



Speaker Biographies

Rod Badcock

Executive Director, Greenspring Bioinnovation Hub
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Rod is passionate about the bioeconomy. He spent the beginning of his career in operational roles with Alberta Pacific Forest Industries and Bowater Mersey Paper Company where he specialised in forest management.

In addition to an MBA from Saint Mary's University, Rod holds a Bachelor of Science in Forest Engineering from the University of New Brunswick. Rod is also an entrepreneur and has been involved in the launch of several firms including a consulting business that supports product and process innovation in the bioeconomy. He resides in beautiful St. Margarets Bay, Nova Scotia with his wife and golden retriever.

Todd Burgess

Forestry Outreach Coordinator, Forest Nova Scotia
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Todd graduated in 1990 with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from UNB. He headed to British Columbia where he worked for 17 years as a professional forester with the provincial government as a Silviculture Planner and later for the BC Timber Sales Program. Todd returned to Nova Scotia in 2007 to work for Northern Pulp in their stumpage procurement program until the recent mill closure. Since 2020, Todd has been working with Forest Nova Scotia as the Outreach Coordinator and trying to 'herd cats' in the various road funding programs.

Todd lives in Hilden, Colchester County, with his wife Janice who is an elementary school teacher. They have 2 grown children. Todd spends his spare time curling in the winter and keeping bees in the summer.

Laura Carter

Woodlands for Wildlife Coordinator, Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute

Laura Carter joined MTRI in January of 2022 shortly after completing her Master's degree in Resource and Environmental Management at Dalhousie University. A resident of Halifax, Laura is thrilled to be a part of an organization that allows her to escape into the forest and apply her passion for forest stewardship and species at risk conservation. Laura currently coordinates MTRI's Woodlands for Wildlife pilot program in addition to working on other forest-related projects, such as old growth forest scoring and biodiversity research. In her spare time Laura enjoys yoga, bird watching, and hiking with her dogs.

Kevin Chen

HWA Strike Team Project Assistant, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables
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Kevin is a Forest Technician in Nova Scotia with the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables (DNRR). He immigrated from Taiwan to Nova Scotia in 2005 where he found his passion for forestry and environmental sciences in this beautiful province. As a graduate from St. Mary's University with a BSc and a Forest Technicians Diploma from the Maritime College of Forest Technicians he is perfectly suited for his current role with DNRR. Being a project assistant for the HWA Strike Team his responsibilities are site assessments, layout, supervision of pesticide treatments, and assistance with facilitating the logistics of the overall project as well as the day-to-day operations of the HWA Strike Team. Kevin has worked in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick for the last six years gaining experience as a technician on private and public lands, specializing in silviculture, pre-treatment assessments, invasive species, and wildfire.

Melissa Labrador

Pemsik Mawa'tasikl Anko'tmu'kl Lead

Melissa comes from the Mi'kma'ki district of Kespukwitk (guess-boo-wick), with maternal connections to the district of Siknikt (sig-a-nick). Immersed in traditional ecological knowledge, skills and values from a young age, Melissa has worked as an Mi'kmaw Guardian alongside others to bring awareness about our relationship with the land and waters and how the environmental changes are affecting cultural practices. She is known for her artistic skills, her knowledge of traditional Mi'kmaw medicine and birch bark canoe building with her Father, Todd. She also worked towards the creation of the Katewe'katik and Pu'tlaqne'katik Wilderness areas, which were designated in 2020.

Hugh McGillivray

Conservation Officer, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

Erin Pearson

Forest Health Ecologist, Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site
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Erin Pearson is a Forest Health Ecologist working in Kejimikujik National Park and National Historic Site. With a background in forest ecology, she has always had an interest in forest conservation, restoration, and sustainable forest management. Growing up on the island of Newfoundland, Erin was immediately drawn to the beauty and diversity of the Wabanaki-Acadian forests in Kespukwitk. Since joining the Resource Conservation team at Kejimikujik, Erin has been working on coordinating forest conservation and restoration activities, primarily relating to the hemlock woolly adelgid. In this role, she's helped with streamlining operations and expanding the scope of the project to a long-term, landscape-scale HWA management program. She's now working to expand the forest health program at Kejimikujik to address and prepare for additional forest conservation and restoration issues.



