



Working to Scale: Reconciliation, Revitalization, Retention, Regional Transportation, and Revenue Generation in Rural and Remote Contexts

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Robert Keen, RPF, CEO, Forests Ontario & Forest Recovery Canada

Keynote Speaker #1: Our Forests, Our Future

Rob is a Registered Professional Forester (RPF) with over 40 years of experience in forestry and founded a forestry consultant business upon graduating with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the University of Toronto in 1982. He has been involved in many facets of the forestry industry, primarily in the Great Lakes St. Lawrence forest region. Rob has provided forestry services to landowners, developed forest management plans on Crown and private lands, conducted wood supply and feasibility studies, led forest audits for the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) and Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources (and Forestry).

Rob has been an active member of the Ontario Professional Foresters Association since 1985, where he served as vice-president for two terms. He was Director and Chair of the Algonquin Forestry Authority, Director of Invasive Species Centre and currently serves as a Director for Maple Leaves Forever and Chair of the Westwind Forest Stewardship sustainable forest licensee.

In 2014, Rob Keen assumed the role of Chief Executive Officer of Forests Ontario (the merged organization of Trees Ontario and Ontario Forestry Association), after serving as CEO of Trees Ontario since 2011, and continues to lead the Forests Ontario team in sustaining and generating new partnerships to support and achieve its re-greening mandate.



FONDATION
CANADIENNE POUR LA
REVITALISATION RURALE
CANADIAN
RURAL REVITALIZATION
FOUNDATION

NORTHERN
POLICY INSTITUTE

INSTITUT DES POLITIQUES
DU NORD

Giwednong Aakomenjigewin Teg
b ΔC2-40-41 P-7/10-1 409-467
Institu dPolitik di Nor
Aen vawnd nor Lee Iway La koonpayeen



Tracy MacPhee, Vice President of Passenger Rail and Motor Coach, Ontario Northland

Keynote Speaker #2: Ontario Northland: Expanding Services and Enhancing Ontario's Transportation Network

As Vice President of Passenger Rail and Motor Coach, Tracy MacPhee is an expert in fostering relationships with stakeholder groups across industries and government. Tracy's authentic leadership style has enhanced operations due to her diligence in areas such as conflict resolution, accessibility standards, diversity, and building a culture of care and accountability. Known for taking action to make a tangible difference, Tracy creates meaningful transportation solutions for passengers, customers, and community partners.

Her unique perspective empowers the executive team in finding efficiencies, generating revenue, and strategically growing the organization's operations, routes, and services.

Mahamat Hamit-Hagggar, Ph.D., Chief, Centre for Special Business Projects, Statistics Canada



Statistics
Canada

Statistique
Canada

Keynote Speaker #3: Data for rural communities: Taking stock and looking forward

Mahamat Hamit-Hagggar is a chief in the Centre for Special Business Projects (CSBP) at Statistics Canada. He manages rural data projects, in which he focuses on the development of data, analyses, and visualizations. He also manages a number of other products related to businesses' performances. Mahamat holds a Ph.D. degree in economics.

PANELLISTS AND MODERATORS

PANEL #1: [Re]Framing Healthy and Resilient Communities



Amanda Mongeon, Ph.D. Student, University of Guelph

Panellist

Amanda is studying rural health and wellbeing at the University of Guelph and puts her learning to practice as Manager of Community Health at Timiskaming Health Unit where she has worked since 2006. Amanda holds a Masters of Education, Bachelor of Environmental Studies and is a Credentialed Evaluator. Originally from Kirkland Lake, Ontario, Amanda now lives in Temiskaming Shores.



Fern Dominelli, Executive Director, Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA)

Panellist

Fern Dominelli is the Executive Director for the Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association. Fern retired as CAO of the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board on August 31, 2022, after 40 years in the public service. Fern started with the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board as a Program Manager in August 2000 and then became CAO in 2009. Prior to his work with the Manitoulin-Sudbury District Services Board, he was with the Ministry of Community & Social Services for 18 years.



Heidi Ferguson, Economic Development Officer/Museum Manager,
Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands

Panellist

Heidi Ferguson is the Economic Development Officer and Museum Manager for the Town of Northeastern Manitoulin and the Islands (NEMI), where she lives with her family in beautiful Little Current on Manitoulin Island.

Heidi has been with the municipality for the past fourteen years and feels privileged to serve her hometown community and make an impact each and every day.

As a small-town Economic Development Officer, you tend to wear many hats; however, this allows you exposure to many different facets- which can provide some amazing opportunities and learning experiences.

Heidi's main focuses are working to help local businesses within NEMI be successful and sustainable, developing and securing funding to help enhance our community and our infrastructure and working to develop, market and promote our beautiful community and its tourism products and offerings to visitors from all over.

