



**CELEBRATION
OF NATIONS**

UNESCO NIAGARA ESCARPMENT BIOSPHERE: CO-GOVERNANCE IN A TIME OF URGENCY

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 2023, 2:00 PM - 3:30 PM

**THE FILM HOUSE, FIRST ONTARIO PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
250 ST PAUL ST., ST. CATHARINES, ONTARIO, L2R 3M2**

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**Niagara
Escarpment
Biosphere
Network**

DESCRIPTION

The Indigenous organization Plenty Canada, which is currently supporting the launch of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network as the official convener of the UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere, presents this critically important session dedicated to sustaining this broadly forested land area that boasts the highest level of species diversity among Canadian biospheres, including more than 300 bird species, 55 mammals, 36 reptiles and amphibians, 90 fish, and hundreds of varieties of special interest flora.

Numerous environmental crises are emerging today that are being witnessed and felt by the public. As over 500 forest fires have raged across Canada this year choking lungs as far south as the United States and as far east as southern Europe, to the deadly fungal disease Oak Wilt which is heading north toward Canada devastating forests, these and other climate change

influenced events are challenging our notions of basic environmental sustainability. In Niagara and up and down the UNESCO designated Niagara Escarpment Biosphere, and across a wide sector of informed conservation, education, and environmental groups, a broad movement is being formed that seeks to incorporate Indigenous value systems while promoting the establishment of co-governance models within organizations working to address these problems. With the Bruce Trail Conservancy, Niagara Parks, Brock University, Niagara College, and others the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network continues its launch event from last year to engage with the public at this session designed to gather input, support research, and outline the needs for data collection for the UNESCO Periodic Review.

As in other parts of the world, significant progress is also required to ensure the sustainability of the UNESCO designated

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere, that runs west from Niagara, and then north to Tobermory, extending some 700+ kilometres. Over the past year, sessions have been held with Indigenous nations on Manitoulin Island, where there exists an interest in linking to or extending the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere, and with conservation, environmental, and educational groups throughout the Niagara Escarpment corridor.

The Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network operates under the principles of Two-Eyed Seeing and Indigenous co-governance to establish a worldview and operational decisions that incorporate the strengths of Indigenous knowledge and Western knowledge. Supporting organization Plenty Canada features on its Board of Directors the esteemed Elder Albert Marshall, who with his wife Murdena, were the proponents of the cross-cultural understanding known as Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing.



AGENDA:

- Traditional opening by **Karl Dockstader**
- Greetings by NEBN Chair **Patrick Robson**, Professor of Environmental Studies at Niagara College, and Algonquin Elder and Plenty Canada Executive Director **Larry McDermott**
- NEBN Updates by Professor of Biological Sciences at Brock University **Liette Vasseur**
- Engagement with Niagara and Iroquoia sections of the Bruce Trail, presentation by Bruce Trail Conservancy CEO **Michael McDonald** with **Ellen Savoia** and **Peter Rumble**.
- NEW FEATURE: Major John Norton Trail: Introduction of a new side trail on Niagara Parks lands by **Steve Barnhart**, **Jim Hill**, and **Tim Johnson**
- Discussion on UNESCO Periodic Review



PRESENTERS



Karl Dockstader, Oneida Bear Clan, is active in One Dish, One Spoon territories as an advocate for Indigenous peoples. He co-hosts the hit radio program One Dish, One Mic that airs in Niagara, London, Windsor, and Hamilton. Karl is a Bell Media radio news rotating talk show host on 610 CKTB's "The Drive" airing weekdays from 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. In addition to radio work, Karl has done TV work with CTV News Channel, appeared as a regular panellist on the politics show CTV Power Play for the 2021-2022 season, and done freelance work including having earned CBC and Canadaland by-lines.

As a self-described "Friendship Centre baby" Karl had the honour to serve as Executive Director of the Niagara Regional

Native Centre for two years. This work followed four years of frontline community work with Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre. Karl loves grassroots initiatives, is unafraid to take bold stances on matters that affect First Nations peoples, and has used art, communication, and podcasting to support community goal achievement.



Patrick Robson, MCIP, RPP, is president and chair of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network. He holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Urban & Regional Planning from Ryerson and a Master of Arts in Politics from Brock University, and is currently a professor of Environmental Studies at Niagara College, teaching in the Environmental

Management and Assessment and the Ecosystem Restoration post-grad programs, as well as the Environmental Field and Lab Tech program. In March 2017, he was appointed to the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority (a.k.a. Peace Bridge Authority). His past work life has included private sector planning consultant work, a planner with the Niagara Escarpment Commission, an investigator with the Ontario Human Rights Commission, and several progressive positions at Niagara Region, including Commissioner of Integrated Community Planning. Highlights of planning initiatives that have garnered awards include developing and then implementing the urban and Brownfield redevelopment regime known as Smarter Niagara Incentives Program, the Niagara Gateway Economic Zone Incentives Program, cross-border planning efforts in the Binational Niagara area, Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative planning support, and progressive policies related to agricultural viability. He and his wife Kelly are also hop farmers.

