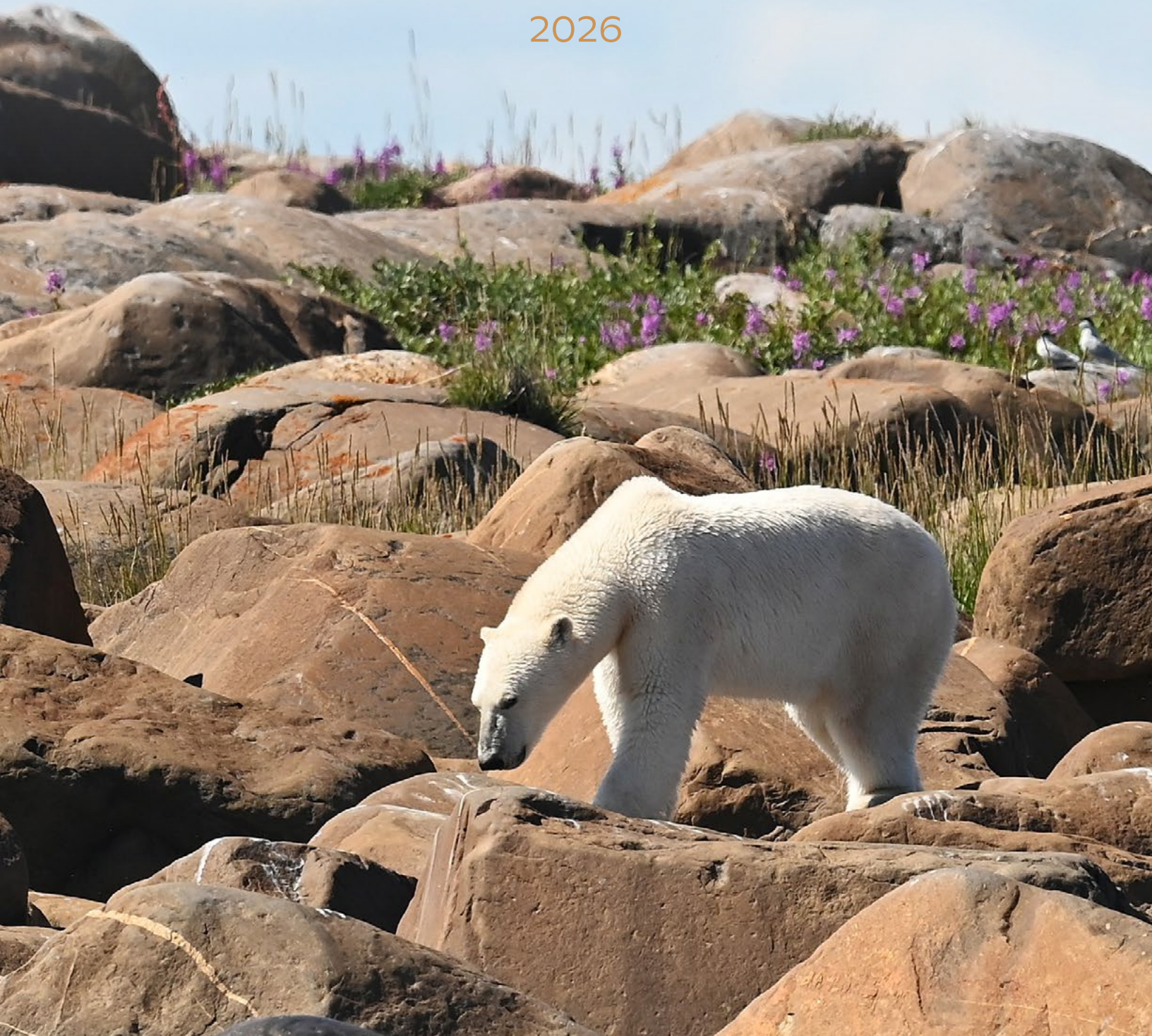
Weston Family Foundation

Weston Family Awards in Northern Research

2026



Weston Family Foundation

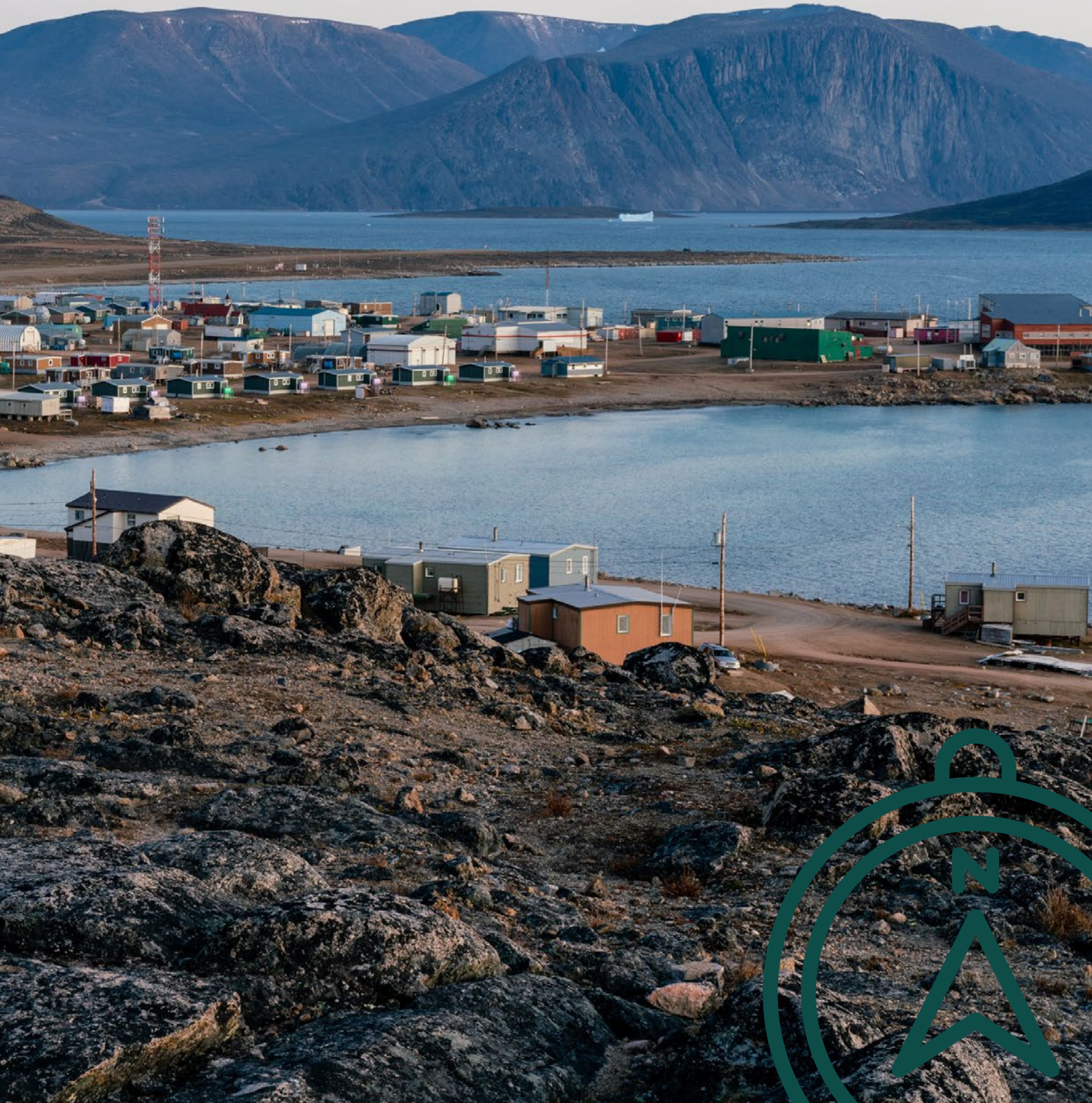
The Weston Family Awards in Northern Research were established in 2007 with the goal of investing in early-career northern researchers whose work aims to protect and restore northern biodiversity in Canada. Since their inception, the Awards have supported over 400 researchers from more than 40 academic institutions. Research projects have taken place across the country and have focused on many diverse species of flora and fauna.

These annual Awards are considered some of the most generous and prestigious in the country for students who are pursuing a master's degree, doctoral degree, or postdoctoral fellowship in northern natural sciences. Weston Family Northern Scholars are part of a growing community of researchers who collaborate with northern and Indigenous communities to co-design research that is both locally meaningful and globally relevant. Their work encompasses fields of study like biodiversity, oceanography, glaciology, geography, and environmental science.

We proudly introduce and showcase our 2026 award winners in this document. At a time of rapid environmental change across northern Canada, these researchers' novel, timely, and important projects are at the forefront of knowledge creation around northern biodiversity, deepening our understanding of the interconnected ecosystems, species, and communities that support life in the North.

Master's Level

2026 Weston Family Northern Scholars



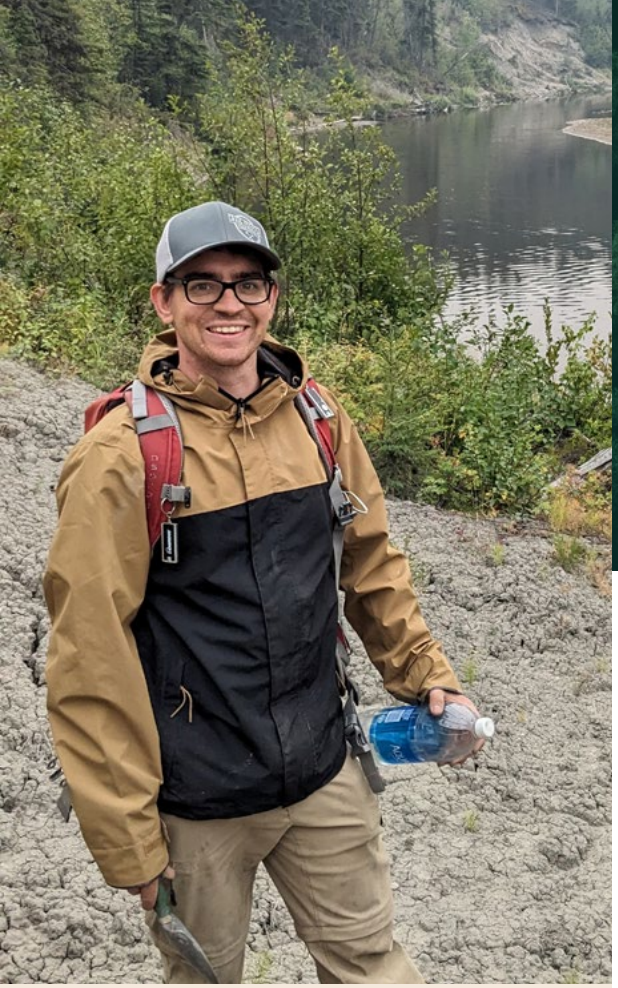
Alexandre Beauchemin

University of British Columbia | Master's

> Field experience in Qikqitaruk–Herschel Island Territorial Park sparked my interest in understanding how climate change is reshaping relationships between plants and pollinators in tundra ecosystems.

Alex is an MSc student in the Team Shrub research group at the University of British Columbia. Driven by an interest in climate change ecology, he first got involved with ecological research in the Inuvialuit Settlement Region during his undergraduate studies when he joined Team Shrub as a field assistant and thesis student on Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) on the Yukon North Slope. Field experience on Qikqitaruk sparked his interest in understanding how climate change is reshaping relationships between plants and pollinators in tundra ecosystems. His current research examines how climate and landscape heterogeneity structure plant-pollinator interactions across Arctic and alpine tundra in the Yukon.

As northern ecosystems experience rapid climate change, the timing of plant flowering and insect activity is shifting. If these shifts occur at different rates, insect pollinators such as bumblebees may face declines in food availability. Alex is using time-lapse imagery and passive acoustic monitoring to track plant flowering and bumblebee activity in relation to climate in tundra landscapes. In partnership with Yukon Parks and other co-managing bodies of Qikiqtaruk, his work will help understand how climate change is impacting northern regions and inform the management and conservation of tundra ecosystems in the Yukon.



