

# INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP PROGRAM



**Healthy Headwaters Lab**

Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research  
University of Windsor

Holistic. Strategic. Partnership.

IAP NEWSLETTER. MAR 2020. VOL. 01

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## NIINWE GIINWA GDINIMIKAAGOM (WE GREET YOU IN A GOOD WAY)

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### Healthy Headwaters Lab



Photo credit: Healthy Headwaters Lab

### WATER IS LIFE.

You may recognize some of these faces from the Anishnaabe Fair, Corn Harvest days and the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Field Course. We are honoured to be invited into the Bkejwanong community for these events and hope to continue building a strong community together as we work toward a common goal of healthy waters.

The **Healthy Headwaters Lab (HHL)** is a team directed by Dr. Catherine Febria, a Canada Research Chair (CRC) & Assistant Professor of Freshwater Restoration Ecology. HHL is based out of the Great Lakes Institute for Environmental Research (GLIER) at the University of Windsor and at the heart of our research is our love for water. Our aim is to work closely with communities and a range of decision-makers to help drive our research program to produce impactful science. We strongly believe that we must listen to and incorporate the knowledge of those who are most connected to the land and water in order to create meaningful solutions for the problems we are facing.

Fuelled by this belief, the two main extensions of our lab are the **Indigenous Allyship Program (IAP)** and the **Farm & Freshwater Ecology Research Network (FERN)**, which are funded by Dr. Febria's CRC position and seek to grow new networks, projects and grants. We aim to weave together our experiences, skill sets, networks and resources to address common sustainability challenges through community-based solutions. The IAP seeks to build capacity in the next generation of Indigenous scientists. We are committed to ensuring that our research on territorial lands incorporates existing knowledge, is guided by local context, and creates new opportunities for emerging Indigenous leaders to be trained in freshwater restoration ecology.

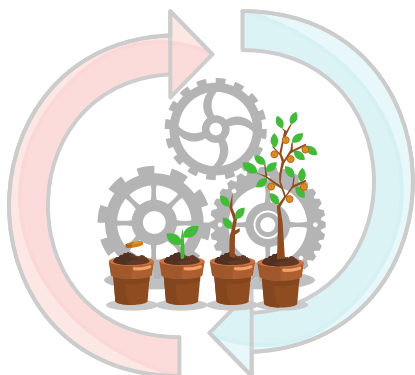


Some members of the Indigenous Allyship team. From Left to right: Jess Owen, Destiny Soney, Candy Donaldson and Katrina Keeshig (Photo credit: C.Febria / Healthy Headwaters Lab)

## DESIRED OUTCOMES OF THE IAP:

- Hire, recruit and train 5+ Indigenous scientists by 2024 (we've already reached 6!)
- Co-create and co-lead the Traditional Ecological Knowledge Field Course bringing together Indigenous and Western science perspectives.
- Produce and promote Indigenous-led resources, creative outputs, artwork and story-telling initiatives
- Build upon existing networks of like-minded allies, strengthen and expand engagement and partnerships.

In keeping with the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Universities Canada Principles of Indigenous Education, the University of Windsor has committed to building stronger, more meaningful partnerships with Indigenous students, scholars, and communities.



Indigenous peoples are historically underrepresented in higher education. HHL is committed to doing their part in closing that gap. The Allyship program will **create, promote and foster increased representation and training of indigenous scholars in community-based freshwater research.**

## THE ALLYSHIP TEAM IS GROWING...

- Candy Donaldson,  
*Director CRC Indigenous Allyship Program*
- Destiny Soney,  
*NinDaWaabJig Project Coordinator*
- Katrina Keeshig,  
*NinDaWaabJig Research Partnership Coordinator & Field Guide*
- Jess Owen,  
*Organic Analysis and Nutrient Research Facility (OANL) Technician*
- Riel Fournier-Altiman,  
*NinDaWaabJig Field Research Guide*
- Shayenna-Rae Nolan,  
*Undergraduate Research Experience (URE) student and Lab storyteller*

Our team is comprised of science practitioners from various backgrounds and communities around the Great Lakes Basin. Each member will add their own layer of experience and understanding to our work.



Examples of engagement opportunities (Anishnaabe Fair & Bkejwanong Eco-keepers attending the Freshwater Ecology Centre in La Salle; Photo credit: C.Donaldson / Healthy Headwaters Lab).

