



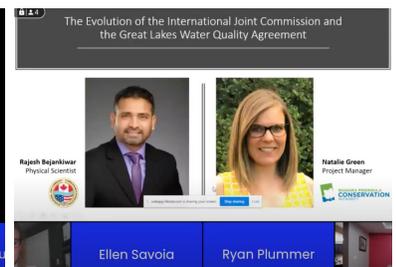
Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Year-in-Review 2021

Partnership Overview & Partnership Focus in 2021

Niagara Parks Commission (NPC) released their strategic plan in 2018 and it highlights the importance of stewardship. In March 2020, the Commission formally adopted the Strategic Plan for Environmental Stewardship. The Plan is accompanied by an operational action plan and monitoring and evaluation strategy. In 2021, the focus of the Excellence in Environmental Stewardship Initiative (EESI) was on climate change. Climate change was identified to intersect with several items in the action plan and these were addressed via a climate readiness approach. This substantive undertaking included: creating an Internal Engagement Report based on findings from the Internal Engagement Survey, hosting an Internal Engagement Workshop for the NPC, production of a Workshop Report summarizing the outcomes of the workshop, and completing the Climate Readiness Plan for the NPC.

The Second Annual Environmental Stewardship Speaker Series

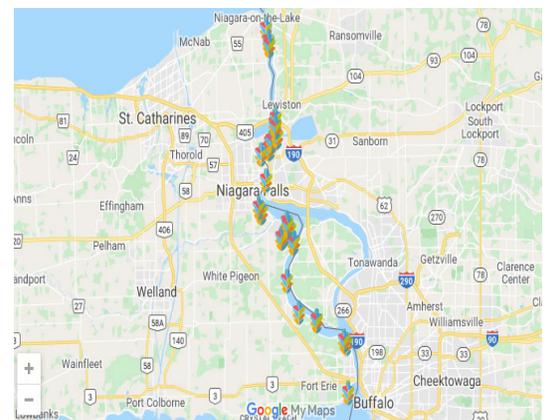
The 2021 Environmental Speaker Series was divided into two parts and the theme of this year was “Connection”. The series kicked off on Earth Day and included a talk from Dr. Robyn Bourgeois entitled *Land, Body and Sovereignty: An Indigenous Perspective*. The fall speakers included representatives from Niagara Parks, Parks Canada, the International Joint Commission, Brock faculty, and Master of Sustainability students undergraduate students and alumni. The fall speakers in this series covered a wide variety of topics, including the importance of environmental stewardship in the Niagara Region, the restoration and perceptions of ecological health in Canada Parks, and the evolution and importance of the International Joint Commission in protecting and restoring the Great Lakes. Thank you to everyone who joined us for the 2021 Stewardship Speaker Series, we look forward to continuing in 2022!



Experiential Education Opportunities for Brock Students

The team is excited to announce that we have updated our map of environmental stewardship initiatives, in partnership with the NPC. This interactive map highlights many of the initiatives undertaken by the NPC, including photos and descriptions of each.

Brock graduate students had the opportunity to work in partnership with the NPC to develop this interactive map highlighting the NPC’s environmental stewardship work. This map includes many of the stewardship initiatives being undertaken at the NPC, and allows the user to explore these initiatives themselves. Check out the map on the [ESRC website](https://www.brocku.ca/esrc) to explore the stewardship work being done along the Niagara River.



Research & Knowledge Mobilization Activities

Climate Change Readiness in Niagara Parks

The summer term focused on the launch of an NPC internal climate readiness survey. This survey asked senior management staff to complete a risk assessment and provide their expertise in preparing for the impacts of climate change, which would later be used in the creation of a Climate Readiness Plan. In the latter half of the summer term, this survey closed and the data was analyzed to create a succinct internal report for the NPC. In October 2021, the EESI team hosted a workshop for NPC staff, which focused on a review of results the internal survey, and engaged them in activities to explore and establish next steps for climate change readiness at Niagara Parks.



Niagara Parks Stewardship Plan Video Overview

In July, the partnership released a video overview about the Niagara Parks Environmental Stewardship Plan. This plan was developed during the first year of the partnership, and was officially adopted by Niagara Parks in March 2020. The video summarizes the plan as developed by Niagara Parks and Brock University and how it will be implemented in the coming years.



Sustainability Seminar Series

In November 2021, members from the ESRC provided a presentation entitled "Community Partnerships for Sustainability at Brock University" through the Sustainability Seminar Series. The presentation focused on partnership impacts and how to go about measuring the performance of partnerships and included highlighting the EESI partnership.



Master of Sustainability Thesis Research

"Environmental Stewardship in the Niagara Region of Canada: How Do Elements of Environmental Stewardship Relate to Success?"

Brooke Kapeller, Master of Sustainability Candidate

On October 1, Brooke successfully defended her thesis research focused on understanding environmental stewardship efforts in the Niagara Region. This research sought to illuminate elements of environmental stewardship efforts and factors making for success. The study took place in the Niagara Region and involved approximately 20 stewardship organizations. The final public research findings are available as an online Story Map. This tool highlights the findings relevant to stakeholders in the region and links those findings spatially on a map.



"Exploring people-place dynamics in the context of COVID-19: social and ecological changes in natural areas and the subjective wellbeing and place attachment of natural area users"

Savannah Stuart, Master of Sustainability Candidate

Savannah Stuart began the process of her thesis work through engagement and collaboration with the NPC, which saw the acceptance of a proposal by the thesis supervisory committee as well as the NPC's partnership staff. This work will explore NPC users' attachment to natural areas and how the social and ecological impacts of COVID-19 may have affected their use of these natural areas. The research is interested in informing future management practices through consideration of the experiences of subjective wellbeing and attachment to place while using natural areas.

Check out the partnership blogs and news stories that were posted in 2021!