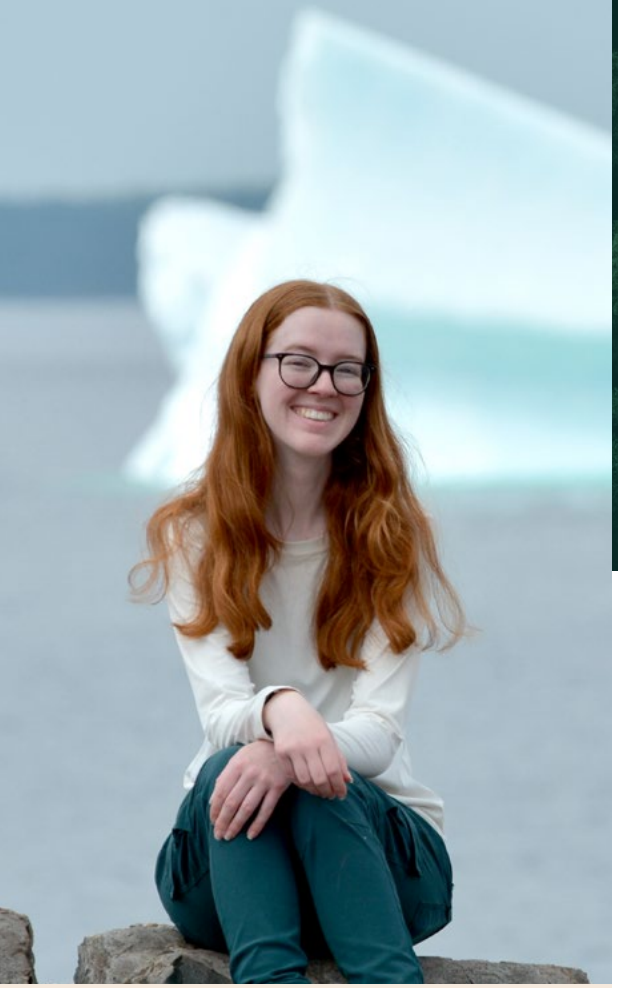
William Bender

Wilfrid Laurier University | Master's

William currently lives in Southern Ontario, but developed a love for the North after visiting family in Pangnirtung, Nunavut. During his undergraduate studies, he spent a summer working with the Northwest Territories Geological Survey (NTGS) in Yellowknife, mapping thermokarst landforms throughout the territory. He is now working towards his MSc in geography at Wilfrid Laurier University in partnership with the NTGS, conducting research in the Dehcho Region of the Northwest Territories to better understand how climate change is affecting the riverbank slope stability of the Mackenzie River, the longest and largest river in Canada.

Communities along the Mackenzie River have recently grown concerned about the rising rates of landsliding along the riverbanks, which negatively affects regional infrastructure and ecosystems, as well as residents' health, well-being, and livelihoods. Working alongside the Łíídlı̨ı̨ Kų́ę́ First Nation Land Guardians, Will's fieldwork has identified permafrost thaw as a potential main driver of slope failure. By combining this fieldwork with remote sensing, his research investigates the relationship between climate change and thaw-driven landsliding along the Mackenzie River.

> Communities along the Mackenzie River have recently grown concerned after observing increased rates of landsliding along the riverbanks which can negatively affect the region's infrastructure and ecosystems, in addition to its residents' health, well-being, and livelihoods.



Emily Cornthwaite

University of Guelph | Master's

Emily is a master's student in integrative biology at the University of Guelph and has always been interested in wildlife, specifically their health and conservation. During her undergraduate degree at Carleton University, Emily completed multiple research projects, during which she developed a passion for wildlife research and fieldwork. This passion led her to her current position, where she investigates factors impacting parasitism in wild caribou.

Caribou are both a culturally and ecologically important species in Canada and are currently in decline. Although caribou populations face many threats, Emily investigates the impact of parasitism on these already vulnerable populations. By tracking caribou on Fogo Island, Newfoundland, Emily participates in a long-term monitoring program, collecting non-invasive samples to quantify parasitism in individuals. She aims to determine the number and types of parasites in the Fogo Island caribou population and how this varies seasonally. Her work contributes to our understanding of how parasitism can interact with other factors to impact caribou resilience, with implications for other populations across northern Canada. Emily hopes this work creates a stronger understanding of caribou health and informs how we can best protect this ecologically important species.

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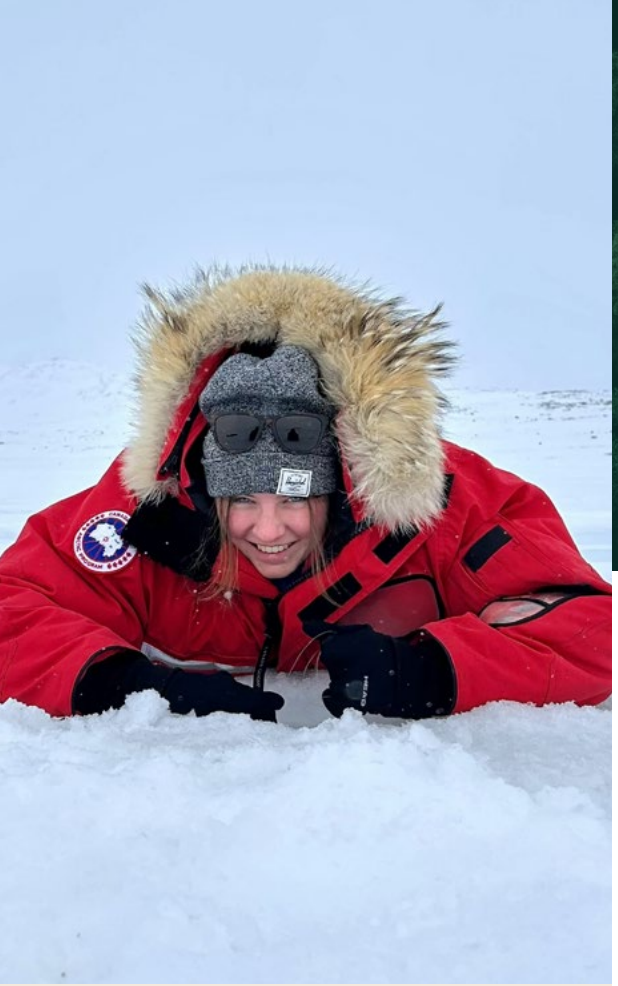

Sibley Duckert

University of Calgary | Master's

Sibley is a master's student in environmental microbiology at the University of Calgary. Growing up in Thunder Bay, she developed an appreciation for northern ecosystems through canoeing, kayaking, and backpacking. While pursuing her bachelor's degree at the University of Guelph, Sibley became interested in the role microorganisms play in maintaining ecosystem health and remediation of contaminated environments.

In 2020, a diesel spill in Postville, Nunatsiavut introduced toxic contaminants into the marine ecosystem and consequently, sources of traditional food. In collaboration with the Nunatsiavut Government, Sibley's master's thesis addresses community concerns about the impacts of diesel spills on Nunatsiavut waters. Working in the fjords of the Torngat Mountains National Park, an area where community members hunt, fish, and connect with their land, she investigates the diversity of marine microorganisms and their response to diesel contamination across the varying seasons of the North. Rooted in respect for community priorities and values, Sibley's project depends heavily on Nunatsiavummiut (the people of Nunatsiavut) for their knowledge of the land, ocean, and culture. By integrating Inuit Knowledge and western science, Sibley's research will provide tangible, beneficial outcomes that support marine conservation, oil spill preparedness, and the protection of culturally significant marine ecosystems in Nunatsiavut.

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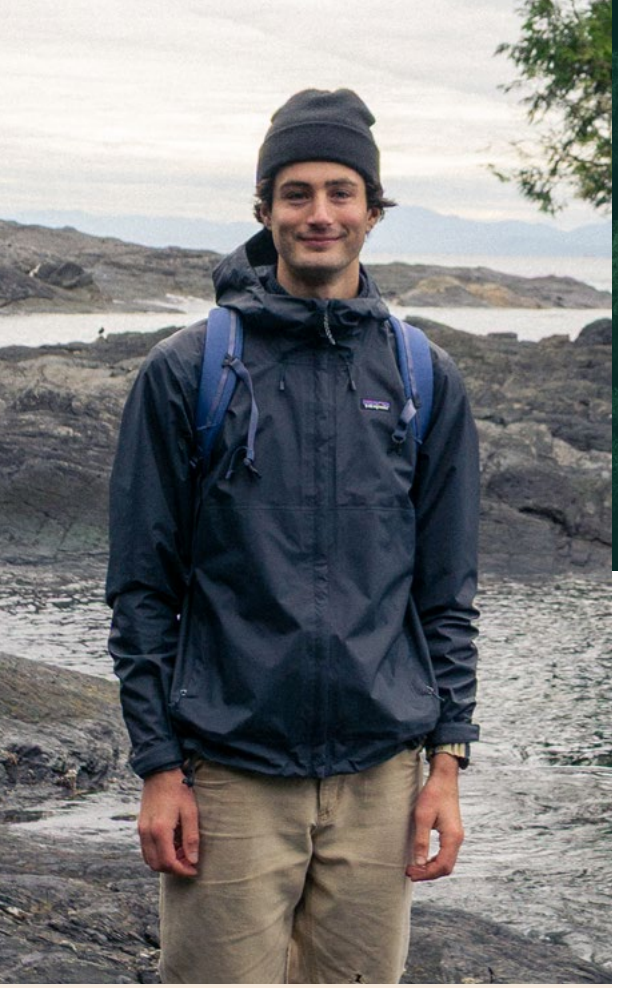

Alexi Ebersole

University of British Columbia | Master's

Alexi grew up on the west coast of the United States before moving to Vancouver, and has always been inspired by the ocean. He will take any opportunity to dive in and connect with its rich diversity of creatures and habitats. Alexi was first introduced to seagrasses during a research fellowship with the US Environmental Protection Agency where he helped run mesocosm experiments and grew fascinated with these marine plants. Now at the University of British Columbia, Alexi is a master's student of Zoology working with the O'Connor Lab in the Biodiversity Research Centre.

Alexi's research is part of a collaborative and Cree-driven project focused on understanding the factors limiting seagrass recovery in Eeyou Istchee, eastern James Bay. Seagrasses support complex coastal ecosystems that host productive and diverse food webs and strengthen coastlines by trapping and retaining sediments. Seagrasses and the ecosystem services they provide are declining globally and competition from excessive algae accumulation is a frequent stressor. Alexi hopes to understand the role that algae play in the recovery of eelgrass and provide Cree-decision support and recommendations into eelgrass restoration in the region.

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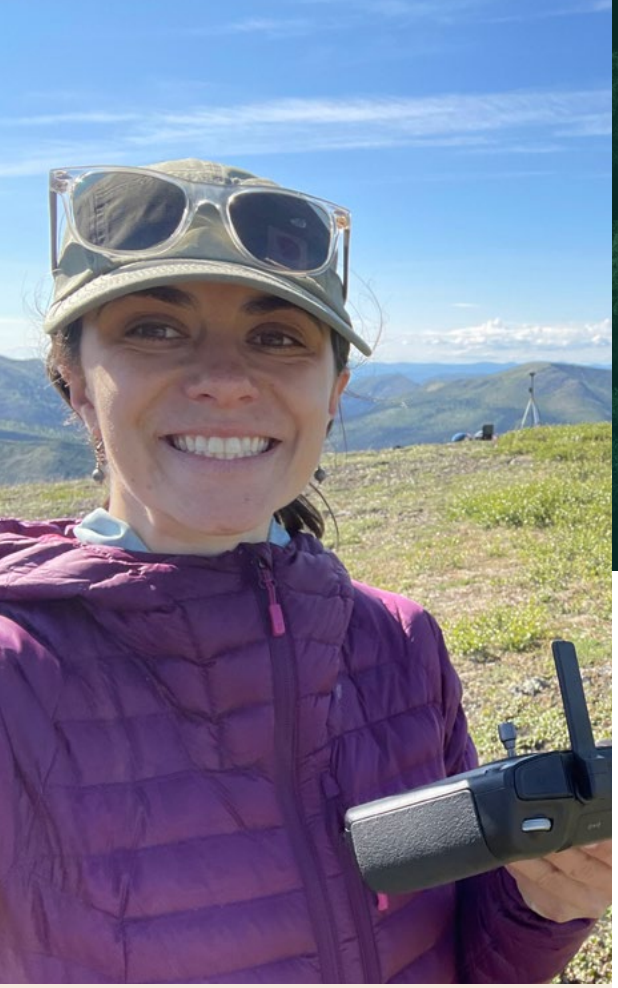

Claire Ethier

University of British Columbia | Master's

Claire grew up in British Columbia where she developed a deep love and appreciation for the forests, coastlines, and mountains throughout the province. Her desire to work in these ecosystems led her to study biology at the University of Victoria. After working in several research positions, Claire is thrilled to pursue her MSc in ecology as part of the Team Shrub research group at the University of British Columbia.