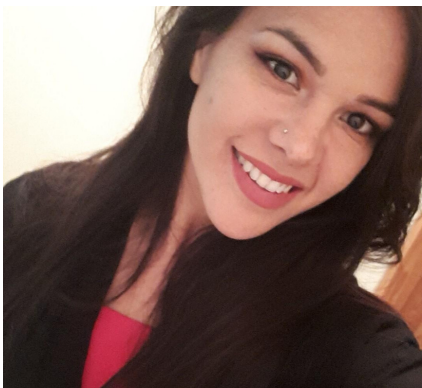


## Meet some of the Indigenous Allyship Program (IAP) Team Members



**Catherine Febria & Candy Donaldson, Co-Directors of the CRC Indigenous Allyship Program**

Catherine Febria is the Canada Research Chair in Freshwater Restoration Ecology & Assistant Professor at the University of Windsor. She launched the Healthy Headwaters Lab in 2019 after more than 5 years in Aotearoa New Zealand where she directed a community-based program on freshwater restoration and ecology. Candy Donaldson has been a Biology Technician at the University of Windsor for more than 15 years, and guiding the Faculty of Science towards Indigenization and Decolonization in Science. Catherine and Candy together co-direct the Indigenous Allyship Program and share a vision of building greater capacity and capability in local communities as stewards of the land and water, and in the next generation of Indigenous leaders.



**Destiny Soney, NinDaWaabjig Project Coordinator**

Most, if not all, will recognize Destiny. Destiny is a student of Environmental Engineering at the University of Windsor and coordinator of the Bkejwanong Eco-Keepers youth program. She plays a key role in the development and coordination of our lab's research with NinDaWaabjig and the Walpole Island Land Trust. She works between the University of Windsor and Bkejwanong Territory on research efforts to support the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk and our lab's Indigenous Allyship Program.



**Katrina Keeshig, NinDaWaabjig Research Partnership Coordinator & Field Guide**

Katrina is a research associate with a background in ecological monitoring and community engagement. Growing up on Georgian Bay on the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation, Katrina has grown up with a deep love of water. She worked as a Parks Canada Resource Management Technician for 8 years, monitoring the ecological health and integrity of aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems. Katrina's main role will be to work with the community to align research activities from the Canada Nature Fund for Aquatic Species at Risk with community priorities and direction. Katrina is most excited to learn from the community and to share her passion for science and learning.

**Check out our video "Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) field course @ Bkejwanong" on YouTube on the [Healthy Headwaters Lab page](#)**



## INDIGENOUS ALLYSHIP

# OPEN HOUSE

OJIBWAY NATURE PARK

### BUILDING TRUST

- ACKNOWLEDGING HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIPS
- ACKNOWLEDGING THE LAND
- ACKNOWLEDGING OUR RESPONSIBILITIES
- LISTENING & SHARING
- VALUING UNIQUE PERSPECTIVES
- RESPECT FOR THE LAND & WATER
- FOCUS ON COMMUNITY
- ACTION-ORIENTED
- CREATING SPACE(S)

These are some elements that come to mind when we think of trust building. What other elements are necessary in relationship building? How can we go beyond knowledge production? How can the research community support Indigenous capacity-building, strengthen networks and implement actions that contribute to sustainability?

On February 20th, 2020 a group of motivated individuals gathered at City of Windsor's Ojibway Nature Park for the purposes of sharing food, stories and building community. This event was also a chance to look back at the inaugural year of University of Windsor's Healthy Headwaters Lab and the Indigenous Allyship Program. This diverse group represented communities across Windsor and Essex County, Walpole Island First Nation, Ontario and as far as China!

We began the day with a *Miigwech circle*: an opening prayer, a message of gratitude and thanks and round circle introductions where invitees shared who they were and what inspires them. Following that, organizers shared information on current and upcoming research opportunities and invited guests to engage with one another, listen and share.

