



## AGENDA

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# ClimateWest Forum: Building Climate Resilience

Being prepared | Working together | Creating change

May 8-9, 2024 Edmonton



# Wednesday, May 8



11:00 AM	<b>Registration, Informal Networking, and Poster Viewing</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Posters by <a href="#">Alberta Resilience Training</a> Project Assistants, Sustainability Council University of Alberta</li></ul>
12:00 PM	Lunch
1:00 PM	Opening Prayer - <a href="#">Elder Heather Poitras</a>
1:15 PM	<b>Opening Remarks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><a href="#">Elaine Fox, ClimateWest</a></li><li><a href="#">Jessica Spina, Government of Alberta</a></li><li><a href="#">Kent Snyder, City of Edmonton</a></li></ul>

## SESSION 1: FOUNDATIONS

In this session, participants will hear:

- advice on weaving Indigenous Knowledges to enhance climate resilience;
- historic trends in and future projections of key climate variables and indices, attribution of recent extreme weather events in the Prairies, and resources to support adaptation action; and
- changes to ecosystems that we can expect in Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

1:45 PM	<b>KEYNOTE SESSION: Weaving Indigenous Knowledges to Enhance Climate Resilience, <a href="#">Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson)</a></b>
2:15 PM	<b>Climate Change in the Prairie Provinces: Observed Change and Future Projections (MB, SK, AB), <a href="#">Dr. Heather Morrison, Environment and Climate Change Canada</a></b>
2:45 PM	Break
3:15 PM	<b>Prairies Region Ecosystem and Biodiversity Changes as a Result of a Warming Climate, <a href="#">Dr. Richard Schneider, Nature Alberta</a></b>



## SESSION 2: CREATING CHANGE

In this session, participants will hear youth perspectives on our changing climate in Alberta. Youth (aged 18-30) and non-youth (aged 30+) will challenge assumptions about working together, and provide practical tips for engaging with youth and incorporating youth perspectives into climate resilience planning. *Moderated by Wai Tse Ramirez, City of Edmonton.*

3:45 PM

### Youth Engagement Panel

- [Austin Zacharko, SunGrid Solutions](#)
- [Hannah Bayne, University of Alberta](#)
- [Jeff Zukowsky, Associated Engineering](#)

4:45 PM

Closing Remarks

## Thursday, May 9

8:00 AM

Networking Breakfast

## SESSION 1: IN OUR COMMUNITIES

In this session, participants will hear from local and community organizations that have identified a climate resilience need or gap, and filled that need for their community or for a local audience. *Moderated by Ali Greenslade, Otipemisiwak Métis Government of Alberta.*

9:00 AM

### Local Initiatives Panel

- [Heather Wheeliker, City of Edmonton](#)
- [Jill Yanch, Resilient Rurals](#)
- [Adriene Konrad, For Our Kids & Common Horizon](#)
- [Lily Halton, School Climate Club](#)



10:00 AM

Break

## SESSION 2: MENTAL HEALTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

In this session, we will explore the latest research on the connections between climate change and mental health, including recent research findings from Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Participants will gain an understanding of how climate change is shaping mental health and what this research teaches us about effectively responding to the climate emergency. This reflective and interactive session will include time for questions and roundtable-discussions.

10:45 AM

**How does climate change impact mental health and what can we do about it?**

**Presented by the School of Public Health, University of Alberta:**

- [Dr. Sherilee Harper](#)
- [Stephanie Olsen](#)
- [Hannah Bayne](#)

12:00 PM

Lunch

## SESSION 3: BEING PREPARED & WORKING TOGETHER

In this session participants will hear about:

- building climate change resiliency at EPCOR Water Services and practical actions on water conservation;
- the recent work of the Alberta Water Council to mitigate against the impacts of drought;
- a framework to understand emergency management across a wide range of emergencies, with real life examples;
- cumulative effects and Indigenous rights in relation to disaster management.



1:15 PM	<p>Preparedness, Water Scarcity and Emergency Planning Panel</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <a href="#">Nicola Lewin, EPCOR</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Andre Asselin, Alberta Water Council</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Emmeline Marshall-Hill, EMH Consulting Inc.</a></li><li>• <a href="#">Dr. Timothy David Clark, Willow Springs Strategic Solutions</a></li></ul>
2:45 PM	Break

## SESSION 4: COMMUNICATING FOR CHANGE

In this session, participants will hear about the latest trends in climate communications and tips for engaging Prairie audiences on impacts, science and action.