Claire's research takes place within Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Traditional Territory, across central Yukon and Alaska. She is studying climate-driven vegetation changes as a driver of Fortymile caribou habitat fragmentation. Pronounced warming at northern latitudes is facilitating the expansion of shrubs to higher elevations and latitudes. Young, low-stature shrubs offer high-quality forage in the summer but develop anti-herbivore compounds like tannins and fibre as they mature. Moreover, shrubs growing taller and at high densities may create movement impediments and obstruct line-of-sight critical for predator detection. In this context, a conservation concern is whether caribou are avoiding shrub patches due to real and perceived risk. Claire is pairing repeat drone surveys and remote sensing products with GPS radio collar data to build resource and step selection functions to predict habitat connectivity throughout the Fortymile caribou range.

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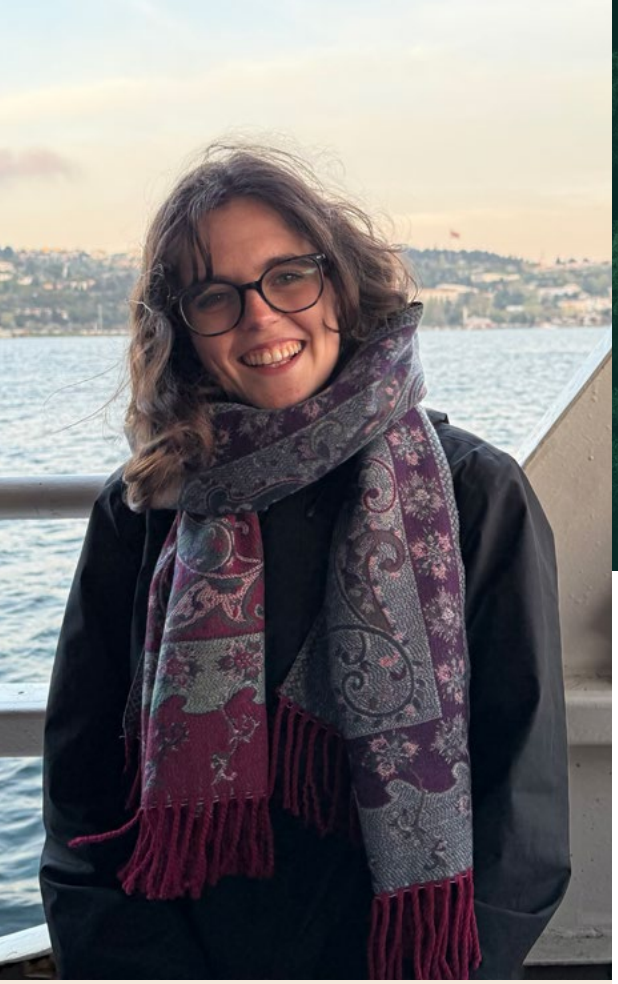


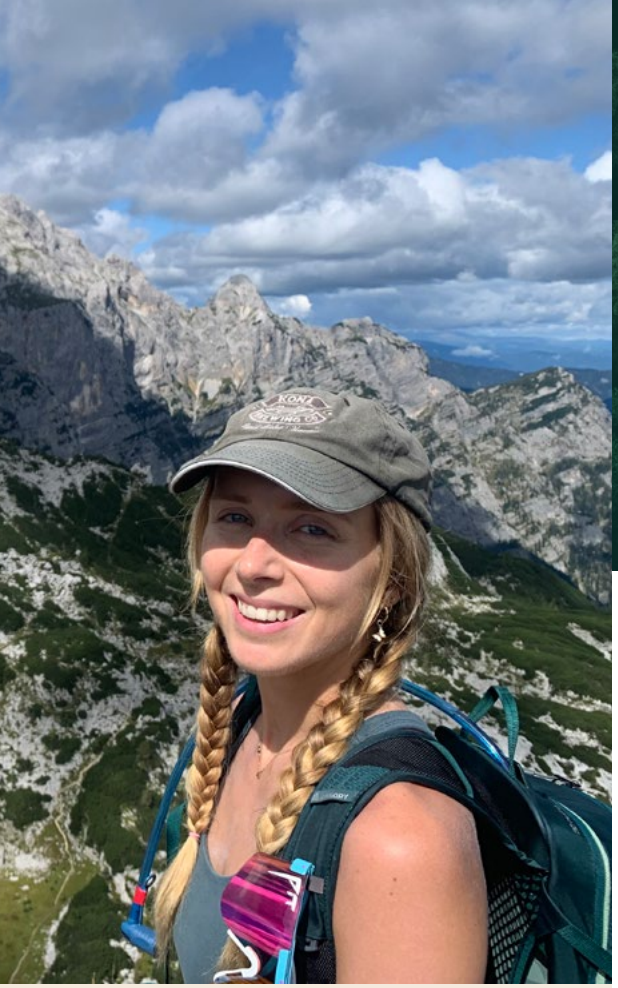
Olivia Locke

Queen's University | Master's

Starting out in astrophysics, Olivia came to realize that the most interesting planet is our own. She became interested in hydrogeology and the importance of groundwater to communities, and has come to appreciate the diverse field of groundwater science in northern Canada. Olivia is currently a master's student in the Civil Engineering Department at Queen's University, where she works with Dr. Stephanie Wright's research group and the Tłı̨chǫ Government to investigate the impact of permafrost thaw on groundwater recharge and its connection to the increased flow of Tstìdeè (La Martre River). This river is increasing in discharge more than any other gauged catchment in the Northwest Territories, affecting traditional travel routes and fish populations.

> As permafrost thaws, it no longer acts as a barrier to groundwater flow, increasing connectivity between surface and groundwater systems and affecting broader ecosystem equilibriums.

As permafrost thaws, it no longer acts as a barrier to groundwater flow, increasing connectivity between surface and groundwater systems and affecting broader ecosystem equilibriums. Yet rates and patterns of change are inconsistent between sites, and fractured bedrock landscapes remain understudied compared to other landcovers. Olivia's research aims to characterize the distribution of permafrost within bedrock outcrops, and model groundwater movement in the Tstìdeè watershed to better understand and predict changes in river flow, helping inform effective conservation measures.



Gemma Macfarlane

University of Calgary | Master's

Originally from Vancouver, BC, Gemma developed an early interest in aquatic ecosystems through her time spent on the water. This interest led her to become a scuba dive instructor and shaped her academic interest in aquatic ecology. Before joining the WildTox Lab at the University of Calgary, Gemma spent three years supporting Indigenous marine stewardship on Vancouver Island, where she designed and implemented several environmental monitoring programs. This experience fostered her interest in holistic approaches to environmental health and strengthened her commitment to community-informed research.

Gemma is now dipping her toes into the freshwater world, as her research focuses on assessing landlocked Arctic char (ᐃᖃᓗᐃᑦ) health in lakes on Melville Island, Nunavut. Her work examines how permafrost thaw mobilizes sediments, trace elements, and legacy contaminants into lakes, and how these environmental changes, together with other stressors such as parasites, may affect Arctic char health. Gemma's research, in collaboration with researchers at Environment and Climate Change Canada, aims to understand how Arctic lake ecosystems are responding to climate change, while addressing concerns about fish health that have been raised by members of the community of Resolute Bay, Nunavut.

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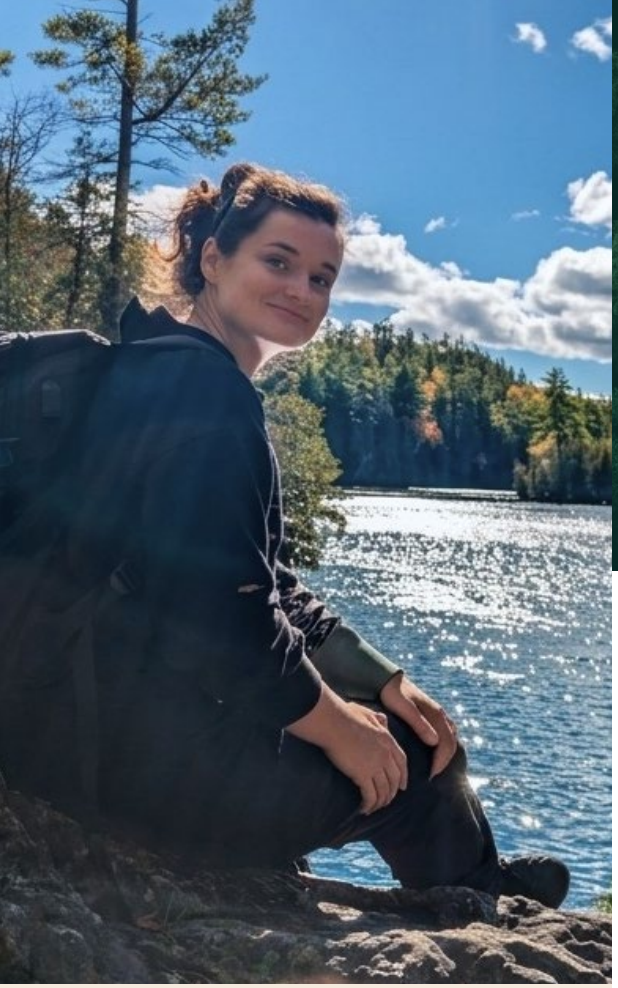

Claire Mercier

University of Guelph | Master's

Originally from France, Claire moved to Canada to pursue her passion for the cryosphere and biology, eventually specializing in polar microbiology. As a master's student at the School of Environmental Sciences at the University of Guelph in the lab of Dr. Jackie Goordial, she investigates the ecological roles of phages (viruses that infect bacteria) within permafrost in the Canadian Arctic. Her fieldwork takes place near Inuvik in the Northwest Territories, on the lands of the Inuvialuit and Gwich'in people, and is conducted in consultation with local hunters and trappers committees and Inuvialuit Environmental Monitors.

Climate change has already initiated permafrost thaw, which accelerates microbial decomposition of soil organic carbon into greenhouse gases. Despite growing research on permafrost bacterial communities, permafrost viral ecology has received little attention. The lack of cultivated microorganisms from frozen soils is a major limitation to understanding virus-bacteria-carbon interactions. Claire will address this gap by optimizing viral isolation methods for cold-adapted microbiota, characterizing a phage-bacteria permafrost model system, and investigating the impacts of viruses on carbon cycling in permafrost. Claire's research will enhance our understanding of the role viruses play in permafrost systems, including their impacts to net greenhouse gas release from these rapidly changing systems.

