AGENDA

Event name: Community wellbeing and the environment workshops

Dates: June 2nd to June 3rd 2022

Location: Dalhousie University, Halifax - Dalhousie University is located in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded territory of the Mi’kmaq. We are all Treaty people.

Day 1

Start time: 8:30am
End time: 4:45pm

Activity

Opening ceremony | 8:30am
Introduction to workshop | 9am
First group of presenters | 9:15am
Break | 10:15am
Community round table | 10:30am
Lunch | 11:30am
Second group of presenters | 12:30pm
Community round table | 1:45pm
Break | 2:45pm
Third group of presenters | 3pm
Community round table | 3:45pm
End of day | 4:45pm

Location (same for both days)

The Windsor Foundation Room
Room C170 in the Collaborative Health Education Building (CHEB)
Summer St, Halifax, NS, B3H 0A8

Day 2

Start time: 9am
End time: 3:30pm

Activity

Welcome | 9am
Fourth group of presenters | 9:15am
Break | 10:am
Community round table | 10:30am
Lunch | 11:30am
Recap and reflection | 12:30pm
Facilitated discussion #1 | 12:50pm
Break | 2:05pm
Facilitated discussion #2 | 2:20pm
Closing ceremony | 3:15pm
End of day | 3:30pm
DAY 1

Thursday June 2nd, 2022, 8:30am – 4:45pm

Opening ceremony
(8:30am-9am)

TBD

Introduction to the workshop
(9am-9:15am)

Melanie Zurba & David Busolo

First group of presenters
Nature-based programs for enhancing connection and wellbeing
(9:15am-10:15am)

Presenter & abstract

1. David Busolo

Improving Newcomers Wellbeing Through Nature Based Approaches

Knowledge of nature-based approaches that enhance wellbeing (e.g., community gardens) is well established. However, gaps in understanding the experiences of newcomers who participate in nature-based programs still exist. Often, newcomers experience poor wellbeing and settlement organizations play a crucial role of supporting them through nature-based programs. Accordingly, in this presentation, we will present lessons from our ongoing research that examines the experiences of newcomers on using nature-based programs to improve their wellbeing. Using a community based participatory approach, we have partnered with settlement organizations in Halifax, Nova Scotia. We are engaging with newcomers through individual interviews. Our preliminary findings reveal that newcomers value the opportunities to engage with nature, each other, and form relations. However, they have very limited time to establish meaningful relations. In the second phase of our study, we will co-develop a nature-based pilot program. Our ongoing research is the first of its kind in Atlantic Canada and the findings will be useful for programs that aim to improve newcomer wellbeing throughout Atlantic Canada.

2. Michael Anaba

Understanding the impact of Nature-based programs on Refugee youth Social Well-being

Refugee youth worldwide are more socially isolated than their non-refugee peers due to disrupted social networks and social support which adversely affects their social well-being. Nature-based programs e.g. summer camps can facilitate social interactions between refugee youth and host population and eventually enhance their social well-being. But refugee youth participation in outdoor recreation is generally low coupled with limited evidence on the impact of these programs on this key
Community wellbeing and the environment: engaged research and practice

population. Our project synthesizes literature on refugee youths’ perspectives on the impact of nature-based programs on their social wellbeing and factors influencing their participation in these programs. These findings will inform future cultural-appropriate ecological interventions that meet refugee youth’s unique experiences and social needs. For health practitioners and immigrant service providers, the findings may help them to better understand how socio-ecological interventions have the potential to result in beneficial health outcomes for refugee youth.

3. Son Truong
Re-wilding nature for children and families: Engaging with Community consultations and participatory methods to inform green and play space design

Access to public spaces, such as parks, gardens, and trails has been shown to offer a myriad of health promoting outcomes. This presentation draws on two case studies to explore the use of participatory methods, including photovoice, walking interviews, and community consultations with diverse stakeholders, to inform and evaluate nature play space design for children and families. The first example is an evaluation study conducted one year after the opening of the Ian Potter Children’s Wild Play Garden, which is located in the heart of Sydney, Australia’s Centennial Park. Drawing on lessons learned, the second case study is the development of community consultations on the use and experiences of community members at the Sherose Island Nature Trail, in the Municipality of Barrington, Nova Scotia, Canada.

