NEW MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Ruth Duncan

Junior Aquatics and Fisheries Specialist, Environmental Collective; Trent University, Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation

About my work



I'm currently a second-year student at Trent University. Over the past two years, I've had the opportunity to work for Environmental Collective on community-based research with the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. Bima'azh ("track" or "follow along" in Ojibway) is a research project investigating lake whitefish behaviour at culturally relevant habitats in Lake Huron. By using smart technology (e.g., underwater remotely operated vehicle and acoustic telemetry) and Indigenous Ecological Knowledge, we can respond directly to community concerns.

Inspiration for this work

Research that is so closely tied to my community has been a gratifying experience. It gives me pride knowing that my work is helping my community and a fish central to my people's history. My ancestors have fished the waters I work in for millennia, and shared history and future in Saukiing Anishinaabekiing (our territory) continuously inspires me to continue on in STEM and fisheries science.

Something else about myself

Aside from cross-country skiing, I enjoy creating videos about my culture and issues in Canada. Last October, a film I helped produce won the award for top documentary at the Forest City Youth Film Festival. Titled We Are Still Here, the film serves as a reminder to all that Indigenous Peoples are still here and thriving.

Why I joined IAGLR

I joined IAGLR while attending JASM 2022. I joined IAGLR to have opportunities to network, meet other fisheries professionals, and hold space for Indigenous People in fisheries.

Pubudu Kumarage

Senior Faculty Member, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

About my work

As a researcher, I am working on environmental and water-resource-related modeling of inland and coastal water bodies. Human activities and rapid development projects have caused a huge impact on the aquatic ecosystems that had thrived with the lakes in my region. My primary objective is modeling the pollutant transport and identifying the harmful accumulations that can affect the sensitive fauna. I also am on a team studying the environmental impacts of recent maritime accidents that occurred along the western coast of the island.

Inspiration for this work

My original background is in fluid dynamics and water resources. I wanted to use my expertise to conserve the environment, as we don't have a planet B as the plan B.

Something else about myself

Although time consuming, data collection and collaborative work are the most interesting parts of the whole process. In our group discussions, I get the opportunity to learn how similar problems have been tackled in other parts of the world. Thanks to the knowledge sharing, I was able to use new practices and computational tools in most of my studies.

Why I joined IAGLR

I am delighted to be a member of IAGLR, with its focus on research about the



largest freshwater system in the world. It is wonderful how novel techniques are being used to study and protect the Great Lakes and the freshwater ecosystem. I am excited to connect with other members from whom I will be able to learn a lot, and to share my experiences as well.