

36st annual Canoeing & Wilderness Symposium
Northern Travels & Northern Perspectives
Wednesday, February 17, 2021 - 1st Online Symposium

All sessions online.

Wednesday evening, February 17, 2021 from **6:00 - 9:45 p.m.**

6:00 PM - **Erica Bailey & Aleks Gusev**, Opening Remarks

Session I. - 6:45 PM - **Wally Schaber**, Bringing Dumoine's History to Life

Session II. - 6:45 PM - [James Raffan](#), The Legend of Ronnie Bowes

Session III. - 7:05 PM - [Martin Spriggs](#), Coast2Coast Because your Life Counts

Session IV. - 7:35 PM - **Jerry Vandiver**, Wilderness Music

Session V. - 8:00 PM - Four (4) Breakout sessions:

1. **Bob Henderson:** [No Wilderness Superheros](#)
2. **Brian Johnston:** [Connecting with Nature during COVID](#)
3. **Bill Ostrom:** [Fitting your canoe pack for heavy loads](#)
4. **Iva Kinclova:** [Paddle the Territories in summer 2021](#)

Session VI. - 8:30 PM - **Diana Kushner & Stephen Smith**, Enduring Ice Project

Session VII. - 9:00 PM - **Paul Burbidge**, Mackenzie Mountains of NWT

9:45 PM - The End

Presenters and Chairs - 2021 Wilderness Canoe Symposium

BAILEY, ERIKA – has canoed all her life, a gift taught to her immigrant parents by her Poppa – Omond Solandt. She is Lead Coordinator, Career Exploration at the University of Toronto. In her spare time, she is a writer, dancer, gardener, and urban bicyclist. Her book, *Paddling as Place: Experiential Learning of Place and Ecological Identity* – is a narrative research on how canoe trip stories impact and shape people's ecological identity and practices.

GUSEV, ALEKS is the man with a largest family in Serbian community. His close family is over a thousand strong, and extended family numbers few thousands. Aleks managed what no political or church clique managed - to herd over a thousand Serbians without marketing, motivational speeches or pork on a spit - he's an institution!" - Nebojsa Djekic (Mi Magazin).

Past Chair of Wilderness Canoe Association, Editor of *Nastawgan* journal, Director of Paddler Co-Op, and principal organizer of Wilderness and Canoe Symposium, I started paddling late in life and now I'm making up for the lost time with a vengeance. In my "spare" time, I organize popular group ski trips and paddling expeditions to far corners of the globe. I'm passionate about creating magical moments in people's lives.

KINCLOVA, IVA has been enchanted by the Canadian wilderness ever since she arrived in 1990 from the Czech Republic. She is an educator, canoeist, and wilderness enthusiast based in Toronto, Ontario. She has organized a number of canoeing trips in Ontario, Yukon and Nunavut, and led numerous winter camping and ski trips. As a teacher in a Toronto high school, Iva has made it her goal to introduce youth to the enjoyment of nature and the necessity to protect this treasure.

She fell in love with canoeing in the Arctic, and has spent many summers on the land, traveling through various terrains and rivers with her small summer tribe. She practices moving meditation, a technique that helps her connect with herself and the environment.

Iva Kinclova has been a part of the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium for a long time, she gave a presentation on creating next summer's journey, sharing her tips and tricks on how to plan and prepare for a wilderness adventure. She also hosted a breakout session on the "Look-at-me-Wilderness-Super-Hero critique", where she invited

participants to reflect on their motivations and impacts of wilderness travel.

2018, [Creating Next Summer's Journey](#)

2017, [Finding partners for Arctic canoeing journeys](#)

2013, Embracing darkness: teaching on Victoria Island

2007, Crossing the Continental Divide

This year she will be leading a session on “To paddle or not paddle in the Territories in the summer of '21?”, where she discussed the ethical and practical dilemmas of traveling in the North during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Iva Kinclova is a passionate and thoughtful member of the wilderness and canoeing community, who has inspired and challenged many people with her stories and perspectives. She continues to seek out new and meaningful experiences in the North, and to share her wisdom and insights with others.

