's student in the Wildlife, Indigenous Science, and Ecology (WISE) Lab and the Young Lab at the University of Guelph. Based in Toronto, Natasha works in close partnership with Wiikwemkoong Unceded Territory on Manitoulin Island, where their research focuses on native pollinator diversity—particularly bees and syrphid flies (flower flies)—and relationships with medicinal, species at risk, and invasive non-native plants in alvar ecosystems.

Guided by community priorities and Elder teachings, Natasha's work weaves Indigenous knowledge systems with Western ecological science to monitor pollinators, document culturally and ecologically significant plant species, and generate data that supports indigenous-led research, ecological restoration and stewardship.

A core aspect of Natasha's approach is knowledge sharing through land-based learning, working alongside Elders, youth, and other community members to strengthen intergenerational connections and build local capacity for ecological monitoring.

With a background in conservation biology, environmental visual communication, and fine art photography, Natasha combines research and storytelling to highlight the deep relationships between people, Land, and wildlife — with the goal of supporting thriving pollinator communities, culturally significant plant species, and resilient ecosystems for future

generations.

Website: natashahirt.ca, Instagram: @natashahirt, Email: nhirt@uoguelph.ca

Peter Beckett, Laurentian University-*The Sudbury Seed Collection Program*

With 50 years of service, Dr. Peter Beckett is Professor Emeritus of Environmental Reclamation, Restoration and Wetland Ecology, School of Natural Sciences, Laurentian University. His particular interest is in plant ecology. Peter is Chair of VETAC, the City of Greater Sudbury's Advisory Panel on Landscape Regreening. He is founding member and director of the Junction Creek Stewardship Committee, that is dedicated to returning ecological integrity to the urban creek. Peter holds a Canadian Land Reclamation Association Noranda Reclamation Award, the Watkin Award and a Pioneers in Reclamation Award from the American Society of Mining and Reclamation. Recently he received a King Charles 111 Coronation Medal for services to community reclamation.

Rebecca Davis Scott, Green Thumbs Growing Kids-*Wildness in the City: Restoring Nature in Urban Spaces*

Rebecca's expertise is in urban agriculture and supporting beneficial insects. She is a horticulturist and a member of the Master Gardeners of Toronto.

She graduated with distinction from the University of Guelph with a focus on Urban Agriculture and has been working as a horticulturist since 2021. Rebecca is part of the Master Gardens of Toronto and a member of Project Swallowtail through Pollinator Partnership. She is currently working for a non profit in Toronto called Green Thumbs Growing Kids, where their mission is to connect inner city children with their food and with nature. I am a strong public speaker and passionate about beneficial insects, invasive plant species removal, and habitat creation in an urban environment.

Richard Feldman, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources-*RestoratiON: a tool to identify priority restoration sites in Ontario*

Bio incoming

[Geri Poisson](#), Beacon Environmental- *Seed forecasting and collection programs*

Geri has over 20 years of experience in the field of natural resource management and environmental consulting in Ontario and British Columbia. His expertise includes work in botanical, wildlife and Species at Risk surveys and habitat assessments, fish habitat assessments, environmental monitoring, urban tree inventory and assessment, forest inventory & ecology, restoration ecology. He has completed numerous environmental impact studies, natural heritage assessments, arborist reports, tree risk assessments, and woodlot evaluations for a variety of clientele and is familiar with a wide range of environmental policy. Geri is a certified Ontario Wetland Evaluator, MNR-trained in using the Ecological Land Classification System for Southern Ontario and a designated Butternut Health Assessor.

Geri is also an ISA-certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessor, a trained Tree Appraiser and Certified Seed Collector.