3:15 PM	<p>How to communicate about climate change in the Prairies and motivate change, <a href="#">Amber Bennett, Re.Climate</a></p>
3:45 PM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Closing Remarks</li><li>• Travelling Prayer - <a href="#">Ron Lameman, Beaver Lake Cree Nation, Treaty No. 6, Confederacy of Treaty Six First Nations Bilateral Treaty Coordinator and International Indian Treaty Council President</a></li></ul>

We gratefully acknowledge our platinum event sponsor for helping us achieve our forum goals. All of our sponsors can be found on our [website](#).



Please note, all listed times are Mountain Daylight Time.

# Speakers



**Elaine Fox, Board Chair,  
ClimateWest**

Elaine is the Manager of Adaptation and Resiliency, Climate & Green Plan Implementation Office in the Department of Environment and Climate with the Province of Manitoba. Elaine draws on a broad range of knowledge and skills to provide leadership and expertise to government, stakeholders, municipalities, Indigenous organizations, business, advocates, and academia. Her applied experience in inclusiveness and collaboration work enhances an integrated legislative, regulatory and policy framework that guides actions required in a changing climate future. Elaine's practical knowledge of water, sustainable development, nature-based solutions, municipal relations, and climate change provide a multifaceted perspective to adaptation.



**Kent Snyder, Branch Manager, Planning and Environment Services,  
City of Edmonton**

Kent Snyder is a dynamic, engaged and empowering leader with 20 years of experience in urban planning in both the private and public sectors throughout western Canada. Kent commenced his career in the private sector where he progressed to leadership roles and managed a private consulting office that provided land development and municipal planning and engineering expertise. Upon entering the public sector Kent led a department of a major Alberta municipality that provided land use policy preparation, development and safety code approvals and inspections, and business licensing.

Kent values collaboration, context specific solutions, creativity and excellence. He strongly believes in employing pragmatic solutions that recognize community values while mindful of long-term goals and continually striving to create fantastic livable cities.



**Hetxw'ms Gyetxw (Brett D. Huson)**

Brett D. Huson is a multi-award-winning author and a proud member of the Gitxsan Nation. He is also a researcher at the Prairie Climate Centre, University of Winnipeg. Brett's work focuses on weaving Indigenous and Western scientific approaches in the fight against climate change. He is dedicated to changing the narrative and promoting dialogue around Indigenous pedagogies and epistemologies.



# Speakers



**Dr. Heather Morrison, Executive Director,  
Canadian Centre for Climate Services**

Dr. Morrison has spent her career at the interface between science and decision-making. She has worked as a research scientist in the field of ecotoxicology, a senior science advisor and research manager in the field of air quality, and as director of the climate research division. These positions have provided Dr. Morrison with the opportunity to work closely with decision-makers to deliver relevant and credible science to support policy and regulatory development. Dr. Morrison received her BSc in Biological Sciences from Queen's University and a PhD in Ecotoxicology from the University of Windsor.



**Dr. Richard Schneider,  
Nature Alberta**

Richard Schneider began his career as a veterinarian in Saskatchewan but quickly transitioned to wildlife research, obtaining a PhD from the University of Guelph. Richard's main interest has been conservation biology, working at the interface between science and policy. Early on he worked for The Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society (CPAWS), then as an ecological consultant, and finally as a senior scientist at the Integrated Landscape Management lab at the University of Alberta. He has authored two books on biodiversity conservation and numerous scientific articles, with over 1,200 citations. He has recently retired, but continues to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of Nature Alberta Magazine.



**Hannah Bayne, MSc Epidemiology Student  
School of Public Health, University of Alberta**

Hannah Bayne (she/they) is an MSc Epidemiology student with the Climate Change and Global Health Research Group at the University of Alberta. The daughter of an ecologist and a psychologist, Hannah has always been passionate about climate change and mental health. She completed her BSc in 2023 with a Psychology major and a Music minor and is now combining these passions with her interests in public health for her MSc research under the supervision of Drs. Sherilee Harper and Ashlee Cunsolo. Her research focuses on using music as a climate adaptation strategy, specifically focusing on using collective music-making to cope with climate grief and anxiety. Hannah is very active in climate change communication and outreach and was awarded the NCCPH Knowledge Translation Graduate Student Award for her work. Outside of her studies, Hannah enjoys volunteering with Girl Guides of Canada, organizing with Climate Justice Edmonton, spending time outdoors, playing the flute and piano, and reading novels.