SCHABER, WALLY is a canoeist, outfitter, author, and historian who has been exploring the rivers of Canada for over 50 years. He was born in Ottawa in 1950 and graduated from the University of Waterloo in Environmental Science in 1974.

He is the founder of Black Feather Wilderness Adventures, one of the leading canoeing and kayaking outfitters in the country. He is also the author of *The Last of the Wild Rivers: The Past, Present, and Future of the Rivière du Moine Watershed*, a book that chronicles the history and ecology of the Dumoine River in Quebec, as well as his efforts to protect it from development and logging.

Wally Schaber has been a regular speaker at the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium since its inception in 1986. He has shared his stories and knowledge on various topics, such as the history of the fur trade, the conservation of wilderness rivers, the challenges and rewards of canoeing in remote regions, and the cultural and environmental impacts of hydroelectric dams. 2016, [Last of the Wild Rivers --Present and Future of Rivière du Moine](#)

He has also been a strong advocate for the preservation and recognition of the Dumoine River as a heritage river, and has organized several events and campaigns to raise awareness and funds for this cause.

RAFFAN, JAMES is a Canadian writer, speaker, explorer, and former executive director of the Canadian Canoe Museum. He was born in Guelph, Ontario, and developed a passion for canoeing and natural history from a young age.

He studied biology and education at Queen's University, where he later earned a doctorate in cultural geography and taught outdoor and experiential education.

He has written several bestselling books about the North, the wilderness, and the canoeing tradition, such as *Fire in the Bones*, *Emperor of the North*, and *Ice Walker*. He has also contributed to various media outlets and produced documentaries for CBC and the Discovery Channel.

He is a fellow of the Royal Canadian Geographical Society and has received many awards and honours for his work, including the Meritorious Service Medal from the Governor General of Canada and an Honorary Doctor of Laws from the University of Guelph.

James Raffan has been involved with the [Canadian Canoe Museum](#) since its inception, having held various roles such as curator, director of development, and director. He is a tireless advocate for the museum and its vision of building a new waterfront facility in Peterborough, Ontario. He is also a former chair of the board of directors of the Arctic Institute of North America and a former instructor and guide for the Ontario Recreational Canoeing and Kayaking Association (ORCKA) and Black Feather Wilderness Adventures. He continues to organize and participate in annual expeditions and adventures related to his interests and to share his knowledge and stories with audiences across Canada and around the world.

His contributions at the [Wilderness and Canoe Symposium](#):

2021, The Legend of Ronnie Bowes

2020, [Mapping Ground Zero](#)

2019, [Wayfinding in a White Canoe Wilderness](#)

2015, [Circling the Midnight Sun](#)

2014, Coppermine Atanigi Expedition

2007, The Lure of Far Away Places

2005, Rendezvous With the Wild

SPRIGGS, MARTIN is a Canadian veteran, adventurer, and filmmaker who has a passion for canoeing and wilderness travel. He started his professional life as an infantryman and paratrooper in the Canadian Army, serving on peacekeeping missions and in Operation Desert Storm. After a spinal cord injury ended his military career, he pursued a new path in health care, working as an emergency medical technician, a registered nurse, and a humanitarian aid worker in various parts of the world. He retired from health care in 2020 and enrolled in the Toronto Film School to study video production. He is currently working on a documentary project called Chasing Desert Ghosts, which follows his journey across the Sahara Desert on a motorcycle.

Martin Spriggs is also an avid canoeist and a member of the Wilderness Canoe Association (WCA), a non-profit community of outdoor enthusiasts who share a love for canoeing and wild places. He has participated in several canoe trips and expeditions organized by the WCA, as well as the annual Wilderness and Canoe Symposium, where he is presenting his Coast2Coast project. The Coast2Coast project was a solo cycling trip across Canada that Martin undertook to raise awareness and funds for mental health issues among veterans. He covered over 10,000 km in 100 days, starting from Victoria, BC and ending in St. John's, NL. Martin Spriggs is an inspiring example of someone who has overcome challenges and followed his passions in pursuit of his dreams.