4. Jenny Rand & Knighton Hillstrom
On the land with the land: Decolonizing land-based HIV Research

Weaving our Wisdoms (WoW) is a multi-year, multi-stakeholder initiative that supports Indigenous people living with HIV and AIDS (IPHAs) by fostering connections to land-based teachings delivered by HIV Older. Introduced by WoW, “HIV Older”, are Indigenous People living with HIV/AIDS long term who share their knowledge and wisdom with other IPHAs about living well with HIV. Grounded in an emergent ‘on the land-with the land’ methodology, WoW focuses on optimizing wellness among IPHAs. WoW draws on four complimentary approaches to research (community-based research, Indigenous Knowledge, Decolonizing Methods, and Two-Eyed Seeing). Additionally, WoW used an ‘on the land-with the land’ methodology. This methodology included gathering together on the land to feast, engaging in ceremony, picking plant medicines, sharing tipi teachings, and participating in sharing circles. Notes
were taken during the tipi teachings, sharing circles, and verbal reflections. Verbal reflections on the activities listed above were collected during the gatherings and 4-8 weeks after. Verbal reflections guided IPHAs to share their impressions in hopes of better understanding the impact of ‘on the land-with the land’ methodologies and the relevance of sex and gender within ‘on the land-with the land’ research methodologies, the role of peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, and the role of HIV Olders. The emergent methodology evolved from a “land-based methodology” to an “on the land, with the land” methodology. This presentation will discuss this methodology by examining how this evolution took place, and what this means for decolonizing research methodologies.

Break  
(10:15am-10:30am)

Community roundtable  
(10:30am-11:30am)

Lunch  
(11:30am-12:30pm)

Second group of presenters  
Land and reconciliation  
(12:30pm-1:45pm)

Presenter, title, & abstract

1. shalan joudry

Pathways to health: linking language, land and poetry

This presentation focuses on personal experience with Indigenous language and art creation, which has deepened my relationship with the natural world and found inspiration in communal healing. I will speak about my journey in working to reclaim Mi'kmaw language and why being in nature helped make connections between words and to remember them. By sitting in the forest to create a podcast, story, or poem, the environment inspired my art as well as by weaving in Mi'kmaw words or phrases. The work of writing and learning my Indigenous language brought me a sense of regrowth, as both were teaching me about the power of overcoming the obstacles of our colonial legacy and challenges we face in a modern global world.

2. Margaret McLennon

Reconciliation in Action: An Analysis of Canadian National Healing Forests

The National Healing Forests are community organized green spaces across Canada that foster healing, sharing, learning, and reflection about Canada’s history and the legacy of Indian
Residential Schools. The relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in Canada is one that is strained due to a history of cultural assimilation and genocide, fulfilled by the residential school system. Reconciliation is a non-linear, constant process in which these relationships are mended through bringing awareness to our common history, an acknowledgment of the harm that has been inflicted, atonement for the causes, and action to change behavior (Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2015). This study aims to add to the growing literature on reconciliation, filling a gap on the impact of Indigenous and Canadian settler community partnerships. The Canadian wide National Healing Forest (NHF) initiative is analyzed to understand how the community and nature focused project contributes to the reconciliation process in Canada. To do this, the literature, theories and case studies detailing the reconciliation process were analyzed to understand the most prominent and frequent elements which Indigenous scholars have outlined as: awareness, relationship and restitution (Clarke, 2015; Petoukhov, 2013; Watson, 2020). These elements are compared to the significant themes that arose from relevant media sources detailing the NHFs in a framework analysis. This study revealed that the NHF initiative is one that is in line with the literature and theories outlining the reconciliation process. The National Healing Forest initiative involves fostering community collaboration and healing in nature leading to strong community connection and empowerment.