# Speakers

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**Austin Zacharko, Senior Manager - Business Development  
SunGrid Solutions**

Austin Zacharko spearheads business development for SunGrid Solutions across western Canada, focusing on developing and building Solar & Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS). With a BSc. in Mechanical Engineering and an MEng in Sustainable Energy Engineering, his expertise spans sustainability, decarbonization, and climate change. Austin's diverse background includes roles in government, academia, consulting, industry, and NGOs - all of which have enriched his approach to renewable energy projects. As a member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, he ensures Indigenous perspectives are core to his work. Austin's commitment extends beyond his profession; he is an avid outdoor enthusiast and community volunteer.



**Jeff Zukiwsky, Senior Resilience & Sustainability Advisor  
Associated Engineering**

Jeff Zukiwsky is a Professional Planner and Senior Resilience Advisor with Associated Engineering. For the past 15 years he has worked with communities and organizations across Canada to help them understand climate risk and vulnerability and develop climate resilience action plans. At the community level, he has worked with over 40 municipalities, supporting climate change risk and vulnerability assessments, adaptation and resilience strategy development and decision-making, and implementation.



**Jill Yanch, Director  
Resilient Rurals**

As Founder and Director of Resilient Rurals with the Town of Bruderheim, Jill Yanch leads the development of a unique climate change adaptation and resilience model customized to fit small and rural communities. Her background in environmental sciences and decades of working with municipalities and Indigenous communities has empowered Jill to build meaningful regional partnerships across Canada. Driven by a deep belief in the power and potential of community, Jill is committed to being an advocate for socio-economic change at the local and national levels.



# Speakers



**Adriene Konrad,**  
**For Our Kids / Common Horizon**

Adriene Konrad is a teacher with Edmonton Public Schools who recently resumed part-time supply teaching following maternity leave. The love for her son and the bonds with her students have been powerful catalysts motivating her climate work. She is committed to urgent, positive changes that benefit all and works as a volunteer within multiple organizations, including For Our Kids Alberta and Common Horizon. She has also organized a Climate Club at her school for youth concerned about the changing climate. Adriene treasures her relationships and cherishes connections with the natural world and its inhabitants. By fostering kind and compassionate bonds with people within the local community, Adriene has become a formidable force for change, fighting for future generations.



**Dr. Sherilee Harper,**  
**School of Public Health, University of Alberta**

Sherilee Harper is a Canada Research Chair in Climate Change and Health and Professor in the School of Public Health at the University of Alberta. Her research investigates health equity in the context of climate change, and she collaborates with partners across sectors to prioritise climate-related health actions, planning, interventions, and research. She was a Lead Author on two Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) reports; served on the Gender Task Group for the IPCC; Lead Author on Health Canada's 2022 Climate Change and Health Assessment; and Co-chaired the Government of Canada's Health and Wellbeing Advisory Table for the National Adaptation Strategy. She is currently an IPCC Vice Chair (WGI).



**Stephanie Olsen, Master of Arts in Community Engagement,**  
**School of Public Health, University of Alberta**

Stephanie Olsen (she/her) is a Masters student in the Master of Arts in Community Engagement program at the University of Alberta. Under the supervision of Dr. Sherilee Harper and Dr. Ashlee Cunsolso, Stephanie's research investigates the mental health impacts of climate change in Alberta, and the power of collective spaces for honouring ecological grief and other difficult climate emotions. Stephanie is also a facilitator with Refugia, an Alberta organization that provides workshops and retreats on ecological grief, eco-anxiety, and the emotional impacts of living during times of planetary crisis.

Stephanie is grateful to live, love, work and play in amiskwaciwâskahikan, Treaty 6 territory (Edmonton, AB).

# Speakers

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**Nicola Lewin, Senior Manager,  
Land and Adaptation Strategies, EPCOR**

Nicola Lewin has a Master's of Science in Civil and Environmental Engineering from the University of Alberta where she specialized in water and wastewater treatment. Nicola has worked in the water and wastewater industry for 23 years and led teams in operations, engineering, emergency management and planning.