VANDIVER, JERRY is an American songwriter and musician who has a passion for canoeing and wilderness music. He was born in Kansas City, Missouri, and moved to Nashville, Tennessee, in 1984 to pursue his dream of becoming a country music artist. He has written songs for many famous singers, such as Tim McGraw, Gene Watson, Phil Vassar, and Lonestar, and has songs on over 15 million records. Two of his songs are displayed in the Country Music Hall of Fame in Nashville.

Jerry Vandiver is also a dedicated paddler and a member of the Wilderness Canoe Association (WCA), a non-profit community of outdoor enthusiasts who share a love for canoeing and wild places. He has participated in several canoe trips and expeditions organized by the WCA, as well as the annual Wilderness and Canoe Symposium,

where he presents his original songs and stories about canoeing and the wilderness.

He has released several albums of wilderness music, such as *True and Deep: Songs for the Heart of the Paddler* (2012), *Every Scratch Tells a Story* (2014), *Paddle On* (2018), and *The Middle of Somewhere* (2020). He often performs with his band, The One Match Band, which features talented musicians who are also avid paddlers. Jerry Vandiver is a unique and inspiring artist who blends his love of music and canoeing in a creative and entertaining way.

KUSHNER, DIANA and SMITH, STEPHEN are a couple of American adventurers and filmmakers who share a passion for kayaking and the Arctic. They are the founders of the Enduring Ice Project, a multimedia initiative that aims to document and raise awareness about the impacts of climate change on the polar regions and the people who live there.

Diana Kushner has been an organic farmer since the 1990s. When not growing vegetables on her Rhode Island farm, Diana escapes into books and into the wilderness — especially into icy realms. This is her first time directing a film.

Stephen Smith is a former military officer and a current health care worker who has a degree in video production from the Toronto Film School. He is also an avid motorcyclist and cyclist who has completed several long-distance journeys across different continents.

Diana and Stephen are also members of the Wilderness Canoe Association (WCA), a non-profit community of outdoor enthusiasts who share a love for canoeing and wild places. They have participated in several canoe trips and expeditions organized by the WCA, as well as the annual Wilderness and Canoe Symposium.

Their film, *Albedo: in search of a frozen ocean*, follows their kayaking expedition to Nares Strait, a narrow channel between Greenland and Ellesmere Island that connects the Arctic Ocean and Baffin Bay. Their journey to assess climate change in the North had to switch gears when their scientific team became trapped by the sea ice it had come to study. With the Arctic Ocean collapsing all around them, they escaped the chaos by traversing the North's most remote and formidable passage. The film is a stunning and sobering portrait of a changing landscape and a testament to the resilience and courage of the explorers and the Inuit communities they encountered along the way.

Diana Kushner and Stephen Smith are inspiring examples of people who combine their love of adventure and their concern for the environment in a creative and meaningful way. They hope that their film and their project will inspire others to learn more about the Arctic and to take action to protect it for future generations.

BURBIDGE, PAUL is a surveyor, trail builder, and adventurer based in Whitehorse, Yukon. He is passionate about exploring the remote and beautiful North by various means, such as skiing, hunting, packrafting, biking, and hiking. He has participated in several wilderness and canoe symposia, sharing his experiences and insights on planning and executing challenging trips in the Mackenzie Mountains of the Northwest Territories. He is also an avid photographer, capturing stunning images of the landscapes and wildlife he encounters.

Paul Burbidge's involvement with the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium dates back to at least 2016, when he gave a presentation on his 2015 expedition to the Nahanni River with four friends. At this 2021 symposium he will be speaking about his packrafting adventures in the Mackenzie Mountains, covering 10 rivers and three significant portages, the longest being 100 km. He will also share some of the challenges and rewards of exploring unrun rivers in remote areas, as well as his gear selection and tips for long whitewater packraft trips.