He served three terms as a Councillor in Wainfleet, Ontario and has taught Public Policy

at Brock University. He has also presented at numerous conferences regarding land-use and sustainability issues across Canada, in the U.S. (including one at the Library of Congress), Germany, The Netherlands, Japan, and South Africa.

Volunteer life includes having served on the Board of YMCA Niagara and is currently a member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Transition Leadership Committee, the Indigenous Planning Advisory Committee of the Ontario Professional Planning Institute, as well as on the Board of the Golden Horseshoe Food & Farming Alliance.



Larry McDermott, Algonquin, is Executive Director of Plenty Canada, an Indigenous non-government organization devoted to the protection of Mother Earth, building healthy communities,

and promoting cross-cultural awareness of the value of Indigenous ways of knowing to achieve a sustainable environment for future generations. He is also a board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network. A former three-time Mayor and long-time council member of Lanark Highlands, Chair of the Rural Forum of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and Commissioner of the Ontario Human Rights Commission, Larry is a member of numerous organizations including the International Indigenous Forum for Biodiversity, the Ontario Species at Risk Public Advisory Committee, the Canadian Environmental Network, UNESCO, and the Ontario Recovery Strategy for the American Eel. Larry also has served as a comprehensive claim representative for Shabot Obaadjiwan First Nation, is a certified tree marker and butternut assessor, and holds other environmental certifications. He lives in a 170-year-old log home on 500 acres of biologically diverse Algonquin land along the Mississippi River.



Liette Vasseur, board member of the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, is a full professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Brock University, where she is a member of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre. She previously held the UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability. Her research is interdisciplinary and links issues such as community-based ecosystem management, climate change adaptation and resilience, and sustainable agriculture. Her climate change adaptation research program encompasses different ecosystems from the rural community of Lincoln, Indigenous communities of San Juan, and in the Chimborazo, Ecuador. She is Honorary President of the Canadian Commission UNESCO and deputy chair and

vice-chair for North America of the Commission for Ecosystem Management with the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and co-lead of the thematic group on Climate Change and Biodiversity Policy and Practice.



Michael McDonald is the Chief Executive Officer for the Bruce Trail Conservancy – named Canada's Top Environmental Charity by Maclean's and MoneySense in 2020. After a 23-year successful career in the private sector, Michael combined his business acumen with his love for people and passion for conservation. Michael works towards protecting natural spaces and stewarding the Bruce Trail, Canada's oldest and longest public footpath. Michael is a proud graduate of McMaster University, formerly achieved the rank of Private in the Canadian

Armed Forces (reserves), and is a certified hike leader in Ontario. Michael is a lover of nature, and deeply values people's personal connections to natural environments.



Ellen Savoia grew up in Prince George British Columbia, on Lheidli T'enneh First Nation territory. Ellen attended Fanshawe College, completing a landscape design diploma before attaining an Environment Studies degree from University of Waterloo. She recently retired from a career as a land use and parks planner, most recently with Niagara Parks. Since retiring Ellen volunteered with Niagara Bruce Trail Club maintaining a section of the trail, as well as sitting on their board as Vice President. When not on a trail, Ellen can be found gardening, in her sewing room or reading.



Peter Rumble first joined Bruce Trail in 1974 as a student in Hamilton. After a career with conservation authorities and the Ministry of Natural Resources, he became involved as a trail maintenance volunteer with the Iroquoia Club of the Bruce Trail Conservancy. He has held a variety of positions including trail captain, zone coordinator, and is currently Trail Development and Maintenance Director. He is also active at both the Club and Bruce Trail Conservancy in outreach and promotion.