Nicola is currently a Senior Manager in One Water Planning at EPCOR Utilities Inc. and leads the Land and Adaptation Strategies team. She is also a member of the Canadian Water and Wastewater Association Climate Change Committee, Chair of the Western Canada Section of the American Water and Wastewater Association, Membership and Engagement Committee and recently became Co-Chair of the Alberta Water Council Drought Mutual Support Committee. Nicola is also an original member of EPCOR's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Council and one of the founding members of Herstory, a Women in Leadership employee resource group.



**Andre Asselin, Executive Director  
Alberta Water Council / Clean Air Strategic Alliance**

Andre Asselin was born and raised in Edmonton, Alberta, where he completed a French high school diploma. He earned a Bachelor of Science in Environment and Conservation Science, with a specialization in environmental economics and policy, and pursued graduate studies in resource economics, both at the University of Alberta. He developed a close relationship with nature spending summers outdoors hiking in Alberta's beautiful Rocky Mountains or lakeside at the family cabin. He began working with the Alberta Water Council as a project manager in 2010 and progressively took on greater responsibilities. In 2017, he was named Executive Director of both the Alberta Water Council and the Clean Air Strategic Alliance. He likes golfing, cooking, and watching the Oilers push to win the Stanley Cup.

# Speakers



**Emmeline Marshall-Hill, Emergency Manager,  
EMH Consulting Inc.**

Emmeline Marshall-Hill, an independent consultant based in British Columbia, specializes in emergency management and governance. With a focus on serving Indigenous, municipal, regional, and provincial entities, Emmeline is dedicated to finding practical solutions to complex challenges.

In her role as the Housing Branch Director for the Grand Forks / Kootenay Boundary Flood Recovery, Emmeline led efforts to develop collaborative visions and plans, bringing diverse groups together to achieve common goals in housing recovery. Her commitment to inclusivity and resilience extends to advocating for the "all of society" approach emphasized in the Sendai Framework.

With a humble approach and unwavering dedication, Emmeline continues to make meaningful contributions to emergency management, inspiring others to work together towards a safer future.



**Dr. Timothy David Clark, Principal,  
Willow Springs Strategic Solutions**

Timothy David Clark (PhD York University) is a Principal Owner at Willow Springs Strategic Solutions, where he oversees and conducts rights, socio-economic, cultural, and disaster impact assessments, helps to design cumulative effects management systems, and carries out oral and archival historical research. Dr. Clark has worked with and for Indigenous governments and communities in Canada and South America for the past two decades.



**Amber Bennett, Deputy Director,  
Re.Climate**

Amber Bennett, Re.Climate Deputy Director, is one of Canada's top climate communication strategists and capacity builders. Over the past five years, she has worked to bring groups and leaders across the country together to build a diverse network of more than 1,900 climate communicators. As manager of the Alberta Narratives Project, she worked to bring together more than 75 individuals and organizations to engage 500 Albertans in climate-energy conversations – making it one of the largest public engagements of its kind. Over the past 20 years her work has delivered new research, critical capacity and skills, partnerships, and campaigns. She has earned multiple awards and regularly speaks on the topic of climate communications. She holds a bachelor of Public Relations and a Master's of Arts in environmental education and communication.

# Poster Presenters



**Samiha Ali, Project Assistant, University of Alberta**

Samiha Ali, a graduate in Physics and Mathematics from the University of Alberta, addresses water security and climate adaptation in the Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation with the Wakâ Mne Science and Culture Initiative. Leveraging training from the Initiative and undergraduate research experiences, Samiha has honed her data analysis skills which she is using to advance environmental justice efforts.



**Mehrnaz Behrooz, Ph.D. Candidate of Operations Management**

Mehrnaz Behrooz is a PhD candidate at the Alberta School of Business, holding an MSc in Industrial Engineering. Her primary research interest lies in integrating data and optimization techniques to formulate data-driven models applicable to diverse areas within operations management, with a dedication to topics related to community enhancement.



**Shayla Watson, Project Assistant, Athabasca Watershed Council**

Shayla Watson, a proud member of the Métis Nation of Alberta, has received a Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation diploma from Lakeland College and a Bachelor of Environmental and Conservation Sciences, majoring in Conservation Biology from the University of Alberta. Now that she has wrapped up her time as an ART Project Assistant, she will be continuing to work with the Athabasca Watershed Council this summer as a Watershed Science Technician.

## Connect with ClimateWest



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204-995-6514



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