Tanya Lemieux, Carleton University-*A Perspective on Using Habitat Quality Indicators to Evaluate the Success of Freshwater Habitat Improvements*

You can find Tanya on LinkedIn: www.linkedin.com/in/tanya-lemieux

Tyler Jamieson, Cambium Inc.-*Species At Risk Habitat Creation*

Tyler Jamieson holds a Masters of Environmental and Life Sciences and a Bachelor of Science (Honours) in Ecological Restoration from Trent University, as well as an Ecological Restoration diploma from Fleming College. Tyler is currently an Ecologist and Project Coordinator at Cambium Inc. and specializes in Ecological Restoration projects.

Vicky Papuga, Canadian Wildlife Federation-*Restoration projects within the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Rights-of-Way as Habitat Program*

Vicky Papuga (she/her) works at the Canadian Wildlife Federation as the Rights-of-Way Pollinator Habitat Coordinator, coordinating the GTHA Project as part of the Rights-of-Way as Habitat program. She has a multidisciplinary background, having studied wildlife movement alongside human attitudes and motivations during graduate school, with growing interests in field botany and native plant gardening in recent years. Her work to develop partnerships with land managers for pollinator habitat restoration is informed by her experiences in biodiversity conservation research, species at risk policy, and fieldwork in meadow restoration. You can often find her outside, whether that's visiting restoration areas or hiking on trails, checking out cool plants and the seeds they may share with her.

Victor Bewsh-*Impact of non-industrial wood ash application on sugar maple regeneration*

Bio incoming

Will Chapple, Kawartha Conservation Authority-*Integrating Landowner Stewardship and Organizational Collaboration in Private Land Restoration*

Will Chapple is an environmental professional specializing in land stewardship, project management, and community engagement. With a background in both regulatory and habitat restoration work, Will has experience leading conservation initiatives, coordinating with landowners and partners, and supporting collaborative programming. He currently works with Kawartha Conservation in Lindsay, ON as the Forestry and Landowner Services staff and member of the Stewardship team. Will's work reflects a strong commitment to practical, partnership-based approaches to environmental restoration and stewardship.

EXHIBITORS:

GreenUP

For more than 30 years, GreenUP has been central and eastern Ontario's leading organization focused on issues of environmental education, sustainability, and stewardship. A cornerstone of GreenUP's work is Ecology Park, a 5+ acre urban park and hub of ecological diversity located within Peterborough's natural heritage and park system. The park features a native plant nursery, demonstration gardens, natural playscape, sustainable education shelter, and more than 3 acres of urban woodland and forests that we are in the process of restoring. Swing by the GreenUP table to purchase gift cards to the native plant nursery or learn about opportunities to support restoration efforts at GreenUP Ecology Park.

Minnow Magazine

A project started by sisters Alex & Natasha with the mission to: educate and therefore inspire Ontarians to care about the conservation of the small but mighty creatures in our ecosystems and to use that passion to organize. to look to and recognize traditional Indigenous ecological knowledge as essential methods that precede conservation as we know it today

Natural Themes Native Plant Nursery & Ecological Services

At Natural Themes, we are passionate about restoring the natural beauty and biodiversity of our region. We provide a wide selection of native plants for home gardens, landscaping projects, and ecological restoration efforts. We grow and offer over 400 species of native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, ferns, and vines. Our plants are grown in containers and plugs to ensure healthy root systems and ease of planting.

We specialize in growing native species from eastern and central North America, with a focus on those native to eastern Ontario, the southern Great Lakes region, and the Carolinian zone.

Our plants:

- Are adapted to our local climate and growing conditions
- Play a vital role in supporting wildlife and enhancing ecosystems
- Contribute to rebuilding resilient, diverse landscapes

Ecological Services We Offer:

- Garden/yard consultations, including rain gardens, woodland/shade gardens, pollinator gardens.
- Ecological restoration consultations, including shoreline restoration, natural pond and wetland creation, and afforestation and reforestation projects.
- Planting services for projects of all sizes

We are well-versed in landowner stewardship programs and can assist in aligning landowners with available grant opportunities whenever possible. We are also a delivery agent for Forest Canada's subsidized large-scale tree planting program. We proudly serve communities in Quinte West, Belleville, Prince Edward County, Stirling, Campbellford, Brighton, Warkworth, and Napanee.