Steve Barnhart, M.L.A., OALA has over 20 years' experience in Environmental planning and design with the last 18 years in public sector landscape architecture. He is currently a senior executive with the Niagara Parks Commission responsible for the organization's environmental planning and stewardship, cultural heritage, and landscape design. Steve oversees the development policy and planning strategy to delivery on the organization's mandate of environmental and cultural stewardship for the Niagara River corridor. Prior to Niagara Parks Steve was with the City of Hamilton and responsible for Park Planning and implementation of open space capital projects and managing forestry and horticulture. Steve has worked on a wide range of projects including master plans, heritage restoration sites,

coastal wetland rehabilitation, waterfront development, transportation, storm water management systems and visual impact assessments, and provided expert witness testimony at the Environmental Review Tribunal. Steve is a registered Landscape Architect with the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects since 2000 and currently serving as the association's president. Steve graduated with a Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Guelph and with a Bachelor of Earth Science from the University of Waterloo. In 2016 Steve received the OALA Public Practice Award.



Jim Hill, who grew up in Niagara attending schools with a War of 1812 theme, Merritton High School and Brock University, started working at historic sites with a similar theme in 1985. For over thirty years, Jim has

worked for Parks Canada, the Friends of Fort George and for most of his career, the Niagara Parks Commission. He started with the Commission in 1996 and developed the Native interpretive programme at Old Fort Erie in an effort to add depth to the story of this important National Historic Site. Jim has been a regular contributor to local newspapers and historic journals. He is currently the Superintendent of Heritage for Niagara Parks, a position he has held since 2005. Jim led the efforts to enhance the historic sites of the Commission in anticipation of the 200th anniversary of the War of 1812 and coordinated the largest reenactments and commemorations during the bicentennial years. In his capacity as Superintendent, he assisted with the planning and unveiling of the Landscape of Nations Commemorative Memorial on Queenston Heights. Jim recently retired from the Reserve Army after thirty years as a Gunner, Sergeant, and finally a Captain with the Royal Canadian Artillery. He still holds a pilot's license from his time as an Air Cadet and lives with his wife Jeannie and son Jack in Niagara Falls, Ontario.



Tim Johnson is senior advisor for Heritage and Legacy at the Niagara Parks Commission, senior advisor to the national Indigenous organization Plenty Canada, senior Indigenous curatorial advisor to the Royal Ontario Museum, Indigenous advisor on museums, heritage and legacy to Lord Cultural Resources, artistic director of The Great Niagara Escarpment Indigenous Cultural Map, and conceptual author and executive producer of the multiple award-winning documentary *RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World*.

He also holds board memberships with several organizations, including the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network, Niagara Peninsula Aspiring Geopark, Bruce Trail Conservancy,

Niagara-on-the-Lake Museum, McMichael Canadian Art Collection, and the Shaw Festival. Tim has also been instrumental in the development of several distinguished masterworks of public art in the Niagara Region during the past eight years. As the former Associate Director for Museum Programs at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of the American Indian, Tim managed the museum's largest organizational group across its facilities in Washington and New York. A long list of critically acclaimed exhibits and programs were produced during his tenure, creating an era that significantly advanced the institution's museology and reputation. Over the course of his work at the Smithsonian Tim edited, conceptualized, and strategically initiated several Smithsonian books showcasing Indigenous art and history. He also established the museum's Indigenous Community Services department and was co-founder and publisher of the museum's flagship quarterly membership magazine *American Indian*, now in its third decade of publication. Among his many highly successful Smithsonian programs was the museum's Mother Earth Festival, curated and implement-

ed in conjunction with Al Gore's global Live Earth initiative held on July 7, 2007, which diffused American Indian knowledge and scientific evidence concerning environmental sustainability to thousands in attendance and millions watching around the world. Produced to enhance public education about human induced climate change, it stands as one of the Smithsonian Institution's most widely viewed public programs. As a leading figure who brought the reality and ramifications of climate change to the forefront in America's capital, Tim also served on the executive committee of the Smithsonian's 'Living in the Anthropocene Initiative,' a pan-institutional committee formed to advance public education about climate change and the implications of human conduct on the planet.

You are encouraged to attend the special concert event on the evening of Saturday, September 9, 2023, in advance of the following day's UNESCO Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Network session.

BORDER CROSSING / BLUES

SAT. SEPTEMBER 9, 7:30 PM - PARTRIDGE HALL



Digging Roots



The Ripcords

In this concert event produced by Tim Johnson (*RUMBLE: The Indians Who Rocked The World*), two celebrated Indigenous award-winning bands, one from within Canada, the 2023 JUNO Award recipient **Digging Roots** — and — one from within the United States, the most recent 2022 NAMA Award recipient **The Ripcords**, will perform blues and rock infused songs that reveal the continuity of Indigenous cultures across the dividing line. Interspersed within the concert will be video segments that inform and regale the audience about the living history of Indigenous border crossing blues.

Tickets for Border Crossing / Blues available at firstontariopac.ca or call Box Office 905.688.0722

SUPPORTERS



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