

**Transboundary Grasslands Workshop**  
**January 19-20, 2016**  
**Speaker Biographies**

**Helen Augare-Carlson**

Helen grew-up on the Blackfeet reservation. She attended college at the University of Montana in Missoula, and since returning to the reservation, has worked as the Native Science Field Director at the Blackfeet Community College.

**Orin Balas**

Orin ranches in southwest Saskatchewan. The ranch is located about the same distance from Mankota, Val Marie, and Ponteix. He runs a cow calf operation with most of the calves sold in the fall. The summer range is on the divide north of Val Marie which is all native grass. The area is grazed from May till January depending on the weather. The rest of the year cows are grazed on a mix of native and tame pasture ten miles north. The area will get a chinook most winters so he gets by with some protein supplements and he does not feed bales very often. He sits on a few different boards which all have a connection to native prairie or Species at Risk. He has been involved with Saskatchewan PCAP for many years first as the Stock Growers representative and now as chair. Over this time many PCAP projects have been completed which have expanded the knowledge of anyone who cares about the benefits native prairie provides.

**Kayla Balderson-Burak, BSc. BIT, MSc. Candidate**

Kayla grew up in Red Deer, AB and attended Lakeland College and the University of Alberta where she obtained a diploma in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation and a Bachelor's of Science in Environmental Conservation. She has worked with the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Ducks Unlimited and Alberta Conservation Association. Prior to starting her Masters, she worked for Alberta Environment and Parks in Medicine Hat on sage-grouse recovery efforts. It was this work experience that led her to the University of Regina where she is currently completing her Masters of Science studying the post-release movements, habitat selection and nest success of Greater Sage-grouse that were translocated from Montana to Alberta in 2011 and 2012. In September 2015, Kayla became the Manager of the Saskatchewan Prairie Conservation Action Plan and is very excited to work and collaborate with other organizations that share the common goal of native prairie conservation.

**Kelly Cooley**

Kelly grew up on the family farm east of Pincher Creek, in southwest Alberta, Canada. Their mixed farm operation included part of the native prairie, with a grand view of Chief Mountain and the Eastern Slopes of the Canadian Rockies.

He served as Agricultural Fieldman for the MD of Pincher Creek from 1993 - 2010, managing their agricultural and environmental services programs, including invasive weed and pests,

conservation, citizen technology transfer & extension, equipment rental & maintenance, agricultural & environmental policy advisement, plus safety and administration of these programs. During this time, he served with many local/regional/provincial/national/international agencies, organizations, and community based partnerships dedicated to sustainable land and water management practices.

Kelly established [CoolPro Solutions Environmental Consulting](#) in September of 2010. Kelly and his wife Carrie volunteer for and participate in local recreational sports and community organizations, share a love for music, and particularly enjoy the joys and challenges of raising their four children. They maintain country roots living on 80 acres south of Pincher Creek, currently in hay production.

### **Bill Dolan**

Bill has worked on transboundary management issues for 39 years with Parks Canada and Alberta Parks. He is currently the Land & Resource Management Coordinator in southern Alberta for provincial parks & protected areas. He has responsibility for science, planning, land use and resource management programs.

Bill also has a keen interest in working across borders, removing barriers and advancing shared management challenges. His experience in trans-boundary management includes working with cooperative management structures established under the Inuvialuit Final Agreement, which is a comprehensive land claim in the western arctic. He has been involved in numerous transboundary and large landscape conservation initiatives in southern Alberta over the past 25 years including:

- Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park,
- Crown Managers Partnership,
- Great Northern Landscape Conservation Cooperative,
- Prairie Conservation Forum,
- Waterton Biosphere Reserve and
- Oldman Watershed Council.

Bill has a BScH in Zoology from University of Manitoba and a MScF in wildlife population dynamics from the University of Toronto. He and his wife, Debbie, live east of Waterton Lakes National Park, near the US border.

### **Ian Dyson**

Ian is a geographer and planner with 34 years of experience dealing with integrated resource management, water resources, protected areas, land use, and regional cumulative effects management systems in Alberta, Canada. He is a senior manager responsible for provincial planning integration with Alberta Environment and Parks. His career experiences have focused on building and sustaining partnership approaches to environmental management, conceiving

management systems approaches to address environmental cumulative effects, and facilitating institutional and societal capacity to define and meet common, place-based environmental outcomes across boundaries and borders.

Amongst Ian's diverse career experiences, the most satisfying have been those with a geographical and applied focus - the conservation of prairie and parkland biodiversity, watershed management in southern Alberta, and trans-boundary collaboration in the Rockies. In 1999, Ian was awarded the Alberta Emerald Foundation Award for Corporate and Institutional Leadership and he received the Prairie Conservation Award in 2001.

### **Paulette Fox - Natowaowakohkaakii – Holy Walking Woman**

A befitting name, Natowaowakohkaakii is a member of the Blackfoot Confederacy with familial roots both in Canada and the United States. Paulette M. Fox comes from a long lineage of remarkable Blackfoot people who were strongly connected to our traditional spiritual ways. Natowaowakohkaakii carries on this tradition as a member of the Sacred Horns Society, a Beaver Bundle holder; and she was a former member of the All Brave Dog Society and the Mourning Dove Society.

Paulette is a University of Lethbridge Alum, class of 2005. She received a Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council Post Graduate Scholarship to complete her Master of Science in Environmental Science. She earned her Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Science and Chemistry from the University of Calgary.

Currently she is employed with the Government of Alberta where she provides strategic advice for natural resource related consultation with First Nations and Metis. Paulette continues to work on projects with Harmony Walkers Inc. a Blackfoot owned environmental consulting company. Along with her project team members she traveled to China in 2012 to assist ethnic minority research and capacity to enhance education and tourism outcomes for the Miao and Shui. She works with elders and youth on the linnii Initiative to restore buffalo to traditional lands. Natowaowakohkaakii was instrumental in getting First Nations and American Indian Tribes along the Canada – USA border to sign the Buffalo Treat so as to enhance collaboration and cooperation.