3. Diane Obed

**Indigenous Reconciliation and Right Relations with Earth**

This presentation will focus on Indigenous peoples around the globe who have been leading environmental and earth justice movements for generations. Indigenous peoples, the first peoples, of the lands of Mi'kma'ki, must not only be included in these conversations, but must be engaged with respectful relationship-building processes that are decolonial in practice and that honors their historical and long-standing relationships with the earth. Centring the voices of Indigenous peoples allows us to begin to recognize and redress the deeply harmful impacts of settler colonialism on these lands while also honoring Indigenous knowledge revitalization such as traditional ecological knowledges that are currently needed at this time. Indigenous knowledges, based in the foundational awareness of holism and ecological interdependence, provides an interconnected way of looking at ourselves, our social relationships and how they impact the earth. Indigenous people's voices are vital as they embody deep lived experiences of the impacts of colonization, environmental racism, and land dispossession, and they hold ecologically sound solutions.
and models of living in ethical relationships that have directly sprouted from these very lands.

**Community roundtable**  
(1:45pm-2:45pm)

**Break**  
(2:45pm-3pm)

**Third group of presenters**  
Rethinking “resource management” and wellbeing  
(3pm -3:45pm)

**Presenter, title, & abstract**

1. **Melanie Zurba**  

**Collaborative land-based education for enhancing relational wellbeing through post-secondary education**  

Reconciliation with Indigenous communities in Canada has become a goal for many post-secondary institutions, many of which are aiming to respond to the Calls to Action put forward by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. Reconciliation not only has the potential to improve relationships among communities in Canada, but also has the potential to (re)establish our relationships with the land, which in turn have significant impacts on individual and collective wellbeing. Land-based approaches to education are powerful for enhancing relationships among Indigenous and non-Indigenous or academic educators, students and the land. This presentation will highlight the relational wellbeing outcomes experienced by educators and students involved in several years of cross-cultural land-based education delivery in Treaty 3 territory (northwestern Ontario) and Mi'kma'ki (Nova Scotia).

2. **Debbie Martin**  

**Community energy planning and its connection to health and well-being for Inuit of NunatuKavut**  

Inuit in southern Labrador maintain deep connections to the land, water, air and ice. Inuit conceptions of health and well-being are inextricably tied to their natural surroundings. Thus, efforts at resource development may, indeed, negatively impact health and well-being, if Inuit are not engaged in decision-making processes that directly affect land, water, air and ice upon which they rely. Moreover, local knowledge about the natural surroundings offers a critical component for resource development opportunities to be undertaken in a way that respects and works in concert with the natural world. As a result, NunatuKavut Community Council (NCC) are interested in developing and implementing a community energy plan that engages residents and seeks their input into decisions around resource development. This workshop will give us the opportunity to share our work to date, and to discuss and draw
connections between our ongoing work and its importance for health and well-being of Inuit.

3. Megan Bailey

**Seasons for the wrong reason: Lobsters, livelihoods and access in Mi'kmaki**

Ongoing rhetoric around the commercial lobster fishery in Nova Scotia continues to undermine Mi'kmaw sovereignty. An important component is the claim that conservation of lobster stocks is at risk, which leaves the door open for interpretation around how much authority the Minister of Fisheries has to infringe on the Mi'kmaq Treaty right to earn a moderate livelihood. We are interested in exploring the extent to which a conservation paradigm, understood through a commercial fishery lens and imposed through a top-down system, serves to limit access by Mi'kmaq to the lobster resource and results in the criminalization of Mi'kmaq who choose to exercise their right. We also explore alternative ideas around fishing 'seasons' and ideas of conservation through an analysis of historical Mi'kmaw access and fishing and conservation practices (Netukulimk). The lobster case studies showcase the tight links between environmental health, access to resources, and freedom to exercise rights.