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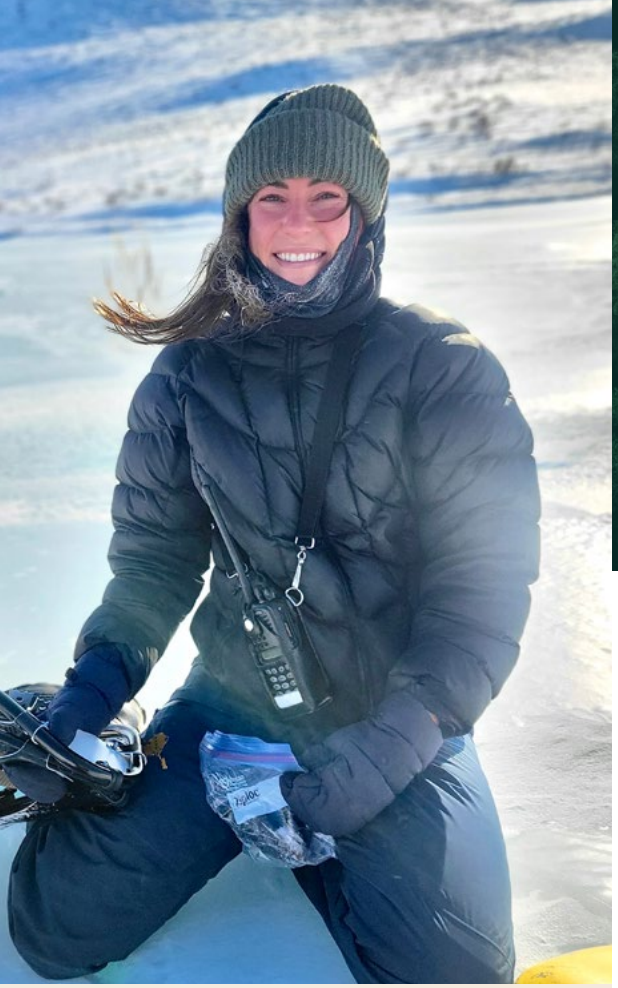


Reanna Newsome

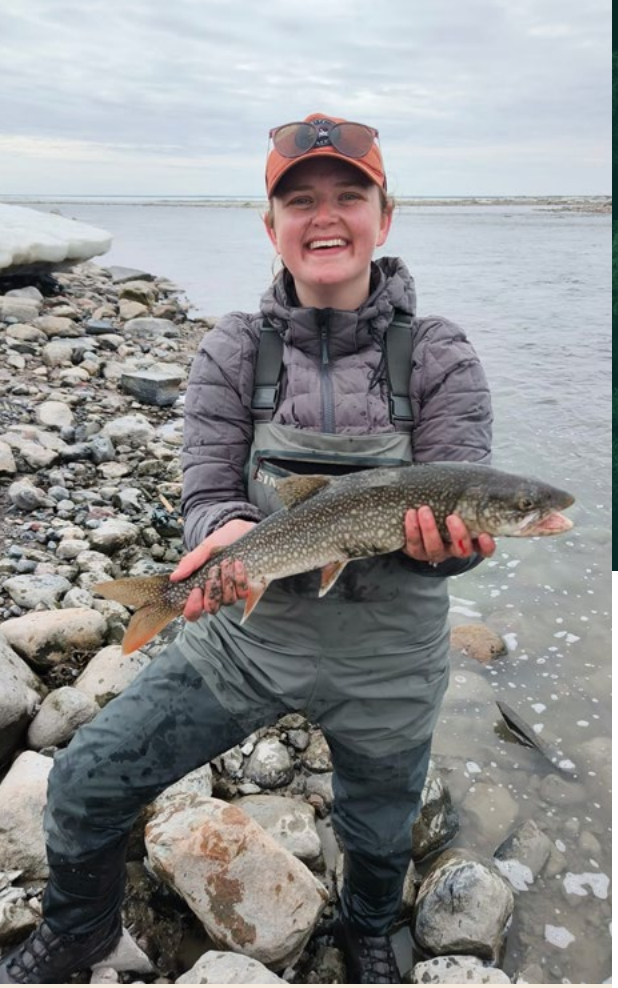
McGill University | Master's

Reanna grew up in the Yukon as a second-generation Yukoner, where she developed a deep appreciation for northern landscapes and wildlife. She is currently a second-year master's student in the Northern Wildlife Knowledges Lab at McGill University and is based in Whitehorse where she works alongside the Porcupine Caribou Management Board and the Yukon government, two key collaborating partners of her project.

Her research takes place on the Yukon North Slope across the summer range of the Porcupine Caribou Herd. This region is experiencing rapid ecological change driven by shrub expansion, increasing moose abundance, and shifting predator-prey dynamics. Reanna's research investigates how these changes influence wolf populations by examining pack size, diet, behavioural shifts, and denning success, comparing these patterns with historical records. To do this, she analyzes wolf GPS collar data, investigates kill sites, and deploys cameras and autonomous recording units at dens.

The goal of her project is to address questions raised by co-management organizations responsible for stewarding the land and the local livelihood surrounding the Porcupine Caribou Herd. Reanna is keen to continue giving back to the community she grew up in and hopes her project can contribute to conservation and management initiatives on the Yukon North Slope.

> "I'm keen to continue giving back to the community I grew up in, and hope my project can contribute towards furthering knowledge, conservation, and management initiatives on the Yukon North Slope."



Amanda Olsen

University of Manitoba | Master's

Amanda was first introduced to northern research as an undergraduate student, when she worked as an aquatic science technician on community-based projects in Rankin Inlet, Nunavut. Through this experience, she developed a passion for fieldwork, particularly in northern regions, while collaborating with local resource users and co-management partners. She is now pursuing her master's degree at the University of Manitoba, conducting her research in the same community she has worked alongside for the past two years.

Amanda's research focuses on the evolutionary history and ecology of capelin along the western coast of Hudson Bay, an understudied region of the species' distribution. Her project examines the genetic history and diet of capelin in the region, contributing to the broader ecological understanding of a species that is becoming increasingly important prey for top predators along western Hudson Bay and other Arctic food webs, particularly in a rapidly changing climate. Amanda looks forward to continuing to work with, and learn from, members of the community where she is grateful to conduct her research.

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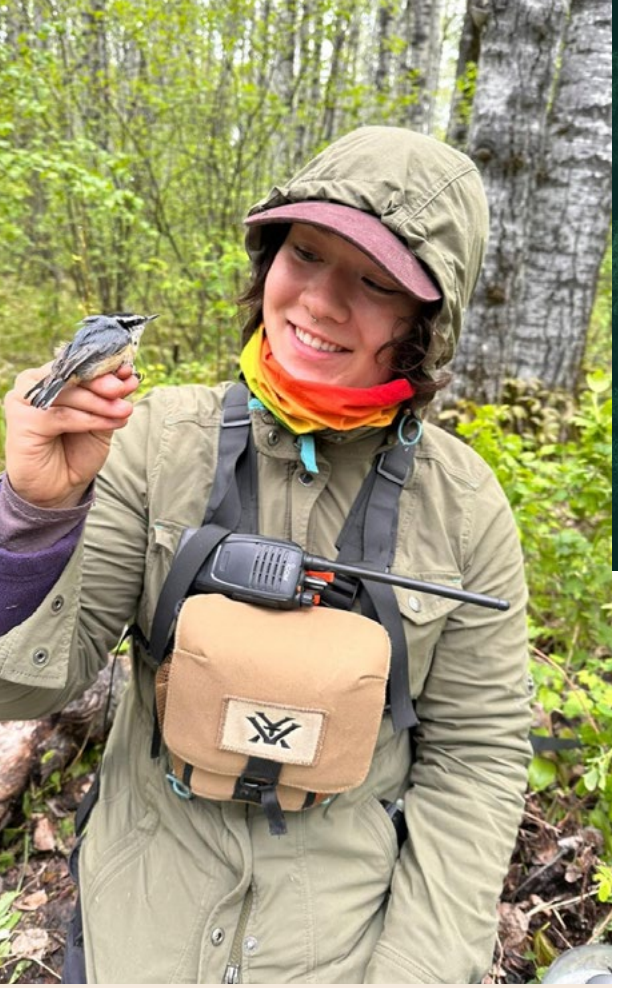

Victoria Redman

University of Saskatchewan | Master's

Tori's interest in boreal migratory songbirds began during her time as a Resource Conservation summer student with Parks Canada at Prince Albert National Park. This experience led to several short-term positions with Environment and Climate Change Canada, where she continued contributing to boreal songbird research in Saskatchewan. She is now a master's student in the Department of Biology at the University of Saskatchewan, using autonomous recording units and DNA metabarcoding to evaluate how forestry-driven landscape changes influence the community composition and diet of migratory songbirds in the Saskatchewan boreal forest.

Tori's research is conducted in collaboration with the Cold Lake First Nations (CLFN) Lands and Resources Team. CLFN is working to establish a protected Ecological Corridor within the Xa Deze (Martineau River) watershed, an area of significant cultural and ecological importance within their traditional territory. Together with CLFN, Tori's work will help to identify habitat characteristics that are important to avian diversity — a critical knowledge need as CLFN works to support land-use decisions that promote biodiversity conservation alongside sustainable forestry. Tori hopes her work will serve as a foundation for a long-term songbird research program in the region, while also inspiring local youth to explore opportunities in biology and conservation.

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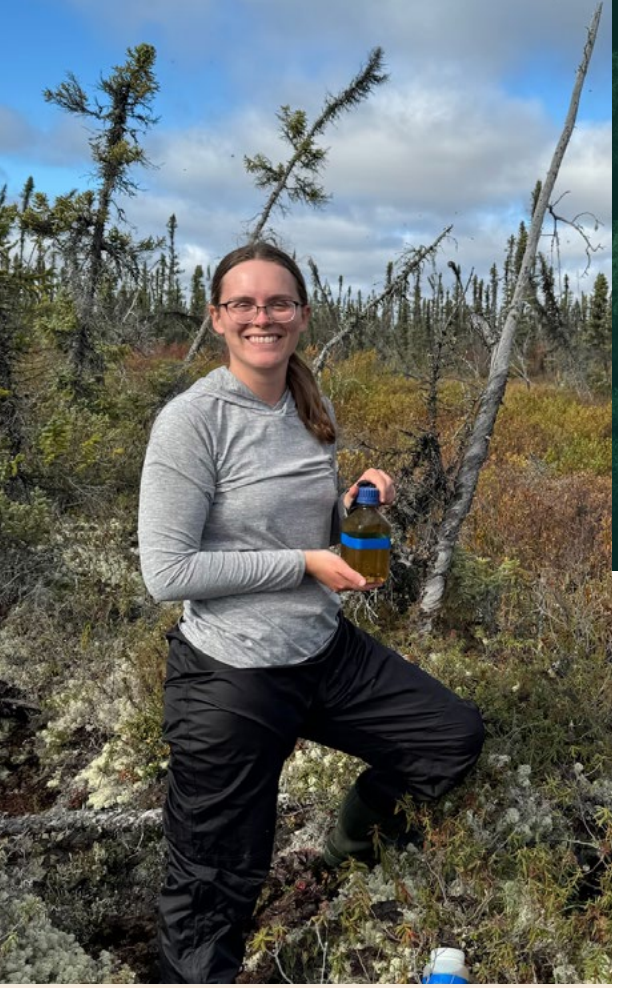


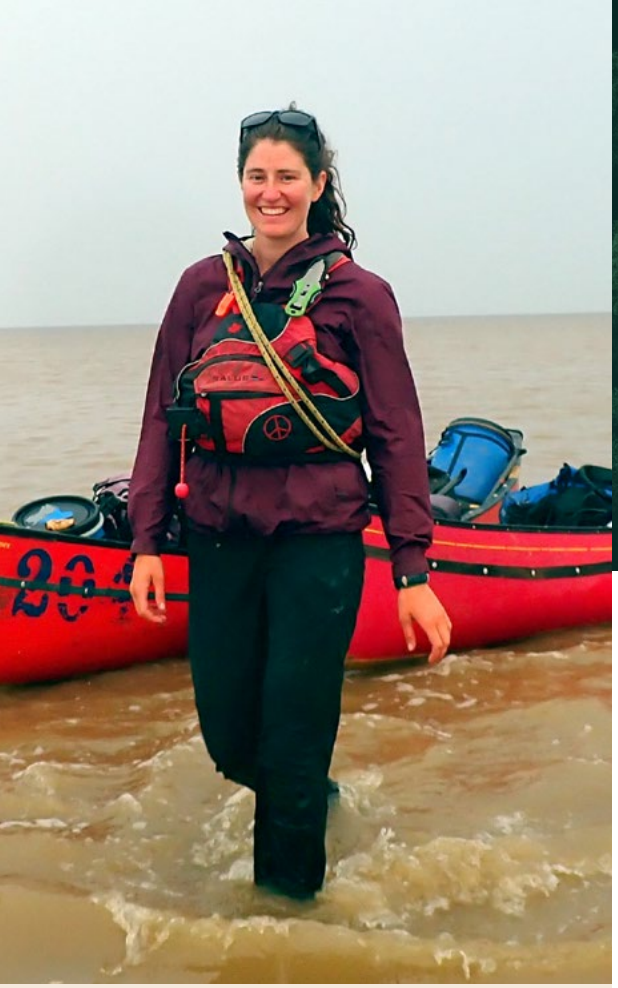
Shelby Robertson

University of Alberta | Master's

Growing up in Ontario exploring the Canadian Shield's lakes and rivers, Shelby developed an early understanding of how water supports every landscape. She also worked for Parks Canada and Environment and Climate Change Canada during and after her undergraduate studies, where she did fieldwork in remote regions in aquatic toxicology.

