



Speaker Biographies

Justin Fiddes

Operation and Engagement Manager, Environment and Natural Resources, The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

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Justin started with the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq in Oct 2018 as a Forestry Stewardship Officer working on Mainland Moose stewardship. Following its completion Justin took on the role of Trail Coordinator through the community trails initiative assisting in the planning of community trails. Justin has since become the Operations and Engagement Manager for the Department providing oversight on logistics and administration department wide.

Karen Gatien

Deputy Minister, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

Karen Gatien was appointed Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Renewables in August 2021. Previously she served as the Associate Deputy Minister of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.

Karen has held a variety of leadership positions since joining the Government of Nova Scotia in 1988. These include positions in the fields of workforce development, public school and early childhood education, adult education, employment services, and policy and planning.

Karen holds a Bachelor of Arts from the University of King's College and a Master of Education from Mount Saint Vincent University.

Andy Kekacs

Executive Director, Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners & Operators Association

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An award-winning environmental writer from Maine, Andy Kekacs moved to Nova Scotia in 2010 to attend the School for Resource and Environmental Studies at Dalhousie University. His Master's thesis offered a new way to think about the attitudes and motivations of small-woodland owners in the province.

Since March 2012, Andy has been executive director of Nova Scotia Woodlot Owners and Operators Association. He is responsible for the design, implementation and assessment of a province-wide outreach program for small landowners. In addition, he is a founding member of the steering committee for the Family Forest Network, which brings together 11 landowner service organizations to help family forest owners who want to adopt ecologically sensitive practices on their own lands.

Andy lives in West Jeddore on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia.

Dr. Vett Lloyd, PhD

Professor, Department of Biology, Mount Allison University

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Dr. Vett Lloyd is a professor of Biology at Mount Allison University working on ticks and the diseases they transmit, as well as other zoonotic diseases. Her interdisciplinary research group takes a One Health approach to tie together the challenges of a changing climate, disease vectors and their effects on animal and human health. Dr. Lloyd has a special interest in encouraging community and citizen science as a way to help "tick proof" communities and tackle the biological, social and human dimensions of tick-borne diseases while incorporating the patient and other communities as full partners in this endeavor.

Cheyenne MacDonald, BSc. (Agri.)

Agriculture and Climate Manager, Environment & Natural Resources, The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

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Cheyenne MacDonald is the Agriculture Cooperative Development Coordinator with Mi'kmawey Forestry at The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq. She is a member of Sipekne'katik First Nation and was born and raised near Waqmiak (Elmsdale) where she grew up as an only child filling her time by playing with the glatpedaq (catfish) and sqoljig (frogs) from the river along her property and exploring the nature around her home.

Cheyenne then earned her BSc. (Agri.) in Plant Science from Dalhousie Agricultural Campus in Truro in 2019 where she showed special interest in ethnobotany, particularly aromatic plants, and botanical medicines. During the entirety of her degree up to now, Cheyenne has worked with Indigenous peoples around the world working with the Agricultural Transformation Through Stronger



Vocational Education (ATTSVE) project in Ethiopia, sitting on the Ocean Obs' Indigenous delegation in Hawaii which included 52 members from across Canada and the US and travelling to work with the Canadian Roots Exchange. She is happy to be working at CMM getting the opportunity to now work with other L'nu in her home, Mi'kma'ki.

Outside her role at CMM Cheyenne fills her time taking medicine and herb walks with her mentors, visiting her beehive and in the past has volunteered with Canada's national parks where she has worked with the endangered Blanding's turtle and the Bring Back our Boreal project and the Hope for Wildlife Organization - spending most of her time dedicated to environmental sustainability and being guided by the principle of Netukulimk.

Peter Neily

Senior Forester, NS Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, Forestry Division

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Peter has been researching and classifying Nova Scotia's forest ecosystems for the past 25 years. He was project leader for both the Ecological Land Classification and the Forest Ecosystem Classification. His recent work has focused on understanding how natural disturbances shape our forests and how forestry can maintain ecological processes and structures both at the stand and landscape level. His work has also included study on stand level biodiversity features, and he was project lead on the preparation of the Forest Biodiversity Stewardship Guidebook. After tramping the fields, forests, and streams of Annapolis County he received a BSc in Forestry from UNB in 1977 and has lived near Truro since then.

Troy Robichaud

Senior Research Advisor, Environment and Natural Resources, The Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq

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Troy Robichaud is a Senior Research Advisor at the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq, coordinating the Mi'kmaq Forestry Initiative with mainland communities. He holds a Bachelor of Resource Management from Memorial University and a MSc. in Bioresource Engineering from McGill University. Originally from New Brunswick, Troy resides Halifax and enjoys exploring Nova Scotia's wooded and coastal regions in his spare time. He is proud to work with NS Mi'kmaq communities as well as in the NS forestry sector contributing to improve forestry practices for all Nova Scotians to prosper from.

Luther Sears

Woodlot owner, Moose River, NS

Luther and Joyce Sears were the Central Region's 2021 Woodlot Owner of the Year finalists. Their woodlot in Moose River, Cumberland County looks out onto the Bay of Fundy and has a view of Five Islands. Luther's main goal with his property is to return the land back to a healthy, species-rich forest. He works hard to help re-establish his land as a healthy forest that can provide safe habitats for animals as well as providing recreational opportunities, all while keeping sustainable forestry management at the forefront of his operations.

James Steenberg, PhD

Senior Research and Planning Forester, Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables

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James Steenberg is a Senior Research and Planning Forester with the Nova Scotia Department of Natural Resources and Renewables, where he is responsible for the Department's research on silviculture, climate change, and forest carbon. He has a PhD in environmental science and is an adjunct professor at Dalhousie University's School for Resource and Environmental Studies, where he teaches and recently completed a Killam Postdoctoral Fellowship. He was also a Fulbright scholar at the United States Forest Service. James has 15 years of research experience as a government scientist, consultant, and academic researcher focusing on forests.