Northumberland Land Trust

The Northumberland Land Trust is a local registered charity and community-based organization that is dedicated to protecting nature in perpetuity through land conservation throughout Northumberland County. We currently care for 1,753 acres of ecologically significant habitat on our 17 nature reserves, some of which are open to the public for community members to walk and connect with the natural world.

Sustainable Roots Ecological Restoration Inc.

Sustainable Roots Ecological Restoration Inc. was born from a desire to see positive change in the way that we view urban ecological restoration. We are dedicated to increasing local biodiversity through pollinator garden installation, invasive species management, reforestation, and educational outreach.

We offer experienced and ecologically responsible invasive species management, tailored specifically to each project. Additionally, we offer educational opportunities for the local community to engage with the plants that we work with through workshops, plant walks, and stewardship opportunities.

Swallowtail Native Plants

Swallowtail Native Plants specializes in native wildflower and grass seeds for the Mixedwoods Plains region of Ontario. Join us at our table to learn more about what we offer!

The Society for Ecological Restoration

The Society for Ecological Restoration (SER) is an international organization working towards advancing the science, practice and policy of ER to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate, and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between nature and culture. Visit our table where we will showcase what membership with SER looks like and where we can help you get signed up for your very own membership!

The Society for Ecological Restoration - Student Affiliation Groups (Trent University & University of Waterloo)

At this conference, we are very lucky to have two student affiliation groups with the Society of Ecological Restoration; The Society for Ecological Restoration - Trent University Chapter (SER-TU), and The Society for Ecological Restoration - University of Waterloo Chapter (SER Waterloo). They will be exhibiting together during this conference, so come stop by their table to hear about the benefits and excitements of running a student group at an academic institution and learn about all the cool events and projects their groups have been pursuing! You may even get some native seed out of it!

Turtle Riot Studios

Turtle Riot Studios is pleased to present a very early playable demo of 'Flora's Reign', an augmented reality (AR) mobile game about restoring nature in your neighbourhood. Created for children and youth in mind, players can explore their neighbourhood, gather seeds, and plant and care for an AR native plant garden in their favourite places to create a balanced,

sustainable ecosystem. The first biome featured in the game is the Black Oak Savanna. Flora's Reign offers an interactive and play-based opportunity to spark curiosity in children and families for ecological restoration, learn about endangered ecosystems, and inspire real-world action.

Trent University, School of Graduate Studies

The School of Graduate Studies at Trent offers several thesis- and course-based graduate programs that prepare students for ecological restoration fields, whether through research or relevant coursework paired with a professional placement. The Environmental & Life Sciences (ENLS) Program offers thesis-based MSc & PhD degrees. The Bioenvironmental Monitoring & Assessment (BEMA) Program offers both a two-year thesis-based MSc and a one-year course-based Master's degree (M.BEMA) with 4-month professional placement. The M.BEMA focuses on key skills for the environmental sector, including data analysis (R), sampling design, environmental assessments, effective communication, geomatics (ArcGIS Pro), and environmental policy. A Graduate Studies representative will be available to provide information for these programs and how to apply.

ULINKS

U-Links Centre for Community-Based Research bridges science, community engagement and experiential learning in Haliburton County. Via student led projects and partnerships with academic institutions (including Trent University), we support ecological restoration and long-term environmental monitoring initiatives. Our Community-Based Education programming focuses on ecological restoration with projects focused on themes such as riparian buffer planning, carbon stock assessments, wetland evaluation (for PSW status) and invasive species mapping/removal. In addition, our auxiliary program - Woodlands and Waterways EcoWatch (WWEW) engages citizen scientists in monitoring forests, wetlands, lakes and streams. The program gathers essential baseline data on topics like water quality, benthic invertebrates, and invasive species to guide local restoration priorities to build community capacity for stewardship while supporting evidence-based decision making.