Shelby is currently pursuing a master's degree in Biological Sciences at the University of Alberta, and her research investigates community concerns surrounding climate change, permafrost thaw, and wildfire effects on regional water quality downstream from the peatlands in the Northwest Territories and northern Alberta. Peatlands, a unique form of wetland, act as a significant global carbon sink. The western Canadian Arctic is warming more quickly than other regions and the organic material the previously frozen peatlands holds is increasingly biologically available. Algal blooms, brownification, and mercury accumulation have been noted in particular as they have human and environmental health consequences. Shelby is excited to work in the North with local communities to improve understanding of these issues and to explore the vast landscapes of the region.

> I conduct research in the Northwest Territories and northern Alberta investigating community concerns surrounding climate change, permafrost thaw, and wildfire effects on regional water quality downstream of peatlands.



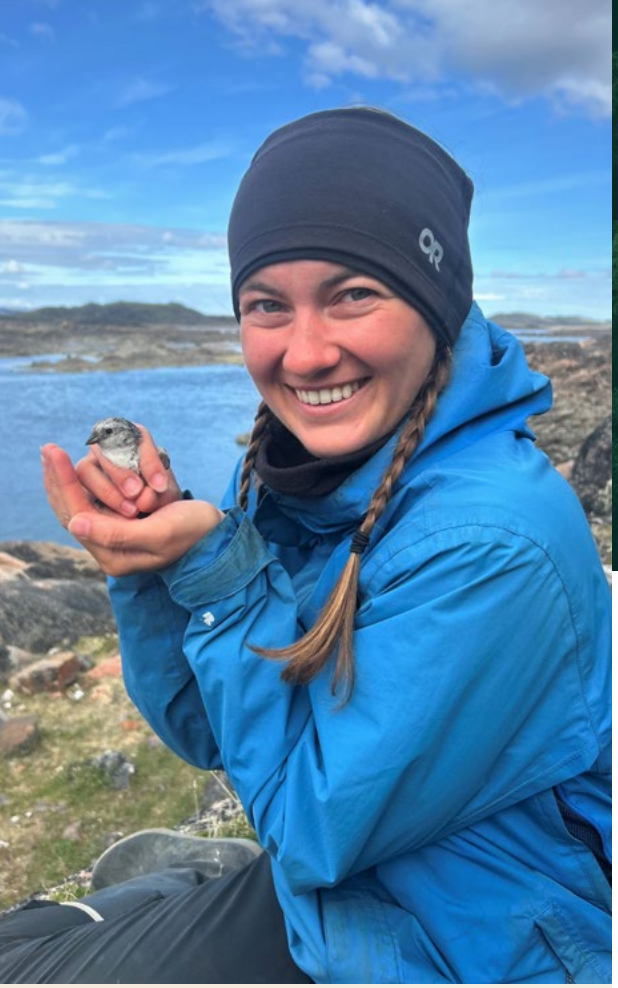
Emma Tutt

Simon Fraser University | Master's

Emma's passion for climate-related research stems from her experiences on multi-week canoe expeditions across northern Canada. She is currently a master's student in the Fire and Ecosystems Research Lab at Simon Fraser University, where she studies wildland fire in peatland landscapes across the northwestern regions of Canada. Her collaboration with Northern Fire WoRx in Fort Nelson inspired Emma to examine burnt peatlands encroaching on surrounding communities.

> With wildfire frequency, severity, and extent increasing rapidly and recent fire seasons setting national and global records, the need for wildfire research has never been greater.

With wildfire frequency, severity, and extent increasing rapidly and recent fire seasons setting national and global records, the need for wildfire research has never been greater. This is especially the case for smouldering fires in peatland landscapes which are transitioning peatlands from globally important carbon sinks to carbon sources. This transition is threatening the role of peatlands as climate regulators and causing chronic air and water quality issues for people, industry, and livestock. Emma's research will model peatland fire risk for different ecozones and peatland types across northwestern Canada with the intent to assess, predict, and better understand peatland vulnerability to fire. By enhancing peatland fire prediction, her research will contribute practical tools for policymakers, industry, and local communities to develop effective peatland fire management strategies.



Elena Tranze-Drabinia

University of Windsor | Master's

Elena started her academic journey at McGill University in Montréal, Québec, where several summer internships sparked a passion for birds and wildlife research. She further explored these interests through an honour's thesis examining metabolic differences between migrating songbirds. After graduating, Elena worked as a lab manager and research assistant at McGill, contributing to seabird fieldwork on Middleton Island, Alaska. This experience introduced her to the unique beauty of the Arctic, and inspired her to continue northern research through her master's studies at the University of Windsor in Ontario.

Based in Iqaluit, Nunavut, Elena's research examines snow bunting heat tolerance limits within the context of Arctic urbanization and climate change. She is specifically interested in how urban microclimates influence investment trade-offs between parental care and overheating as city birds face increasing summer temperatures and rapid urbanization. In collaboration with Lund University in Sweden, Elena is also contributing to a review of existing research on the effects of global climate change on birds, with a focus on knowledge gaps in the Arctic. Through these projects, she uses birds as a way to study rapid anthropogenic change, ecological adaptation, and physiological limitations of Arctic wildlife. Her work aims to optimize conservation strategies, advise climate warming projections, and aid future city planning and development decisions.

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Doctoral Level

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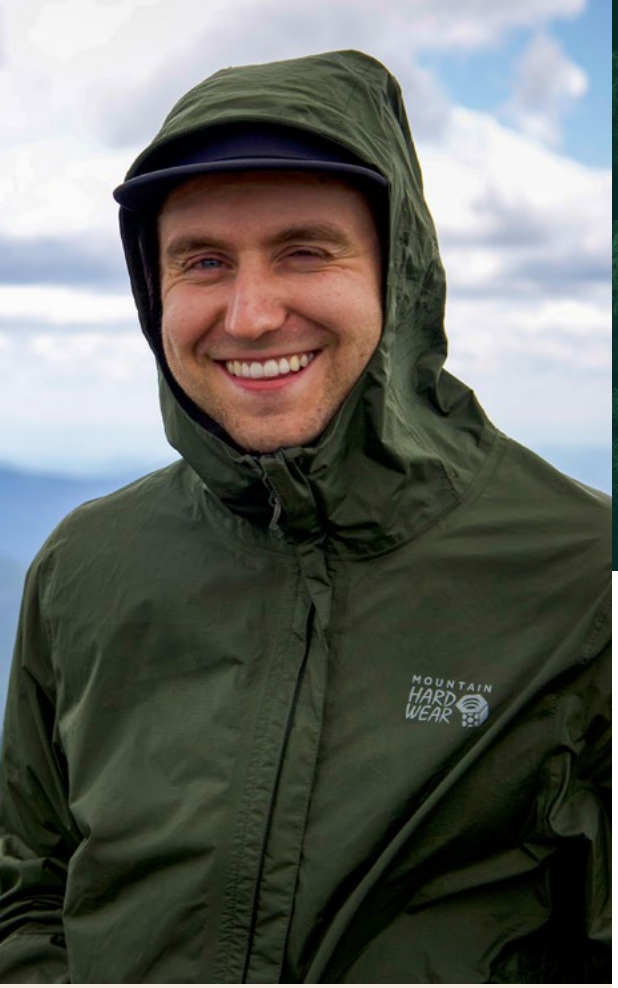

Louis-Philippe Beauchamp

Université Laval | Doctoral

Louis-Philippe is a PhD candidate in biology at Université Laval under the supervision of Jean-Pierre Tremblay and Steeve Côté. He previously completed his MSc in environmental sciences at Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières.

Louis-Philippe's doctoral research is part of Caribou Ungava, a large-scale research program studying the ecology of migratory caribou populations in Québec and Labrador. His project investigates how rain-on-snow events, a climatic phenomenon growing more frequent with climate change, affect the nutritional resources, movement patterns, and population dynamics of migratory caribou. Conducting fieldwork in Nunavik, at Kuujjuarapik-Whapmagoostui and further north at Baie Déception, he uses field experiments and satellite remote sensing to evaluate how ice encapsulation of vegetation impacts forage quality and terrestrial lichen cover, a critical winter resource for caribou. Louis-Philippe's research ultimately aims to support the sustainable management of migratory caribou, a species of deep ecological, cultural, and food security importance to Inuit, Cree, Naskapi, and Innu Nations. Alongside his research, Louis-Philippe leads Holobionte, a science communication project in which he produces short documentary films on ecology research.

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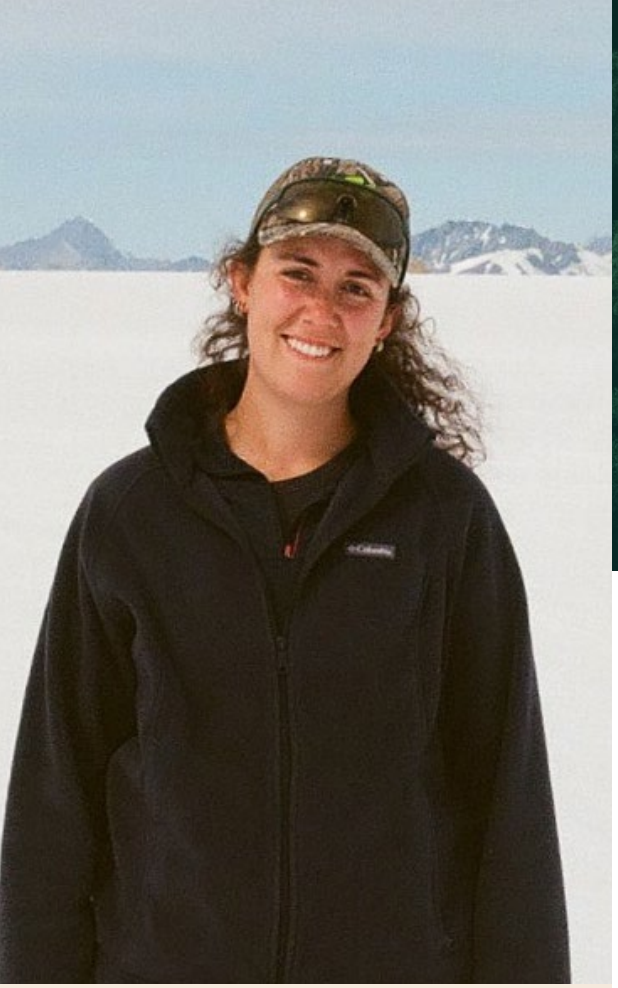