As a leader Paulette serves on a number of boards and committees. She is a seasoned public speaker who is much in demand. She remains committed to coaching figure skating, hockey and power skating. She worked with the Kainai Cadets and Coyotes. Along with her husband and three children, Natowaowakohkaakii lives on the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta.

### **Jeff Nelson BSc, MSc.**

Jeff worked for nearly 30 years with Ducks Unlimited in both the U.S. and Canada, retiring from the organization as Chief Executive Officer at DU Canada. He joined World Wildlife Fund as Deputy Director for their Northern Great Plains program in 2012. Jeff has served on the boards

of the Prairie Pothole Joint Venture, Northern Great Plains Joint Venture, Wildlife Habitat Canada, and Ducks Unlimited Canada.

He leads the Sustainable Ranching Initiative out of the Bozeman office in an effort to secure the future of ranching and while also improving the security and stewardship of grassland ecosystems under management. Jeff also assists with setting strategic direction for the overall program, underpinning it with solid science, and building support from a broad array of supporters. Jeff spends his free time hunting, fishing, hiking, and enjoying the great outdoors with his family.

### **Joel Nicholson**

Joel Nicholson was born and raised in the prairie region of rural Alberta. Living there cultivated his interest in wildlife which led him to complete a BSc (Special) degree in biology and chemistry from the University of Alberta's Augustana Campus in Camrose, Alberta.

He has worked on numerous wildlife research projects in western Canada, as an industrial consultant, and is currently employed by Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development in Medicine Hat as a Senior Species at Risk Biologist. Recent work activities have focused on the grasslands of south-eastern Alberta and include conservation related work on species such as greater sage-grouse, burrowing owl, swift fox, short-horned lizard, soapweed, yucca moth, western spiderwort, tiny cryptanthus, northern leopard frog, and prairie rattlesnake.

### **Peter Swain**

Originally from Montreal, Peter Swain is the new Director for South Region of Alberta Parks, and was most recently the Area Manager for the Cypress Hills. Peter has many years' experience in nature interpretation working as a guide, trainer and manager in the Canadian Rockies and on the West Coast. He has a Master's Degree in Animal Conservation (2007) where he examined the economics of grizzly bear viewing and how it related to conservation opportunities. In his time on the prairies, he has grown to appreciate grass, wide-open vistas and not miss the mountains or ocean so much.

### **Karen Raven, BNRSc, MSc., P.Ag.**

Karen was raised on a ranch in the Southern Interior of BC where she gained her love of the land. Her multidisciplinary education in Natural Resource Science and Masters of Science in Rangeland Ecology and Management has laid the foundation for her current cross-disciplinary work. Karen is the current Chair of the Alberta Prairie Conservation Forum and is the Manager of the Land Use Section in the Environmental Stewardship Division of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Her work focuses on support to regional planning, sustainability initiatives such as the Canadian Round Table for Sustainable Beef and the McDonald's Sustainable Beef project, conservation offsets, biodiversity and agri-environmental stewardship. She is also a member of

the Rangeland Research Institute Strategic Advisory Council and represents Agriculture and Forestry on the Endangered Species Conservation Committee. She has worked in a variety of roles in agriculture, rangeland management and conservation throughout her career. Grassland conservation and responsible stewardship are close to her heart and drive her involvement in the Prairie Conservation Forum.

### **Tim Romanow**

Tim joined the MRWCC in October 2011 as the Executive Director. Tim previously was an Assistant Agricultural Fieldman in charge of Environmental Programming with Cardston County (Formerly Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture, AESA program). Tim's responsibilities revolved around the county's Sustainable Agriculture Program with an emphasis on community initiatives involving grazing and riparian area management as well as stewardship extension programming. Prior to which Tim worked for the Aquaculture Centre of Excellence at Lethbridge College, and ran the Invasive Weed Control Program with Parks Canada in Waterton Lakes National Park.

Tim is a graduate from both the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College with a Degree in Environmental Science, Diploma in Renewable Resource Management, and a Certificate in Fish and Wildlife Technology.

Tim has a background in agriculture, as his family runs a small cow/calf operation near Didsbury Alberta, and races Thoroughbred Chuckwagon's on the Western Chuckwagon Association Circuit in Alberta and British Columbia. Tim lives near Spring Coulee Alberta, has a passion for western heritage, and raises genetically rare or endangered heritage breeds of poultry and fowl.

### **Melissa Weatherwax**

Melissa Little Plume-Weatherwax comes from the Amskapii Pikunii. She was raised near Browning, MT on the Blackfeet Reservation. She is a certified K-12 teacher and has worked at Blackfeet Community College for approximately 9 years. Her experience includes Educational Systemic Reform, developing K-12 Informal Science Programs, and coordinating Native Science Fellowships, for secondary and post-secondary students interested in the geosciences. These programs have strived to implement strong Blackfeet Language and Culture components, to model native ways of knowing in the geosciences.

### **Kelly Williamson**

Kelly Williamson is a forage, seed and cattle producer from southwest Saskatchewan. With 20-years experience as a primary producer, combined with a degree in Agriculture, Kelly uses his experience to practice agrology in the province. His consulting focus is on various agri-environmental projects, always looking towards advancing methods of environmentally sound agriculture, today and into the future. He has kept current with involvement with agricultural

linked boards including the Saskatchewan Stock Growers Association, Society of Range Management, Pambrun Conservation and Development, Old Wives Watershed Association, South of the Divide Conservation Action Plan, Rural Municipality of Whiska Creek.