Meet our 2026 conference hosts

Our 2026 conference in Winnipeg is a joint event of IAGLR and the Society of Canadian Aquatic Sciences and is hosted by IISD Experimental Lakes Area (IISD-ELA). On the following two pages, we introduce you to the local chairs.

Pauline Gerrard

2026 CONFERENCE SITE CHAIR
Executive Director
IISD Experimental Lakes Area



Describe your work or studies.

As executive director of IISD Experimental Lakes Area—the world's freshwater laboratory—I oversee strategic direction and management of the facility and our research. With a background in ecology, I believe in large-scale collaborative research that brings together multiple partners and sectors to understand the complex environmental problems (including, of course, threats to fresh water) that we are facing in the world today.

What inspired you to enter this work?

With parents who were ornithologists, ecology and environmental science have been part of my life since I was very young. I've been lucky enough to work in North America, Africa, Europe, and Southeast Asia over the course of my career, and this international experience has helped me understand the importance of connecting research and innovation in similar systems across the globe. I'm excited about connecting the work we have being doing at IISD-ELA on in-situ monitoring to similar systems that are being used in the North American and African Great Lakes. I feel that there is enormous potential to use these types of systems to fill data gaps across Canada, and, by bringing our expertise and experience together, we can support needs in other parts of the country and around the world.

What are you most excited about for the upcoming conference?

I'm excited to learn from Indigenous partners around the great lakes about shared learning and experience. We have strong relationships with Treaty 3 communities close to IISD-ELA, but I'm interested in learning from others and expanding these relationships and learning.

What is something about yourself that you'd like to share with other IAGLR members?

I believe strongly in learning through hands-on experiences; it isn't always easy these days, but getting out in the field and on the water puts perspective to what we are trying to do and why. The way to inspire the next generation of freshwater scientists is to give them the opportunity to experience it firsthand.

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