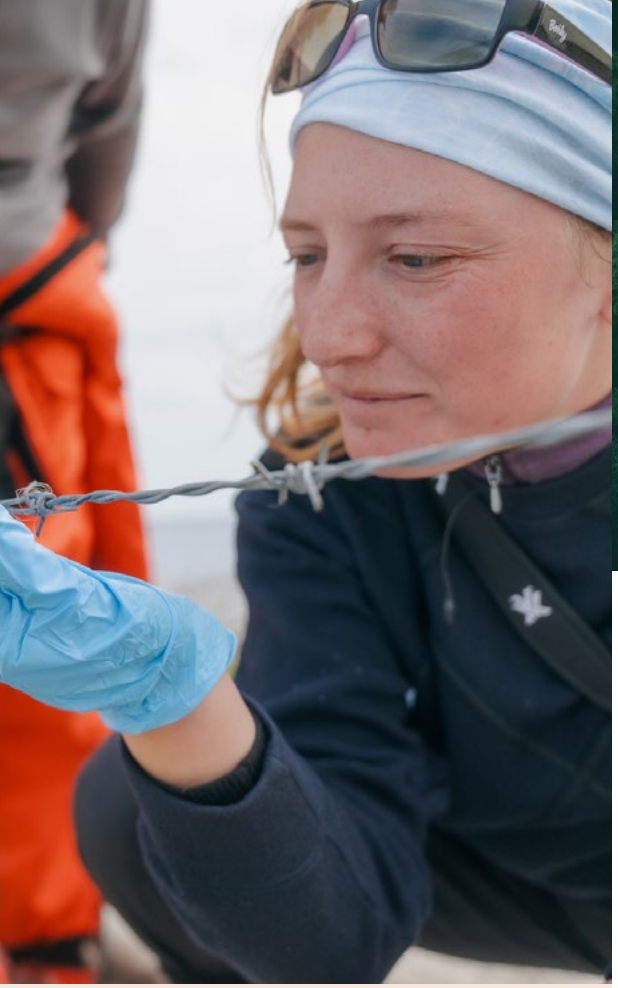
Myriam Cloutier

University of British Columbia | Doctoral

Myriam is a doctoral candidate in the Faculty of Forestry at the University of British Columbia. Her research is driven by her interest in the interactions between vegetation and the environment, and how climate change affects these dynamics. She completed her MSc in biology, where she studied temperate forest tree phenology using remote sensing and deep learning. Myriam now applies these methods to tundra ecosystems in the western Canadian Arctic.

As Arctic temperatures rise, thawing ice-rich permafrost is reshaping tundra landscapes through erosion, altered hydrology, and shifting vegetation patterns. Myriam's doctoral research focuses on monitoring permafrost degradation and its impact on tundra vegetation in the Arctic, in particular on Qikiqtaruk (Herschel Island) and in Ivvavik National Park, Yukon. By integrating field measurements with high-resolution drone and satellite data, she aims to bridge the gap between ground-level observations and regional trends to track changes in permafrost and tundra vegetation across scales. Working alongside park managers and northern communities, her work seeks to improve the monitoring of changes happening in tundra ecosystems to provide a foundation for biodiversity conservation and land-use planning in the Western Canadian Arctic.

> By integrating field measurements with high-resolution drone and satellite data, I aim to bridge the gap between ground-level observations and regional trends to track changes in permafrost and tundra vegetation across scales.



Alexandra Langwieder

McGill University | Doctoral

Alexandra is a PhD candidate at the Centre for Indigenous Peoples' Nutrition and Environment at McGill University. Her research focuses on developing community-led tools in polar bear science and weaving Cree Knowledge with Western scientific approaches to better understand the ecology of the world's southernmost polar bears in the Eeyou Marine Region of James Bay. Alexandra's doctoral work investigates the genetic structuring, foraging ecology, and distribution of polar bears at the boreal-tundra ecosystem transition, with the goal of advancing understanding of the species at the edge of its range. By co-developing research tools with communities, she aims to support Indigenous-led wildlife research and governance.

Alexandra's research is conducted in partnership with the Eeyou Marine Region Wildlife Board and the Cree Trappers' Association. Over the past five years, she has worked closely with research partners in the Cree communities of Waskaganish, Eastmain, Wemindji, and Chisasibi. Through workshops and community-to-community knowledge sharing and training, Alexandra and her partners are now expanding this research to additional communities in the eastern Arctic. Building collaborative research networks across northern communities has been foundational to her work, and she looks forward to the next stages of this project.

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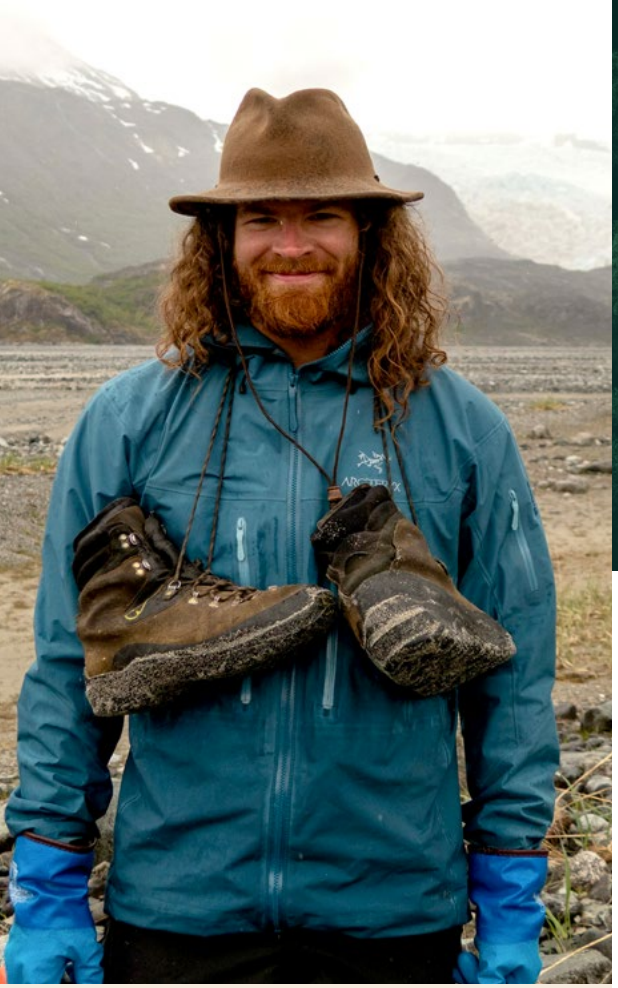
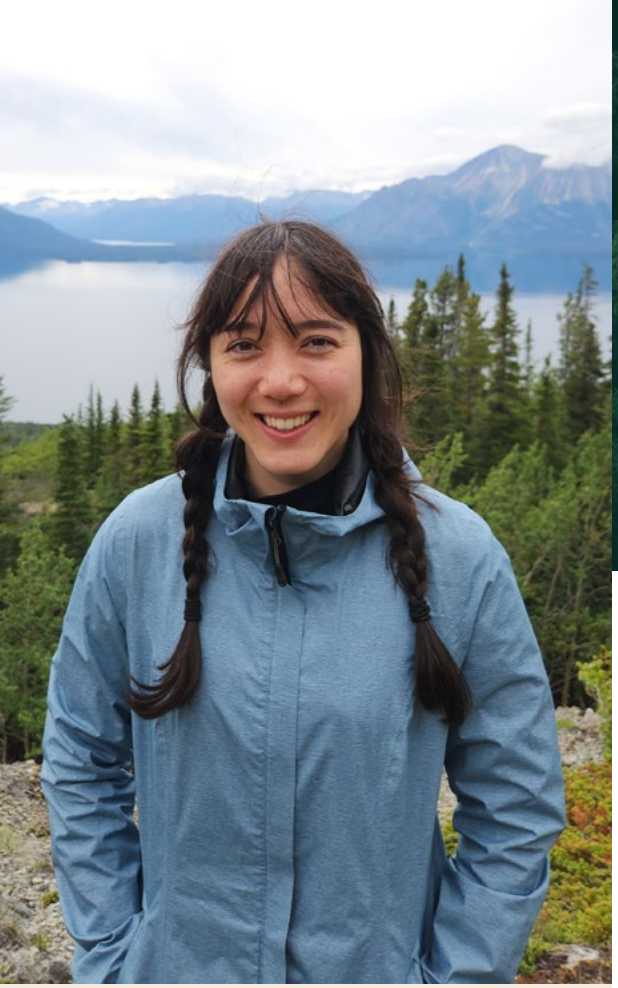


Benjamin Louter

University of Victoria | Doctoral

Ben is a PhD candidate in Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria, where his research focuses on multi-proxy paleoenvironmental reconstruction of the Taku River basin, integrating glacial morphology, early Holocene archaeology, sediment analysis, and geochronology. Originally from Vancouver Island, Ben has spent eight years living and working in Atlin, British Columbia and the Yukon, building deep relationships with the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) as their Heritage and Archaeology Coordinator. His doctoral research draws on isolation pond sediment coring, diatom analysis, pollen analysis, radiocarbon dating, cosmogenic nuclide dating, and archaeological survey to reconstruct how the T'aaku Kwáan homeland transformed as glaciers retreated and seas rose following the last ice age. Conducted in close partnership with TRTFN Elders and Knowledge Holders, under the supervision of Dr. Darcy Matthews and in collaboration with Dr. Duncan McLaren, the research links Indigenous oral histories and place names with geological and archaeological evidence to document ancient human adaptation to rapid environmental change. Ben's work directly supports TRTFN's heritage governance and climate stewardship initiatives, including the T'akú Tlatsini Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area.

> My research links Indigenous oral histories and place names with geological and archaeological evidence to reconstruct how early Holocene sea level rise and glacial retreat shaped ancestral Tlingit settlement and adaptation in the Taku River watershed.



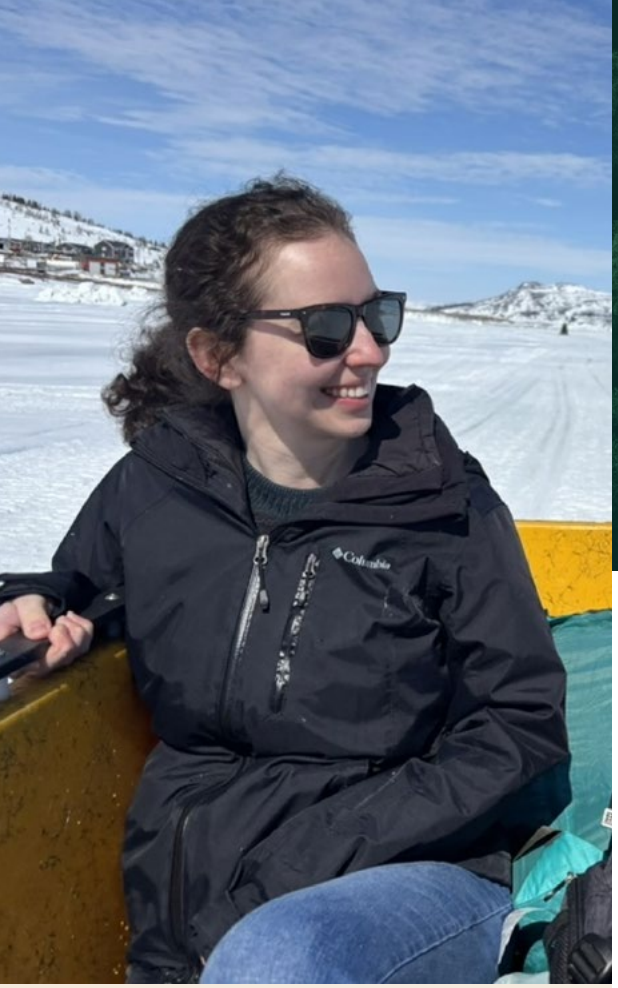
Chantal Lurette

University of Ottawa | Doctoral

> Awe in nature reminds us that we're part of something far larger — one species within a deeply interdependent, interwoven web of life.

Growing up spending time in nature filled Chantal with awe and a sense of place in an interconnected world, inspiring her interest in stable isotope ecology and food web studies. During her PhD in Earth Sciences at the University of Ottawa, she aims to further develop her techniques in compound-specific stable isotope analysis (CSIA) of amino acids and fatty acids. Her research aims to elucidate the role of glacial meltwaters in structuring freshwater food webs in the Canadian sub-Arctic, using Atlin Lake as a focal system, where she is working closely with community and research partners from Yukon University and the Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) Land Guardians.