Outside of work, Heidi enjoys volunteering on school council and spending time with her children and family and watching the amazing Manitoulin sunsets!

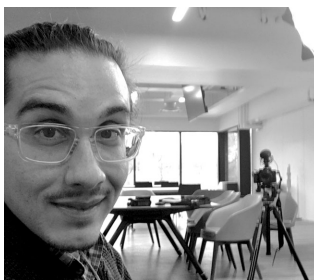


Leith Deacon, Ph.D., Associate Professor, University of Guelph

Moderator

Leith Deacon is an Associate Professor in the Rural Planning and Development Program in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph. He is a full member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and a Registered Professional Planner. Leith's research focuses on rural and small communities and concepts around sustainability, governance, mental health, and resiliency.

PANEL #2: Reconciliation in Rural and Northern Regions



Andrew Judge Ph.D., Assistant Professor, Anishinaabe Studies, Algoma University

Panellist

Mkomose (Dr. Andrew Judge) is Assistant Professor of Anishinaabe Studies at Algoma University. He has lectured at Sir Wilfrid Laurier University, The University of Waterloo, and Coordinated Indigenous studies at Conestoga College, where he established a network of Indigenous leaders to restore land. Mkomose specializes in Anishinaabe cultural knowledge, ethno-medicine, and land-based learning.

Mkomose has learned from, worked and consulted with, and served Indigenous Elders and community leaders for over a decade. He has founded several community-led Indigenous knowledge based programs at the elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels and works tirelessly to promote Indigenous land-based sustainability practices.

Mkomose has delivered over 100 invited lectures related to Indigenous knowledge, with a pointed focus on the restoration of Anishinaabe teachings, across Canada and internationally. He supports conscious awakening using Anishinaabe Cosmovision to respond to the current state of society, with the generous support of plant medicines. Mkomose is both Midewiwin and an initiated Mayan Day Keeper. He regularly participates in the ancient ceremonial practices of his Anishinaabe ancestors.

Currently, Mkomose is working with scholars from the University of Toronto Mississauga and the Mississauga Nation to assist in establishing best practices for Community Engaged Learning at post secondary institutes. He also supports students at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture to better recognize the value in designing sustainable and edible habitats for the benefit of future generations. Over the past two years at Algoma University Mkomose has led multiple projects including a maple syrup harvests; building a corn, bean, sunflower, tobacco, and pumpkin harvest circle; and, building a traditional Anishinaabe teaching lodge. He has facilitated teachings from many local and international Anishinaabe community leaders in sharing knowledge with thousands of students and guests.



Jason Batise, Executive Director, Wabun Tribal Council

Panellist

Jason is a member of the Matachewan First Nation located in Northeastern Ontario. He currently lives and works in Timmins, Ontario, where he has resided for nearly thirty years. Jason grew up in Callander, where his parents, Barney and Doreen Batise, still reside and is the proud father of three boys.

Jason has spent the majority of his career in service of First Nations through employment at the Wabun Tribal Council, starting as an Economic Development and Technical Services advisor and achieving advancement to his current role as Executive Director. He also serves as Director on several First Nation Boards, including Nishnawbe Aski Police Services and Legal Services Corp. He is also President of five General Partnership development corporations owned and operated by First Nations. These include the Ontario First Nations Sovereign Wealth Fund, Niiwin GP Inc, and Three Nations Drilling, to name a few.

Over his career, Jason has been instrumental in developing the economies and wealth of the communities he represents, achieving well over one billion dollars of direct and indirect value to the First Nations. These achievements include the negotiation of numerous Impact and Benefits Agreements, Resource Revenue Sharing with Ontario, First Nation equity in large-scale hydroelectric developments and many other investments that have translated into better outcomes for the People he serves.



Wendy Landry, Senior Advisor Indigenous Initiatives & Indigenous Engagement at Enbridge Inc.

Panellist

Wendy Landry is a member of Red Rock Indian Band; she has strived to educate people about Indigenous people, striking down misconceptions and untruths as she goes. Her journey has included bringing non-indigenous Canadians (and Corporations) to understand the History of Indigenous People and Canadian Historical Relations, as well as the effects on Indigenous People and Canada as a whole.

She has been married to Pat for 34 years, and raised 6 children, three Biological, three came to us from the Child Welfare System. She is also the Mayor of the Municipality of Shuniah (Ojibwe for Silver, coin, or money). She is the 1st First Nations woman in Ontario to serve as a Mayor since her first term in 2014 after four years as a councillor. In April of 2017, she was elected to represent 37 Municipalities as the President of the Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association. She is also on the Executive Board of the Associations of the Municipalities of Ontario, Chair of the Indigenous Task Force at AMO, appointed to MPAC and other boards, serves as the Vice President of Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corp, and volunteers on other boards.

