

FORUM ON BIODIVERSITY

Eighth Annual National Wildlife Week Forum

The United Nations has declared 2010 the International Year of Biodiversity. Join us for an intriguing and information packed evening as we explore just what the term 'Biodiversity' means. We'll take a look at how climate change can affect global biodiversity and what the future might hold. Finally, we will examine the role of invasive species and see whether native ecosystems are more resilient to this threat than we think.

FORUM DETAILS

Wednesday, April 7, 2010
6 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

3rd floor (West)
Canadian Museum of Nature
240 McLeod Street, Ottawa

Free admission / No registration required

Exhibitors

Light refreshments

OC Transpo Bus Service: numbers 5, 6 and 14

Limited on site paid parking

ORGANIZATION

The Wildlife Festival celebrates National Wildlife Week in the Nation's Capital Region. The partners in the Festival are the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Parks Canada, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Canadian Wildlife Service of Environment Canada, the Ottawa Stewardship Council, Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Ottawa Field-Naturalists' Club/Fletcher Wildlife Garden, Girl Guides of Canada, Facilitations and wildlife photographers and educators.

This event is organized by the OFNC/Fletcher Wildlife Garden, the Canadian Museum of Nature, the Ottawa Stewardship Council, and Parks Canada.

AGENDA

- 6 p.m. doors open, mingle, browse exhibits, refreshments (Slide Show, **Club de photographie Polarisé**)
- 7:00 p.m. **Welcome and Introduction by Mark Graham, Director, Research Services, Canadian Museum of Nature, and Emcee, Johanne Ranger, Environment Canada**
- 7:05 p.m. **Biodiversity: an overview. Dr. Ole Hendrickson, Science Advisor, Ecosystems and Biodiversity Priorities, Environment Canada**

The United Nations has proclaimed 2010 as International Year of Biodiversity. Recognition is growing that biodiversity - the variety of life - maintains our health, wealth and food security. Unfortunately, the global target of significantly reducing the rate of biodiversity loss by 2010 will not be met, owing to continuing or growing pressures from habitat loss, invasive alien species, pollution, resource overexploitation and climate change. There is an inextricable link between poverty, ecosystem degradation and biodiversity loss. Billions of people around the world remain highly dependent on biodiversity for their livelihoods, including farmers and indigenous peoples following traditional lifestyles. Biodiversity also underpins the capacity of ecosystems to regulate the climate, purify air and water, limit outbreaks of pests and diseases, and mitigate impacts of natural disasters on people and human settlements. Of equal importance is our fascination with the amazing variety of Earth's species, as scientists continue to discover new forms of life in hitherto unexplored regions such as the deep oceans.

- 7:40 p.m. **Climate Change: Potential Impacts on Biodiversity. Gary Neilsen, Ontario Ministry of**

Natural Resources

Just what do we mean by the term “Climate Change” anyway? Gary will provide a primer, Climate Change 101, to help us understand this sometimes confusing concept. He will discuss the state of the environment in Southern Ontario, and address the potential impacts of climate change on natural ecosystems. But natural systems can have a role in helping mitigate the effects of climate change, and Gary will explore this intriguing premise. Finally, he will provide a list of recommendations for learning more, and things we can do to help control climate change impact.

- 8: 25 p.m. **INTERMISSION** and door prizes (Slide Show, **Club de photographie Polarisé**)

8:40 p.m. **Learning to love the “Purple Mustard Zebra beetle”: Do invasive species leave room for biodiversity? Dr. Stephen McCanny, Parks Canada**

Invasive species are fearsome for the rate at which they can change native ecosystems. Humans are associated with a host of generalist organisms that are good at exploiting disturbed and nutrient rich environments. Will this train of destruction destroy the very fabric of life that humans depend upon? Dr. McCanny looks at the theory and experimental evidence for this gloomy scenario. Native ecosystems are often more resilient than we think and invasive species more vulnerable than we suppose. He concludes with some practical approaches for dealing with new and aggressive species in Canada.

- 9:15 p.m. Questions from the audience for our speakers
- 9:30 p.m. END

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Ole Hendrickson

Dr. Ole Hendrickson is a science advisor in Environment Canada's Ecosystems and Biodiversity Priorities Division. He received a Ph.D. in Ecology from the University of Georgia in 1981, worked for two years as a post-doctoral fellow at the University of Guelph, and was a research scientist and biodiversity coordinator with the Canadian Forest Service before joining Environment Canada in 2000, where he serves as Canada's national focal point for science and technology issues addressed by the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. He and his colleagues work with federal departments and agencies, provincial and territorial governments, and a broad range of non-government stakeholders to promote implementation of the Convention within Canada.

Gary Neilsen

Gary graduated in forestry from the University of New Brunswick in 1981. After taking several years to travel and explore the world, he settled in Eastern Ontario. His career has largely been with the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, where he has worked as a Management Forester, a Stewardship Coordinator for Leeds County, and a supervisor within MNR. Most recently, he has taken up the position of Climate Change Project Coordinator for MNR. Gary knows that climate change can have a substantial impact on our natural ecosystems and it is entirely possible that with some unavoidable changes, we will have to learn to adapt to new conditions. His work for MNR involves looking at how a changing climate will impact on the biodiversity of our woodlands and natural areas.

Dr. Stephen McCanny

Dr. Stephen McCanny is the Manager of Resource Conservation for Parks Canada's Ontario Service Centre. He began working on invasive species in graduate school at the University of Western Ontario. In his career with Parks Canada he has worked on grasslands, contaminated sites and ecological restoration guidelines. Throughout this work, he has returned to the question of measurement: How do we show progress in environmental management? Stephen was instrumental in the development of the national Ecological Integrity monitoring program in National Parks.