2022 Ontario Invasive Plant Conference

Agenda

Date Thursday, January 13, 2021

Time 9:00am-6:00pm EST

Location *Virtually hosted on Remo.co (Registration required at https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/220977007177)*

Schedule

Time	Speaker	Notes
9:00am	System Opens	
9:00-9:30	Morning Mix and Mingle	
9:30-10:00	John Urquhart, President Ontario Invasive Plant Council Belinda Junkin, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council Mary Lou and Dan Smoke Celebrated Indigenous Elders and knowledge holders	Welcome & Introduction
10:00-10:10	Bailey Bingham Ontario Invasive Plant Council	Introduction to Remo (How-To)
10:10-10:45	John Urquhart, President Ontario Invasive Plant Council Belinda Junkin, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council Derissa Vincentini Invasive Species Centre	Ontario Invasive Plant Council Program Updates EDRR Update
10:45-11:00	Canadian Council on Invasive Species	Canadian Council on Invasive Species (CCIS): Enabling Canadians to take action on invasive species
11:00-12:00	Dr. Jennifer Grenz University of British Columbia	Keynote Speaker
12:00-12:40	Lunch break/Networking	

Last updated 2022-01-05

12:40-1:00	Phragmites at CAMI Assembly	Speaker: Brooke Sampson, GM CAMI Assembly
1:00-1:20	Effects of invasive Phragmites australis removal on avian species diversity in Long Point coastal marshes	Speaker: Marissa Zago, University of Waterloo
1:20-1:40	Point Pelee National Park Marsh Restoration	Speakers: Andrew Laforet and Tarra Degazio, Point Pelee National Park, Parks Canada
1:40-2:00	Networking	
2:00-2:20	Biological control of invasive knotweed: How post-release research can contribute to the success of a weed biological control agent	Speaker: Dr. Ian Matthew Jones, University of Toronto
2:20-2:40	Severn Sound Environmental Association - Tackling invasive species on a watershed scale	Speaker: Tamara Brincat BSc., CERPIT, EPt, Invasive Species Program Coordinator, Severn Sound Environmental Association
2:40-3:00	Protecting Nature Where You Live. The Power of Community Involvement	Speaker: Beatriz Gomez-Canizo, Oakvillegreen Conservation Association
3:00-3:20	Networking	
3:20-3:40	Aggressive Native and Near-Native Plants. Unintended consequences?	Speaker: Stephen Smith, Urban Forest Associates Inc.
3:40-4:00	The Role of Science Communication and Journalism in Invasive Plant Management	Speaker: Frederick Schueler, Fragile Inheritance Natural History
4:00-4:30	John Urquhart, President Ontario Invasive Plant Council Belinda Junkin, Executive Director Ontario Invasive Plant Council	Interactive discussion & closing remarks
4:30-6:00	Evening Mix and Mingle	
6:00pm	Online Meeting Closes	

Keynote Speaker: Dr. Jennifer Grenz

Dr. Jennifer Grenz is a researcher and Indigenous (Nlaka'pamux) Scholar, currently working in the Faculty of Land and Food Systems at the University of British Columbia. She has worked professionally in invasive species management for almost two decades and has recently completed a PhD, which focused on applying an Indigenous worldview to invasion biology and ecology. Dr. Grenz's work challenges us to think differently about our role in ecosystem management, something very important as we face a rapidly changing climate. Dr. Grenz is a science communicator, weed chaser, textile artist, farmer, and proud Indigenous woman in STEM.

Embracing Relational Science: What an Indigenous worldview offers complicated issues in Invasive Species Management

Dr. Jennifer B. Grenz
Sessional Lecturer, Faculty of Land and Food Systems, University of British Columbia
Principal, Greener This Side Invasive Plant Management

Indigenous perspectives on invasive species are largely unknown. Informed by Western science, the specific impacts of invasive species are often generalized and not well understood. Common approaches to ecological restoration are rooted is the native versus non-native dichotomy which equates native species with evolutionary fitness. Integration of Indigenous ecological knowledge in land management while increasingly popular, may not provide the full benefit that the application of the Indigenous world view can. The application of Indigenous research methodology to invasion biology reveals new insights into species assessment and ecological restoration. The acknowledgement of values and relationality plays a vital role in guiding land management decisions reflective of an Indigenous worldview, cultural values and allows us to redefine and reclaim practices that protect food security and sovereignty for generations to come.

**Supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada*

Phragmites at CAMI Assembly

Brooke Sampson; GM CAMI Assembly

GM CAMI Assembly of Ingersoll has been monitoring phragmites growth in four key areas on site since 2015. The pilot project initiated the measurements of density in a $1m^2$ area, tallest height and representative height with three samples from each of the four monitoring sites. This data is compiled annually to project trends. Along with this, Interns at CAMI maintain phragmites growth by organizing removal projects each growing season.
This presentation will cover the monitoring and maintenance plan, schedules and methods used at the CAMI Assembly Plant since the *Phragmites* program began in 2015. Success stories and learning opportunities will be shared to hopefully help listeners with their own *Phragmites* maintenance.

Effects of invasive *Phragmites australis* removal on avian species diversity in Long Point coastal marshes

Marissa Zago; University of Waterloo

Marsh bird populations in the southern Great Lakes coastal wetlands have been declining since 1995, and one factor contributing to this decline is the expansion of the invasive grass European Common Reed (*Phragmites australis ssp. australis*). The Canadian Wildlife Service aims to remove 90% of P. australis in two National Wildlife Areas in Long Point, Lake Erie by 2025. We undertook a Before-After-Control-Impact study to determine the short-term response of marsh bird communities to the removal of *P. australis*. Throughout the 2019 marsh bird breeding season, Autonomous Recording Units (ARUs) were used to record bird vocalizations in areas where herbicide treatment of *P. australis* was planned for fall 2019, and in P. australis-invaded areas where no treatment was planned (statistical controls). These sites were resurveyed in 2021 to compare to baseline recordings. Recordings comprised three 15 min segments during the dawn chorus, which pilot research confirmed was optimal to maximize avian richness estimates by capturing both early and late vocalizing species. We observed 54 species in 2019 and 46 species in 2021. Prior to treatment in 2019, 4 out of the 8 marsh bird species of conservation concern were observed in *P. australis* dominated habitat. In 2021, 5 marsh bird species of conservation concern were observed in *P. australis* invaded habitat and 3 were observed in treated habitat. However, total marsh bird richness did not differ significantly between control and treated sites. Our next steps will be to look at community composition to determine if treated and untreated habitat support different bird assemblages. Our results provide insight into how marsh birds initially respond to the restoration of a *P. australis* dominated wetland complex. Continued monitoring is necessary to assess the long-term consequences of *P. australis* control for the avian community.

Point Pelee National Park Marsh Restoration

Andrew Laforet and Tarra Degazio; Point Pelee National Park, Parks Canada

Established in 1918, Point Pelee National Park is located in Southwestern Ontario and consists of 15 km2 mainland peninsula as well as Middle Island (18.5 hectares). The Park is home to over 60 federally listed species at risk. Approximately 72% of the park's mainland is comprised of marsh habitat and 19 species at risk are dependent upon its continued presence. Since the late 1950s, the overall percentage of open water habitat in the marsh has decreased by 10 percent (100 hectares) due to habitat alterations, reducing overall habitat biodiversity for all marsh species, including species at risk.

The objective of this project is to increase open water and edge habitats in the marsh through removal of invasive floating cattail mats and invasive *Phragmites* to restore habitat diversity for species at risk where the park can influence recovery. Planning involved an Open Standards workshop to review threats to the marsh and develop a Community of Practice on marsh management, as well as contacting wetland managers from various organizations within Canada and the USA to discuss management methods. This process provided a foundation for the project's conservation and restoration planning.

The Park is using an aquatic vegetation cutter and aquatic weed harvester to recreate open water areas, and use “cut to drown” techniques and herbicide application for treatment of Phragmites in species at risk areas of concern. Cutting Phragmites to drown with hedge trimmers began in the 2020 and 2021 seasons. Heavy machinery has been field tested. The restoration team has adapted to rising challenges within the project, learning much along the way, and work with hedge trimmers, herbicide and heavy machinery will resume in 2022.