The day allowed university staff, faculty, field naturalists, municipal representatives and members of Bkejwanong to come together and learn what each other does and how we might work together in the future. At the heart of it all was the question: **How can we support Indigenous capacity-building?**

**Follow us on Facebook at Healthy Headwaters Lab. Leave a message, share your ideas, watch out for contests and online resources.**



## Bkejwanong Kwewag share inspiring messages of repatriation



Photo credit: S.Nolan

Members of Bkejwanong attend the February 20th Indigenous Allyship Open House at Ojibway Nature Park. From (l) to (r) Tanya Garcia, Mariah Alexander, Montana Riley, Summer Garcia and Destiny Soney.

We were so happy to be joined by the inspiring Anishnaabe Kwewag responsible for bringing traditional practices of harvesting and preparing mandaamin back to the community. Members of the university were invited to join in the Corn Harvest celebration and were honoured to listen to teachings and stories of this powerful medicine and integral part of Anishnaabe culture. Chi-Miigwech for sharing that with us!

## Congratulations **CLINT JACOBS**



Photo credit: P.Marval

### **UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR'S FIRST ADJUNCT INDIGENOUS SCHOLAR**

HHL took a leading role in proposing the creation of a new role at the University of Windsor. Early in 2020, a Senate by-law was approved creating a new position called "Adjunct Indigenous Scholar". The vote was unanimously approved and Clint Jacobs was the first to be nominated and granted this new title. This appointment recognizes his wealth of knowledge and deep connection to the land *and* contribution to scholarship and training. This appointment creates new opportunities for Clint to participate as a grant holder, collaborator and lecturer in other ways of knowing, seeing and relating to our environment. Congratulations Clint!

## **Ojibway Nature Park: Bringing Indigenous language and content to the City of Windsor**

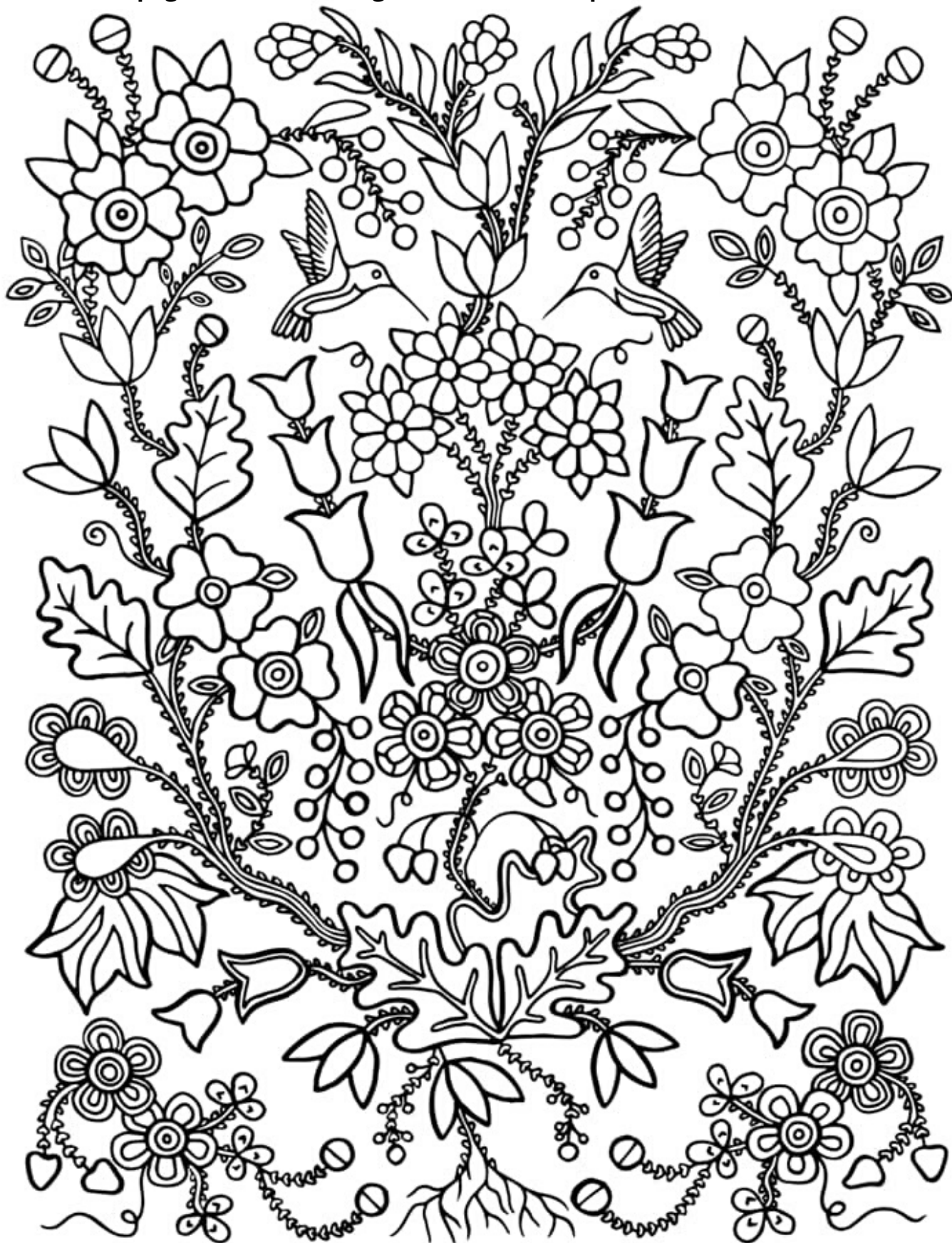
Ojibway Prairie Complex is a collection of five closely situated natural areas within a 10 minute drive from downtown Windsor. The Ojibway Nature Centre is the Hub that oversees four of these areas and second home to Karen Cedar, naturalist for the city of Windsor.