Her studies will integrate food web sampling and CSIA to understand how species assemblages shift along spatial gradients shaped by varying degrees of glacial influence, how nutritional pathways change as meltwater inputs decline, and how these changes influence contaminant bioaccumulation. This multidimensional approach aims to build a holistic understanding of how climate change reshapes ecological interactions and reorganizes northern freshwater ecosystems. The outcomes of her research will directly support species conservation in northern Canada and provide science-based guidance for stewardship initiatives led by the TRTFN.



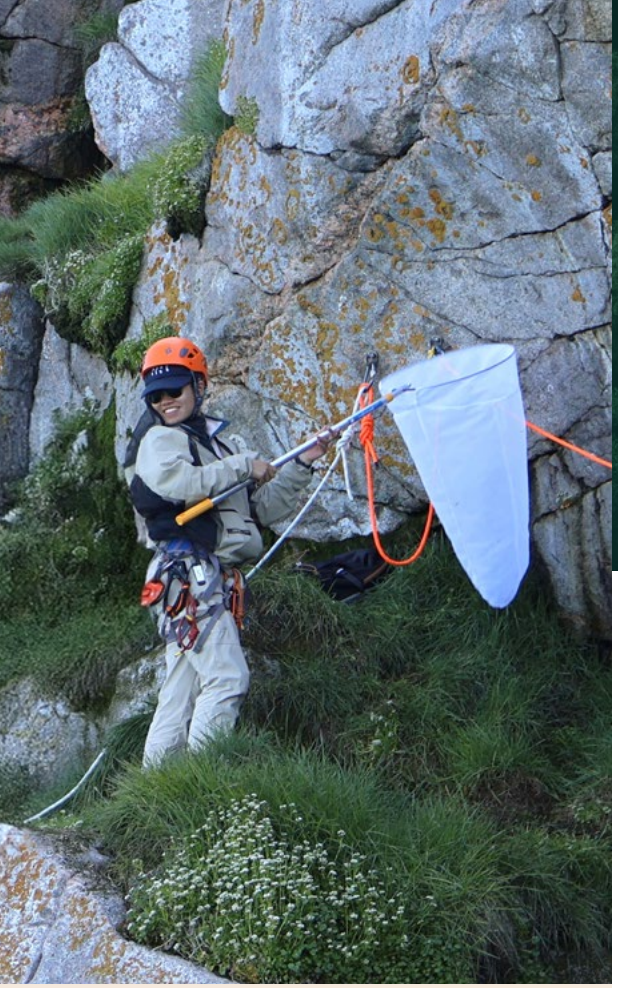
Kathryn Murray

Dalhousie University | Doctoral

Kathryn is a PhD candidate in the Department of Earth and Environmental Sciences at Dalhousie University. Originally from Toronto, she began studying cold-water corals in 2021 while completing her master's degree at Memorial University, looking at the effects of oil/gas exploration and aquaculture on corals of the Northwest Atlantic. Through this, she developed a passion for the research and conservation of cold-water corals, which can be highly vulnerable to disturbance.

Kathryn's doctoral research is focused on the effects of climate change on cold-water corals, with a focus on northern Labrador. With rapid, large-scale shifts occurring in northern regions, including warming temperatures and sea-ice decline, understanding the impacts on habitat-forming animals such as corals is key to supporting healthy oceans. By studying changes in the growth and diets of corals – along with collaborators from the Nunatsiavut Government, Fisheries and Oceans Canada, and Memorial University – Kathryn's work investigates the impacts of long-term environmental change occurring within benthic habitats, the results of which could be used for management and conservation efforts.

"With rapid, large-scale shifts occurring in northern regions, including warming temperatures and sea-ice decline, understanding the impacts on habitat-forming animals such as corals is key to supporting healthy oceans."



Jolie Nguyen

McMaster University | Doctoral

Jolie is currently a PhD candidate in the Avian Conservation, Ecophysiology, and Ecotoxicology (ACEE) Lab at McMaster University working with Dr. Emily Choy. Jolie completed her Bachelor's in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at the University of Toronto in 2023, and started her master's at McMaster University in 2024 where she received the Weston Family Award in Northern Research at the master's level.

For the past two summers, Jolie has lived and worked in the Canadian Subarctic, conducting field research on the impacts of climate change on thick-billed murres (akpa) on Coats Island (Akpatuurjuaq), Nunavut. She is also looking forward to spending the next several summers on Coats Island to continue her PhD work. She works on the island in collaboration with the community of Coral Harbour (Salliq), the Aiviit Hunters and Trappers Organization (HTO), and Environment and Climate Change Canada. Jolie utilizes a variety of biologging, GPS-tracking, and temperature tracking techniques to study how murres experience heat stress with a goal of monitoring how their populations will change in the future.

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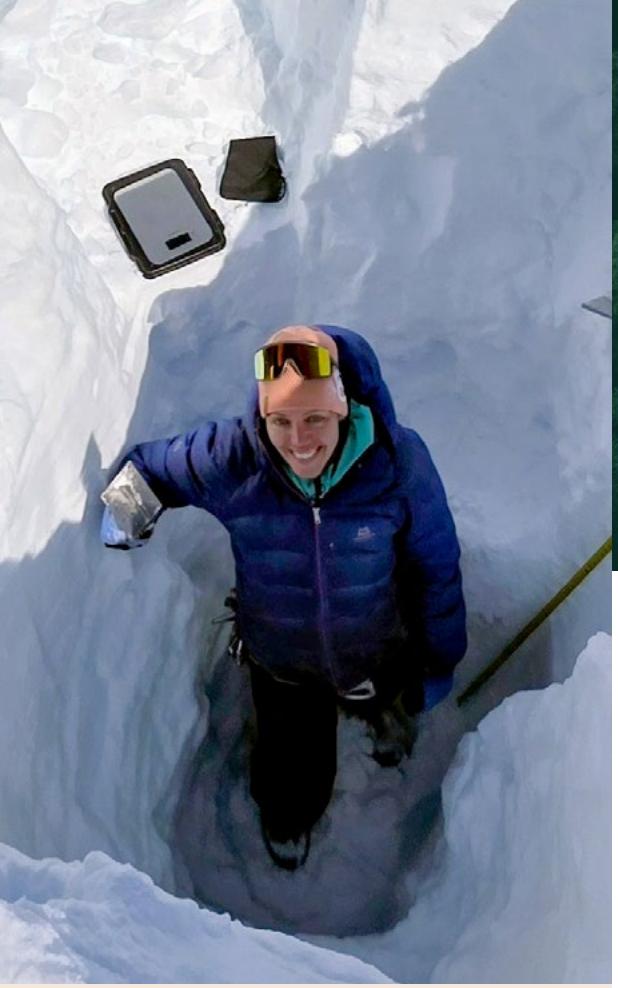


Stephanie Saal

University of Waterloo | Doctoral

Stephanie has called the Yukon her home for the past decade, building her career in applied cold regions hydrology. Through her work with Yukon University and close collaboration with northern practitioners, she repeatedly observed the need for reliable, large-scale snowpack information to support ecological monitoring, flood forecasting, and hydropower management. This gap motivated her to pursue her PhD at the University of Waterloo, focusing on retrieving watershed-scale snow water equivalent using satellite remote sensing.

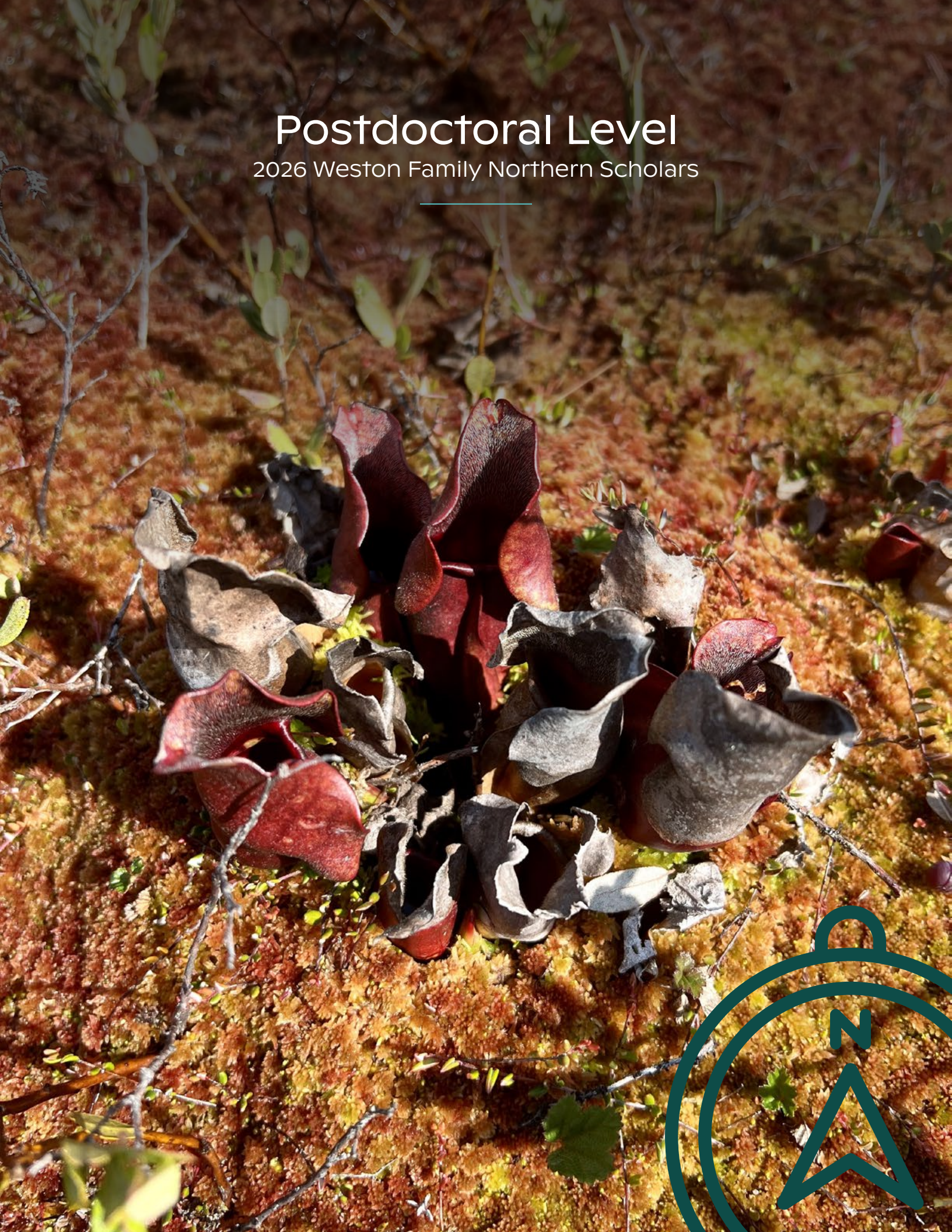
> My work is grounded in locally identified needs for watershed-scale snowpack information to support northern communities and ecosystems.

Her interdisciplinary research is carried out in partnership with Kwanlin Dün First Nation (KDFN) in the Fish Lake and Wolf Creek watersheds. She uses differential interferometry from synthetic aperture radar satellites to track cumulative snowpack development over the winter, enabling landscape scale estimates of snow water equivalent. Together with KDFN, she examines how snow influences key ecological relationships, including the role of snowmelt in buffering water temperatures for cold water fish species and the ways snowpack shapes caribou movement. By advancing methods to map snowpack at landscape scales, Stephanie aims to support community-identified priorities and strengthen understanding of northern ecosystems.

Rooted in the North, Stephanie is committed to research that reflects the land, the people, and the frozen environments she has grown to love.