**Community roundtable**
(3:45pm-4:45pm)

**End of day 1**
(4:45pm)
Welcome to day 2 of the workshop
(9am-9:15am)

Fourth group of presenters
Roles and connections grounding our care for the planet and non-human relation
(9:15am-10:15am)

Presenter, title, & abstract
1. Srividya Iyer
   Culture, community, connections, climate, and citizenship: On what matters for the well-being of young people
   Globally, there are growing concerns about the mental health and well-being of young people. Young people today are grappling with an unfolding climate crisis that will deeply impact their future, along with economic and employment uncertainties particularly in the wake of the pandemic. An important source of hope in this grim context are voices, particularly of young people, that are proposing new understandings of well-being that are inclusive of concerns with the larger environment and society. These understandings have implications for improving youth mental health and well-being. Importantly, they also open up exciting possibilities for innovation and action around larger issues such as environmental problems, cultural continuity (especially in Indigenous communities) and citizenship.

2. Lily Barraclough
   Youth Activism and Experiences of Climate Grief
   Youth are at the forefront of social and climate justice movements in Mi’kma’ki and across the globe. They face complex mental and physical health risks as a result of the climate crisis alone; but face additional mental health challenges as activists on the frontlines who are devoting their lives to the movement. Community building workshops and events, particularly those that are arts-based allow for openness and connections to be fostered between youth activists, and to create the space for youth to process their complex emotions relating to the climate crisis and inequity. As the climate crisis progresses, the stresses on youth mental and physical health will only increase, which makes it even more crucial to find ways to foster connection and community among youth activists.

3. Elizabeth Williams
   Interspecies health: Linking human and non-human wellbeing in research and practice
Dominant Western cultural models situate non-human animals as part of the 'environment', separate from human wellbeing. Yet, humans are inextricably linked to countless other animals. In recent decades, humans' love and abuse of other species have increased exponentially. For example, companion animals have continuously grown in popularity (e.g., 50% of UK households have a pet), while more animals are consumed than ever before (e.g., 3X the animals are killed in the USA each year, compared to 30 years ago). Further, from 1970 to 2014 wild animal populations worldwide deteriorated by an average of 60%. For some, human-induced suffering of trillions of animals causes great distress and despair, whereas even people unaware are affected in unacknowledged ways. Where are these oversights? How can we meaningfully acknowledge these interconnections in research and practice, as they impact both the wellbeing of humans and other species in community?

4. Kent Williams

Enabling Hope and Wellbeing in Emerging Leaders through the Relational Turn

Living in today's suggested epoch of the Anthropocene, which is defined by the omnipresence of humans---as a geophysical force on the planet, we only need to sense the emerging human narrative echoing of hopelessness and helplessness---and the negative impacts off our actions on humankind's wellbeing. With the grand challenge of climate change and a present pandemic, emerging leaders (EL) today are left with visions of a dystopian world, feeling they cannot make a difference. However, when the EL are introduced to nascent knowledge frameworks in the university setting (Indigenous, SDGs, planetary boundary, and relational turn frameworks) that present interdependence, reciprocity, and relational elements to interconnecting in the biosphere it changes perspectives and positions them as a positive force for change----promoting wellbeing and visions of desired futures. My contribution will share a learning process enabling solidarity and coming together as an earth community to overcome grand challenges and embrace opportunities for community wellbeing and positive impacts towards climate action.

Break
(10:15am-10:30am)

Community roundtable
(10:30am-11:30am)

Lunch
(11:30am-12:30pm)
Recap and reflection: on the presentations and community roundtables
(12:30pm-12:50pm)

Facilitated discussion #1:
(12:50pm-2:05pm)

Break
(2:05pm-2:20pm)

Facilitated discussion #2:
(2:20pm-3:15pm)

Closing ceremony
(3:15pm-3:30pm)

Facilitated by graduate student rapporteurs: Michael Anaba & Morgan Brimacombe

**Topic:** Common and divergent perspectives and the key aspects of a framework or heuristic for research on community wellbeing and connection to the natural environment

**Topic:** Structure of the edited volume

TBD

*Thank you for your participation in the workshop.*