Sean Power, RPF

Manager of Private Land and Scaling, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

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Sean is a Register Professional Forester that has spent most of his 25 working years in Harvest Operations and Operational Planning focusing on GPS, Lidar, and Drone technology. Sean graduated from the College of North Atlantic in Corner Brook Newfoundland obtaining his Forest Technician diploma then continuing to complete his HBscF in Lakehead University in Thunder Bay Ontario.

Currently he is the Manager of Private Land and Scaling at the Department of Natural Resources and Renewables in Nova Scotia and he is leading the implementation of the Silviculture Guide for the Ecological Matrix and the High Production Legs of the Triad.

Mary Jane Rodger, RPF

Executive Director, Medway Community Forest Cooperative and the NS Working Woodlands Trust

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Mary Jane Rodger is an RPF and the Executive Director of the Medway Community Forest Cooperative and the NS Working Woodlands Trust. Mary Jane has been with Medway since 2015, minus a short term as the Atlantic Region Forest Conservation Coordinator with Environment and Climate Change Canada from 2022-2023. As ED at MCFC, Mary Jane oversees numerous initiatives related to the implementation of ecological forestry on Crown and private lands, including MCFC's Hemlock Woolly Adelgid (HWA) conservation initiative. Mary Jane led the development of the NSWWT in 2019 to help private woodlot stewards place access working forest easements and carbon markets, and the initiative is now fully operational and recruiting landowners.

Mary Jane took an active role in Nova Scotia's Independent Review of Forest Practices in 2018 which led to her membership on the Minister of Lands and Forestry's advisory committee from 2020-2022. Mary Jane sits on several boards including the Mersey Tobeatic Research Institute and is standing for nomination as vice-president of the Registered Professional Foresters Association of Nova Scotia this spring. Mary Jane resides in rural Lunenburg Co. with her partner, two horses and border collie cross, Pearl.

James Smith

2023 Western Woodland Owner of the Year Award Winner

James and Linda Smith own a 307-acre woodlot in Sable River, Shelburne County. Just a few kilometers from the coast, the woodlot is the Atlantic Coastal forest type.

The couple is recultivating the land, which was affected by a fire in 1902 and a clearcut in the late 1940s. They've planted tree species such as elm, lilac and both American and Dunstan chestnut, broadcast more than two pounds of red spruce seed, and about 2,000 red oak acorns. James has been using corrugated tubing for some of the trees, which acts as a miniature greenhouse to speed up the growth rate and protect the trees from browsing. He demonstrates ecological forestry by leaving large seed trees after partial harvests to promote natural re-growth and biodiversity on the woodlot.

After buying the property in 2012, James built a road network using only materials sourced from the woodlot. In 2018, it was classified as a class "D" road network.

Marcus Zwicker

Chief Operating Officer, Freeman Lumber

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Marcus was born and grew up in Walden, Lunenburg Co., NS. His education includes graduating from New Germany Rural High School, 2001, UNB BSc Forestry/Economics, 2006, University of Western Ontario MBA, 2012. He resides in Bridgewater, NS with his wife Kate, sons Mason and Harrison and daughter Lucille. He is currently a private woodlot owner, Christmas tree grower, and Chief Operating Officer at Freeman Lumber since early 2021. From 2016 to 2021 Marcus was the general manager of WestFor Management Inc. He started working in the forest industry with his father and grandfather when he was a young fella in their logging business and Christmas tree lot. Over the past 20 or so years Marcus has worked in the forests of Atlantic Canada, for local companies Turner and Turner Lumber Ltd and Looke Cancut. After university graduation he spent 10 years at JD Irving Ltd in various roles across NB and NS including mill manager and operations superintendent.