

CBWN Spring meeting speaker bios



Lorna Visser, Principal, Carmanah Strategies
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Lorna Visser is Principal of Carmanah Strategies, an organizational development, communications and fundraising consulting firm. She is based in the West Kootenays and has worked across Western Canada with charities, foundations and progressive businesses. She has assisted hundreds of nonprofit and charitable organizations, fulfilling her mission of “Helping Make Good Organizations Better.”

Lorna is a sought-after speaker for conferences and conventions with her energetic presentation style and upbeat message of empowerment for the social-profit sector. She has given keynote addresses at conferences as diverse as Nelson CARES, the Kootenay Library Federation, the Alberta Land Trust Alliance and the Creston Community Services Society. She was a lead trainer for the federal government’s Green Legacies project to encourage private donations to land conservation charities.

Lorna’s career includes working as a journalist for a daily newspaper in Calgary, a lengthy stint as a corporate communications professional in the oil industry (what she now calls "her evil past"), and as a communications and fundraising professional with national charities including the Canadian Red Cross and the Sierra Legal Defence Fund (now Ecojustice Canada). She holds an honours degree in journalism from Mount Royal University.

Lorna is active in the environmental conservation community and serves or has served in numerous volunteer board capacities including on the Environment Steering Committee of the Columbia Basin Trust, the Alberta Ecotrust Foundation, the Slocan Lake Stewardship Society, the Kootenay Conservation Program and the Hills Recreation Society. She is a founding director of her local community foundation, the Slocan Valley Legacy Fund, and has spent the past 10 years building that organization.

Phil Matson, Research Specialist - GIS/AIS, Flathead Lake Biological Station
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A majority of Phil’s work involves GIS and Remote Sensing with the underlying focus of relating floodplain habitat complexity to biotic and anthropogenic metrics and of modeling streams at differing discharge rates as they relate to geomorphic work - with the goal of systematically rendering the long-term water and riparian quality of water bodies in the Pacific Northwest.

Phil's collects aerial imagery through a high-resolution camera and analyzes the imagery in the FLBS GIS lab; coordinates data collection and maintenance, collects physical, chemical, and biological data, to his involvement of various education outreach programs to local schools and student groups. He continues to collaborate on a number of local, regional and international initiatives. Phil is the GIS database manager for the Crown Manager’s Partnership, and coordinates the Aquatic Invasive Species sampling efforts for FLBS and sits on the Upper Columbia Conservation Commission (UC3) - Montana’s sustained push against aquatic invasive species.

Gerry Oliver, Retired Fisheries Biologist

Seventeen years with the BC Ministry of Environment provided Gerry with a variety of aquatic experiences including lake and stream management, fisheries management planning and aquatic habitat protection and restoration. Inventory and assessment of habitat and fish populations, water quality and fisheries monitoring were all part of the work. As the Regional Coordinator for the Watershed Restoration Program under the Forest Renewal Program, Gerry developed and coordinated the restoration program in the Kootenays. Since 1995 his work as a consultant has involved a full range of inventory, assessment, management planning, habitat restoration and research in the area of aquatic resource management. Gerry's work has been key to technical reviews of provincial water quality and temperature guidelines and the development of a species management plan for westslope cutthroat trout for BC.

Bill Thompson, Columbia Lake Stewardship Society

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Bill Thompson is a retired meteorologist. Much of his experience has focused on water management issues both in Canada and abroad. Bill currently monitors inflowing and outflowing streams and lake level for the CLSS and undertakes analyses aimed at establishing the water balance of Columbia Lake.

Shannon McGinty, Lake Windermere Ambassadors Program Coordinator

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Originally from Ontario, Shannon has been in the valley since January 2018 and is the Program Coordinator for LWA. She previously worked in a variety of fields from recreation to youth outreach, but has a passion for water stewardship. Her education background is a Bachelor of Science at the University of Northern British Columbia. Shannon enjoys mountain biking, rock climbing, skiing and snowboarding in her spare time.

Jessie Paloposki, East Kootenay Invasive Species Council, Education and Communications Manager

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Jessie started her career as an Environmental Educator even before she knew what a career was. As a child, she would spend countless hours exploring the forests surrounding her rural BC home. As she grew up, she began to see these wild places disappear. In 2008 her urge to protect wild places led her to begin her professional life as a Park Ranger. Jessie worked for BC Parks for 8 years, committing to protecting our precious natural areas and helping others discover the beauty of the natural world. In 2016, she decided to move away from parks and join the East Kootenay Invasive Species Council.

Jessie earned her MA in Environmental Education through Royal Roads University and a Diploma in Natural Resource Management through Vancouver Island University. In her spare time, she can usually be found kayaking a river, skiing in the mountains, or travelling the world.

Avery Deboer-Smith, Living Lakes Canada Program Coordinator

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Avery is currently coordinating the Transboundary Water Monitoring and Data Hub Collaborative. For the past several years, she managed the Friends of Kootenay Lake Stewardship Society, including wildlife monitoring, water quality monitoring, restoration of wetlands, shoreline cleanups and the annual Kootenay Lake Summits and the Society's outreach capacity. Avery worked for local government, implementing two of the most successful Columbia Basin Trust Water Smart Ambassador programs. Avery has a background in international relations and a technical diploma in environmental sciences. She is currently working on her Master's in environment and management.

Rory Gallagher, Living Lakes Canada Hydrometric Technologist

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Having recently moved to the Columbia Basin and residing in Nelson, Rory is jumping into the deep end of all things water monitoring. His background in water quantity, quality, and meteorological monitoring lends well to LLC's current work to facilitate the development of a community based monitoring network and open source database to help address water datagaps in the Columbia Basin. Put simply, Rory's current role with LLC is to develop a hydrologic monitoring network supported by a database that will allow the monitoring initiative to address these data gaps.

Rory's previous professional experience includes working for the provincial government, civil engineering consulting firms and NGOs on hydrology and energy projects. His education includes a diploma in Environment Technology and a degree in Environmental Engineering Technology.

Carol Luttmer, Living Lakes Canada Program Coordinator Groundwater Monitoring Program

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Carol has over 20 years of experience in environmental monitoring throughout Canada and in the mid-west United States. She has worked on diverse and complex projects including the distribution and bioaccumulation of contaminants in Arctic ecosystems, groundwater infiltration in fractured bedrock to assess the feasibility of deep geological disposal of nuclear waste, and wind erosion and air quality in arid environments. She has a Masters of Science in Physical Geography and a Bachelor of Science in Water Resources Engineering.

Danielle Paydli, Canadian Freshwater Alliance, BC Organizer

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Danielle is a graduate of the University of Saskatchewan's International Development program and a passionate social justice advocate. She has years of campaign and program management experience working with Oxfam Canada, the University of Saskatchewan, Vancouver Island University and non-profit groups advocating with and supporting women, people with disabilities and newcomers to Canada throughout her work and volunteer career.