Paul Burbidge is a respected and inspiring member of the wilderness and canoeing community, who exemplifies the spirit of adventure and discovery.

HENDERSON, BOB is an outdoor educator, canoeist, author, and editor based in Dundas, Ontario. He has been teaching outdoor education at McMaster University for over 30 years, and has written several books and articles on topics such as wilderness philosophy, adventure travel, and Canadian canoeing culture. He is also the founder and co-editor of Pathways: The Ontario Journal of Outdoor Education, and the resource editor of Nastawgan: The Quarterly Journal of the Wilderness Canoe Association.

Bob Henderson has been a key figure in the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium since its inception in 1986. He has been a frequent speaker, moderator, and organizer of the symposium, sharing his stories and insights on various aspects of wilderness travel and education. He has also been a mentor and supporter of many other speakers and participants, fostering a sense of community and learning among the wilderness and

canoeing enthusiasts.

Bob Henderson is a respected and influential leader in the wilderness and canoeing community, who has inspired and educated many people with his passion and expertise. He continues to paddle and explore new and old routes, and to share his stories and wisdom with others.

His contributions at the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium:

2021, [No Wilderness Superheros](#)

2018, [A Tale of Two Rivers: The Wind/Peel Rivers from gentle starter whitewater trip to ragingflooded out “near” misadventure](#)

2010, Pike’s Portage - Stories of a Distinguished Place

2001, Hubbard - Wallace Court Room Drama

1987, Joys of Bannock- and Metaphysics

OSTROM, BILL is a canoeist, outfitter, and pack maker based in Thunder Bay, Ontario. He has been designing and making canoe packs since 1979, and has developed a reputation for producing high-quality, durable, and comfortable packs for wilderness travelers. He is the owner and operator of Ostrom Outdoors, a company that offers canoeing gear, clothing, and accessories, as well as custom-made packs.

Bill Ostrom has been involved with the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium since at least 2016, when he gave a presentation on his canoe trip on the Seal River in Manitoba. He also hosted a breakout session on how to fit a canoe pack to carry heavy loads lightly, sharing his tips and tricks on how to adjust and balance a pack for optimal comfort and performance. He returned to the symposium in 2021, where he hosted another breakout session on the same topic, demonstrating his techniques and answering questions from the participants.

Bill Ostrom is a passionate and skilled member of the wilderness and canoeing community, who has inspired and helped many people with his stories and products.

JOHNSTON, BRIAN is a paddler, instructor, and writer based in Manitoba. He has been canoeing since he was young, and has explored many waterways in Canada and beyond. He is passionate about sharing his love for paddling and wilderness with others, and has been involved in various organizations and events to promote and support the paddling community.

Brian Johnston started his paddling journey in southern Manitoba, where he learned to run rivers with a local canoeing group. He soon became an instructor and a volunteer for the group, and followed the lead of some seasoned canoe trippers who expanded their range of nature and rivers to the North. He has paddled in the vast barren lands, where he has experienced big skies, esker walkways, blowing grasslands, herds of caribou and musk ox, and bears of all kinds. He has also witnessed Inuit culture, history, and progress, and felt the ice, winds, snow, waves, and oceans of the Arctic.

Brian Johnston is still volunteering for Paddle Manitoba and Paddle Canada, where he serves on the Canoe Program Committee as a member for moving water canoeing. He is also a presenter at the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium, where he has shared his stories and insights on various aspects of wilderness travel and education. He is also a writer, who has published articles on paddling and outdoor recreation in various magazines and journals.

His contributions at the Wilderness and Canoe Symposium:

2021, [Connecting with Nature during COVID](#)

2015, [Messages from the Subarctic: publishing notes from Tyrrell's Cairn](#)

2006, Back - Meadowbank - Prince Rivers - 2005

2003, From Resolution to Bathurst Inlet