Postdoctoral Level

2026 Weston Family Northern Scholars



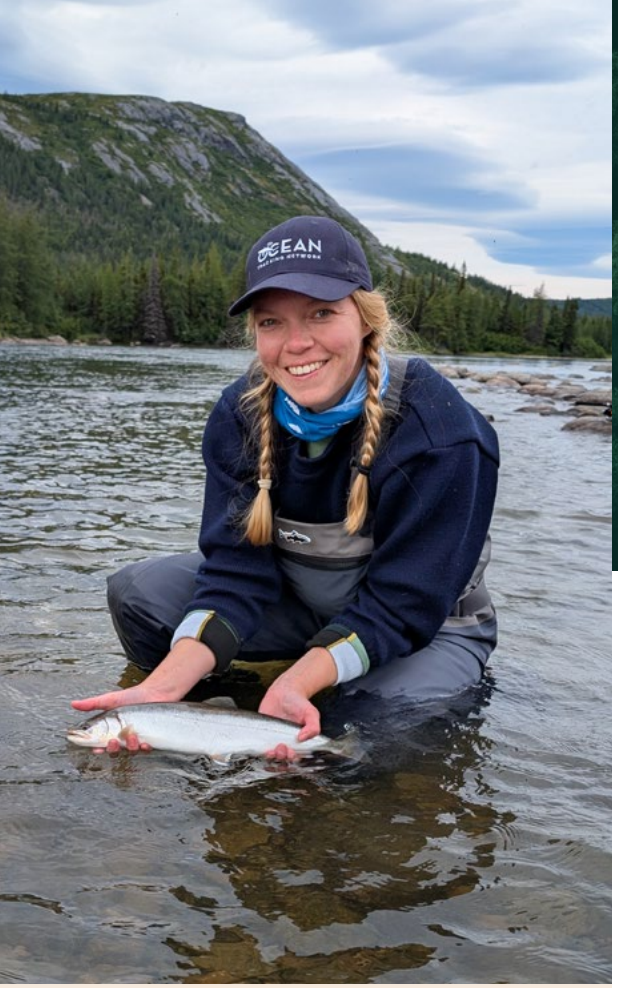
Camille Lavoie

Université Laval | Postdoctoral

> Through science and community partnerships, I aim to strengthen recognition of Arctic kelp forests as ecosystems worthy of long-term stewardship and protection.

Camille completed her PhD in oceanography at Université Laval in 2026, where she studied Arctic kelp forests and their role in supporting biodiversity and ecosystem functioning across the Canadian Arctic. Her research demonstrated that kelp forests are far more extensive and ecologically important in northern Canada than previously recognized, while also highlighting their links to Arctic food webs, coastal communities, and climate-related ecosystem services. Passionate about science communication and northern research, Camille is committed to making Arctic marine ecosystems more visible to both scientific and public audiences, while strengthening recognition of kelp forests as critical coastal habitats deserving greater attention in conservation, management, and long-term monitoring efforts.

As a postdoctoral fellow affiliated with Fisheries and Oceans Canada, Camille will lead a long-term coastal monitoring program based in Qikiqtarjuaq. Working alongside collaborators from Université Laval, the Qikiqtarjuaq Research Centre, the Nattivak Hunters and Trappers Association, and the Canadian Museum of Nature, her project will track seasonal and interannual patterns in kelp growth, carbon and nutrient cycling, associated biodiversity, and ecosystem resilience. Combining scientific diving, in situ ecological experiments, and community-based monitoring, this research aims to better understand how Arctic coastal ecosystems function and respond to rapid environmental change.



Emma Lunzmann-Cooke

Dalhousie University | Postdoctoral

Emma is a postdoctoral fellow at Dalhousie University studying fish movement ecology. Through her undergraduate and graduate research, she developed a strong interest in fish tracking and using acoustic telemetry to support fisheries management.

Emma's postdoctoral research is based in Nunatsiavut and uses acoustic telemetry to track the seasonal movements, survival, and predator-prey dynamics of Atlantic cod and capelin. As ocean temperatures warm, Nunatsiavut waters are becoming increasingly suitable for both species, and cod catches in northern communities have increased substantially in recent years. Despite this shift, little is known about the distribution and connectivity of Atlantic cod and capelin at the northern extent of their Canadian range. By tagging both species simultaneously, Emma's research examines Atlantic cod and capelin seasonal movements, predator-prey dynamics, and whether Atlantic cod observed in Nunatsiavut waters are connected to southern populations.

Emma's work is conducted in partnership with the Nunatsiavut Government, Ocean Tracking Network, and Oceans North, and aims to support ecosystem-based, climate-resilient fisheries management, and strengthen Inuit-led stewardship of northern marine ecosystems.

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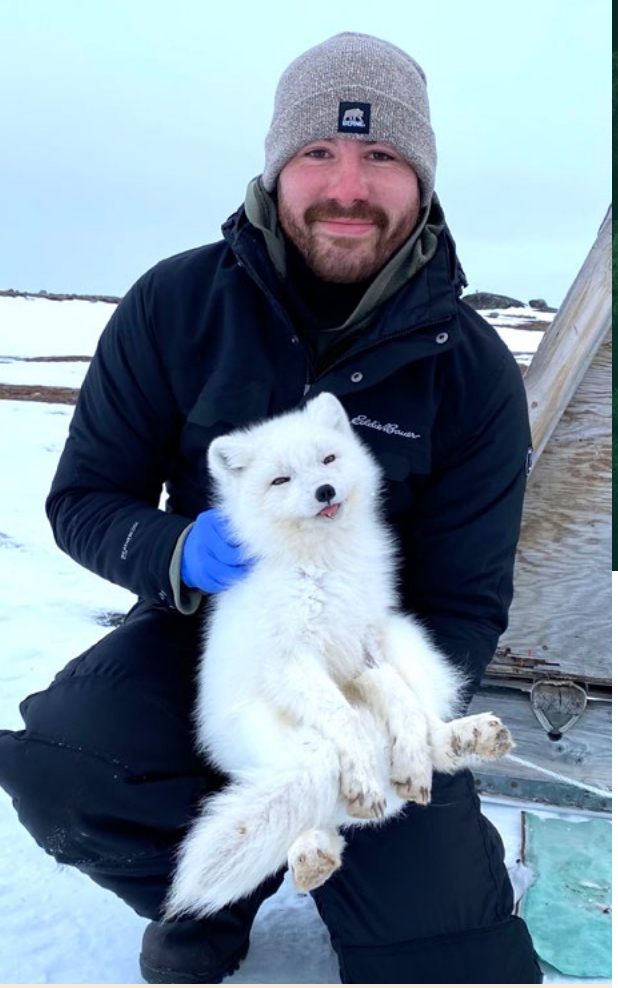


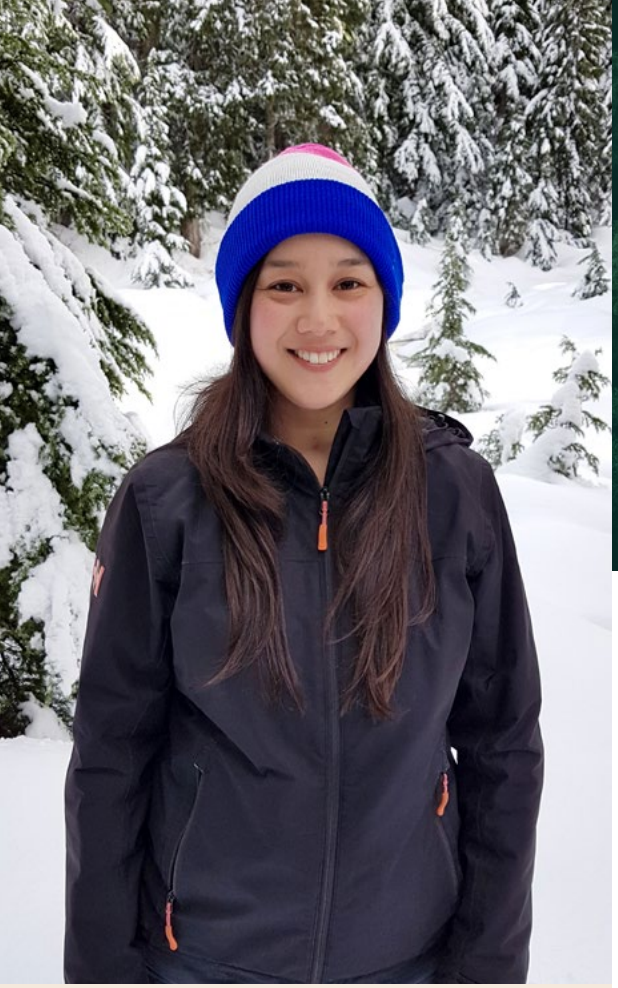
Cody Malone

University of Calgary | Postdoctoral

Cody Malone is a wildlife parasitologist whose research focuses on parasites in northern wildlife and the risks they may pose to human and animal health. Cody completed his PhD in Veterinary Microbiology at the University of Saskatchewan where his research advanced the understanding of the foodborne parasite, Trichinella, including its diversity, host range, and distribution in northern wildlife, with a particular focus on the newly described species T. chanchalensis, helping to inform public health and food safety.

Cody's postdoctoral research at the University of Calgary will apply cutting-edge DNA metabarcoding and hybridization-capture genomic tools to characterize parasite communities in wild ungulates across northern Canada, generating essential data on parasite diversity, zoonotic risks, and indicators of ecological change. This work supports food safety, food sovereignty, wildlife management, and long-term ecosystem monitoring. Cody is also deeply committed to community engagement, regularly sharing knowledge and collaborating with wildlife professionals, harvesters, and northern communities across Canada. His research will contribute important information that will strengthen public health guidance, support safe and sustainable harvesting, and help northern communities adapt to emerging parasite risks in a rapidly changing environment.

> My research generates important knowledge that strengthens public health guidance, supports safe and sustainable harvesting, and helps northern communities adapt to emerging parasite risks in a rapidly changing environment.



Kristen Sora

University of Victoria | Postdoctoral

Kristen completed her PhD at the University of British Columbia's Institute for the Oceans and Fisheries in 2024, where she worked closely with the Fisheries Joint Management Committee and Inuvialuit Game Council. Her research interests broadly center on modelling climate change impacts on Arctic fish species distribution.

Kristen's current postdoctoral research at the University of Victoria's School of Earth and Ocean Sciences was co-developed with the Olokhaktomiut Hunters & Trappers Committee. As part of her postdoctoral fellowship, she aims to examine the climate change impacts on species of interest to the Ulukhaktok community using an interdisciplinary approach. Lower trophic blue foods including algae, aquatic plants, invertebrates, and some fish, can play an essential role in achieving food and nutritional security, and building resilient food systems. The Ulukhaktok Inuit Community are actively synthesizing Traditional Knowledge of species and harvesting activities in relation to environmental conditions to facilitate communication about and adaptation to a changing climate. By merging academic research with Inuit Knowledge in active co-production processes, Kristen aims to bolster the resilience of Arctic communities and ecosystems in the face of fast-paced environmental change.

> "Lower trophic blue foods including algae, aquatic plants, invertebrates, and some fish, can play an essential role in achieving food and nutritional security, and building resilient food systems."

Weston Family Foundation

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MASTER'S

Alexandre Beauchemin
University of British Columbia

William Bender
Wilfrid Laurier University

Emily Cornthwaite
University of Guelph

Sibley Duckert
University of Calgary

Alexi Ebersole
University of British Columbia

Claire Ethier
University of British Columbia

Olivia Locke
Queen's University

Gemma Macfarlane
University of Calgary

Claire Mercier
University of Guelph

Reanna Newsome
McGill University

Amanda Olsen
University of Manitoba

Victoria Redman
University of Saskatchewan

Shelby Robertson
University of Alberta

Emma Tutt
Simon Fraser University

Elena Tranze-Drabinia
University of Windsor

DOCTORAL

Louis-Philippe Beauchamp
Université Laval

Myriam Cloutier
University of British Columbia

Alexandra Langwieder
McGill University

Benjamin Louter
University of Victoria

Chantal Lurette
University of Ottawa

Kathryn Murray
Dalhousie University

Jolie Nguyen
McMaster University

Stephanie Saal
University of Waterloo

POSTDOCTORAL

Camille Lavoie
Université Laval

Emma Lunzmann-Cooke
Dalhousie University

Cody Malone
University of Calgary

Kristen Sora
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