...



...

She has previously been a college instructor for 10 years, worked in Correctional Field for 20 years and has worked, volunteered, and led many committees, organizations, and boards. She is a strong advocate and passionate about Indigenous Knowledge and believes that before Reconciliation, there must be TRUTH.

She has been working in Indigenous Engagement for Enbridge for 10 years and now is the Sr Advisor for Indigenous Initiatives and Community Engagement, working to support teams to meet ESG targets, Indigenous Awareness Training, Indigenous Employment work plan, Indigenous Initiatives, and relationships.



Rachel Rizzuto, Research Manager, Northern Policy Institute

Moderator

Rachel Rizzuto is the Research Manager for Northern Policy Institute. Originally from the United States, Rachel attended the University of Guelph and the University of Waterloo, earning her B.A. (Honours) and M.A. (co-op) in Political Science, respectively. Throughout her academic and professional careers, Rachel has pursued the study of community and economic development, an enthusiasm borne out of travel throughout rural and urban China. Through her role at NPI, Rachel provides research expertise and passion for seeing northern communities thrive.

FACILITATORS:



Maurice Switzer, Bnesi, Principal, Nimkii Communications

Concurrent Priority Setting Roundtables: Reconciliation in Rural and Northern Regions

Maurice Switzer, *Bnesi*, is a citizen of the Mississaugas of Alderville First Nation, where his grandfather was Chief from 1904-09.

He serves on the board of the North Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre and on the board of governors of Nipissing University, and on advisory councils for organizations, including the Ontario Human Rights Commission, the Indigenous Primary Health Care Council of Ontario, and the First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Education Association of Ontario.

At various times Maurice has been an editor and publisher at five Canadian daily newspapers, communications director for the Assembly of First Nations and Union of Ontario Indians, and adjunct professor of communications and Indigenous studies on the Laurentian University campus.

His son and grandson are commissioned officers in the Canadian Armed Forces.



Dee Ann Benard, CEO, Rural Development Network

Concurrent Priority Setting Roundtables: Rural Revitalization (reinvestment)

Dee Ann is the Rural Development Network's inaugural CEO/Executive Director. She has over 18 years of experience leading not-for-profit organizations and has spent over 30 years working in rural Canada. With this experience, Dee Ann leads RDN in helping communities navigate the landscape of rural development through RDN's initiatives, such as developing affordable housing, tackling homelessness, increasing immigration and supporting community sustainability. RDN has a vested interest in seeing communities thrive, not just survive, and is well-positioned to assist them through complex processes.

Dee Ann holds a B.Sc. and M.Sc. from Simon Fraser University. Since moving to Alberta in 1994, she has held positions with government, private industry and non-profits and has served on numerous boards.



Wendy Landry, President of Northwestern Ontario Municipal Association, Mayor of Shuniah, and Co-Chair of Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force

Concurrent Priority Setting Roundtables: Regional Transportation



Danny Whalen, Councillor of the City of Temiskaming Shores, President of the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities, and Co-Chair of Northern Ontario Transportation Task Force

Concurrent Priority Setting Roundtables: Regional Transportation

I was born and raised in the area. I am married to Suzanne with two daughters, Trina and Tracey. We also have two granddaughters, Mya and Lily, and our grandson Calvin to whom we devote much of our time. During my 25 years of municipal experience as both a member of Council and Head of Council, I participated on various boards of Council.

I have recently been elected to the position of President of The Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM). I just received my 25-year pin from Minister Clark, and I was again elected to our City Council on 21 October.



Cheryl Fort, Mayor, Township of Hornepayne

Concurrent Priority Setting Roundtables: Rural Revenue Generation

Cheryl Fort is the Mayor of the Township of Hornepayne, and Northern Ontario has always been home. Cheryl completed post-secondary courses through Distance Education at the University of Windsor and Athabasca University. Cheryl has taken two years of commerce and two years of general studies, focussing on communication. Cheryl is the mother of three grown children. For 16 years, Cheryl has worked for Canadian National Railway, currently as a Locomotive Engineer. Cheryl is an avid volunteer with 25 years of experience. She has served as a town councillor, school board trustee, library board chair, hospital board member and Legion Youth Education Chair. Cheryl is the second female Indigenous Mayor to be elected in Ontario. While working as both Mayor and Locomotive Engineer, she also sits as a Director for the Ontario Good Roads Association for the Northern Zone. Cheryl is a servant-leader and a strong advocate for Northern Ontario.