Biological control of invasive knotweed: How post-release research can contribute to the success of a weed biological control agent

Dr. Ian Matthew Jones; University of Toronto, Institute of Forestry and Conservation

Knotweed species are among the most serious invasive plants in Europe and North America. The knotweed psyllid, *Aphalara itadori*, has been approved as a biological control agent on both continents, and releases began in the UK in 2010, in Canada in 2014, and in the United States in 2019. Despite widespread releases, across a range of habitats and conditions, no field population of *A. itadori* has been confirmed to survive for multiple growth seasons. We describe research designed to identify the obstacles preventing the establishment of *A. itadori*, as well as efforts to

overcome them. Additionally, we describe recent advancements that show great promise for finally providing successful biological control for invasive knotweeds.

Severn Sound Environmental Association - Tackling invasive species on a watershed scale

Tamara Brincat; Severn Sound Environmental Association

The Severn Sound Environmental Association (SSEA) is committed to ensuring exceptional environmental quality and exemplary stewardship of the Severn Sound area through sound science, collaboration, and partnerships at a watershed scale. Since invasive species do not respect private, municipal, or regulatory boundaries, the SSEA initiated the Invasive Species Program in 2017 to support municipal partners, providing expertise and a coordinated local approach to invasive species education, detection, monitoring, and management.

The goal of the SSEA Invasive Species Program is to reduce the ecological, economic, and social impacts of invasive species, through mapping and data collection, providing education and outreach to municipalities and the public, linking with regional, provincial, and federal invasive species initiatives, as well as working with local organizations and volunteers. The SSEA Invasive Species Program includes developing and periodically updating a cross-municipal strategy, promoting partnerships and cooperation between municipalities, residents, and community groups, and coordination of a multi-partner working group to share information and lessons learned at a local level. Through the Program, over 70 different invasive organisms have been detected within the Severn Sound watershed area to date, including a wide range of terrestrial and aquatic plants, invertebrates, fish, mammals, algae, and micro-organisms. The presentation will provide insight into how the SSEA developed a coordinated approach with eight partner municipalities to reduce the impacts of invasive species across jurisdictions through communication, monitoring, mapping, and management. It will highlight some of the challenges and successes of a watershed scale invasive species initiative.

Protecting Nature Where You Live. The Power of Community Involvement

Beatriz Gomez-Canizo; Oakvillegreen Conservation Association

Invasive Species are one of the mayor threats to ecosystems in Ontario; urban ecosystems are not the exception. Southern Ontario is the most densely populated area in Canada and home to extremely valuable ecosystems, this is one of the main reasons why Oakvillegreen has been involving the community in hands-on stewardship and effective actions to improve local biodiversity and invasive species monitoring and control. With great results, this community involvement has provided residents with the knowledge and tools needed to take action in their own neighbourhoods and contribute to invasive species management plans.

Since 2015 and in close collaboration with the Town of Oakville and Conservation Halton, Oakvillegreen has involved businesses, schools, youth groups, seniors and general citizens in workshops, webinars, walks and invasive species removal events, tackling species like garlic mustard, buckthorn, *Phragmites*, dog strangling vine, LDD moth masses and others.

Our programs are about empowering the community by introducing the notion that we can all do something positive about the ecosystems surrounding us, which has not only increased citizens' participation but reduced the complaints received by the Town of Oakville when removing invasive species from public property.

Aggressive Native and Near-Native Plants. Unintended consequences?

Stephen Smith; Urban Forest Associates Inc.

Many of us have been asked what we should do about aggressive native plants in our projects; whether they are unwanted vines that carpet the site, shrubs that invade our prairie plantings or plants from other parts of North America that act like invasive species. Our discussions to date have centered on the problems of alien species but

many North American natives can interfere just as much with our project goals. During this session, we will discuss this conundrum and offer some solutions.

The Role of Science Communication and Journalism in Invasive Plant Management

Frederick Schueler; Fragile Inheritance Natural History

Along with politics, news media are thronged with accounts of sports, entertainment, and celebrities. If biologists and naturalists want to see natural history represented in the news, they'll have to write and submit accounts of what is going on, because reporters aren't any more attuned to these phenomena than their readers are, and many of the readers "don't know that plants are alive." I will discuss several articles we've written for a local newspaper about invasive plants, emphasising conspicuousness, surprising twists, implied definition, and evolutionary change.

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Last updated 2022-01-05