The complex is home to a tremendous variety of plant and animal life, and includes protected wetland, forest, prairie and savannah habitat. The centre provides learning opportunities for all ages and hopes to spark interest and compassion for our natural areas.

When one hears the name 'Ojibway' you might expect a greater connection to Indigenous heritage - currently there is little to none. We want to change that! Together, Karen and the HHL (led by Katrina & Shayenna) are committed to creating space(s) and supporting the development of content created by local indigenous communities and residents.

**Please reach out if you have ideas!**

**Connect with nature, even through art:** We know that this time of isolation and uncertainty can be very difficult. Take some time to de-stress by colouring in this amazing artwork by Christi Belcourt from her painting titled 'Joy.' **Share your work on our Facebook page and follow along for activities and prizes to be won.**





**On the importance of Water:** This beautiful artwork is by local Bkejwanong artist Baashkooniingad Kwe (Mariah Alexander). This colouring page was created for a NinDaWaabjig colouring book celebrating the importance of water. Stay tuned for more original artwork by this talented artist!





How do you like to learn things?

- Learn from Elders
- Hands on learning
- Learning Animations Legends & Stories
- Visual dual coding
- Watch then try it out!
- Place based Learning Outdoor Ed
- Experience & Practice with the team
- Group reflection
- Through stories
- Doing hands on explore & experiment
- Through conversation

**Lab** on Facebook or Twitter.

**2019** ●  
Initiate trust-based relationships from the beginning to enhance and increase understanding, capacity and capability in monitoring and habitat restoration.

**2021** ●

Sustain and strengthen trust-based partnerships. Co-develop, implement and assess best management practices with stakeholder groups and partners at WIFN.

**2023** ●

- Continued mapping and removal of invasive plants.
- Ongoing habitat restoration.
- Ongoing community engagement, participation and training.
- Assessment and reporting of project deliverables and development of sustainability plan.

## Implementation & Evaluation of Recovery Actions for Aquatic Species at Risk in the Lower Great Lakes Watershed

**2019**

Hire support staff to assist in the planning and implementation of project deliverables, including local knowledge holders.

**2020**

Removal of invasive plants in Swan Lake Marsh. In-stream and riparian garbage removal. Construction and installation of 2 erosion control structures. Removal of 3 in-stream blockages. Monitoring and assessment of areas where *Phragmites* removed previously.

**2022**  
Co-develop resources for community and practitioners in evaluation of habitats and planning of restoration activities and biomonitoring.

2019  
2023

A multi-year grant has been approved to implement recovery actions for at-risk fish and mussel species in the lower Great Lakes watershed, with a special focus on Bkejwanong species-at-risk (SAR) habitats. Over the next 3 years, HHL will join other research teams and practitioner groups across the lower Great Lakes and throughout Bkejwanong to implement high-priority recovery activities like the ones detailed above. Community engagement, participation and training are core elements of the HHL and Walpole Island Land Trust's project deliverables.