

Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve – Transitional Leadership Committee (established Sept. 2019)

Member Biographies

Norman Ragetlie

Norman Ragetlie is Executive Director of the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI). After early work with Pollution Probe in environmental advocacy and managing a Toronto food co-operative, Norman completed an MSc at the University of Guelph in rural planning. He then worked in municipal government for 10 years as a professional planner on an award-winning sustainable community development program and on natural heritage protection in Hamilton-Wentworth. He then worked for 10 years at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs on capacity building to support rural community economic development, engaging with many municipal and economic development stakeholders across Ontario to adapt new approaches to the local community context. He served as Chair of the Ontario Farmland Trust for seven years. A strong collaborator, Norman has led diverse partnership projects and studies at ROI on topics relevant to rural communities as well as conducting statistical analysis on Ontario rural geographies. He is a trail captain with the Sydenham Bruce Trail Club and lives on the shores of Georgian Bay in Grey County.

Patrick Robson

Patrick Robson holds a Bachelor of Applied Arts in Urban and Regional Planning from Ryerson University and a Master of Arts in Politics from Brock University. He is a Member of the Canadian Institute of Planners. Currently, Patrick is a Professor in the Environmental Management and Assessment post-graduate program at Niagara College. In March 2017, he was appointed to the Buffalo and Fort Erie Public Bridge Authority (a.k.a. Peace Bridge Authority). Previously, he held positions as a private sector planning consultant, a planner with the Niagara Escarpment Commission, an investigator with the Ontario Human Rights Commission and positions at the Regional Municipality of Niagara, including Commissioner of Integrated Community Planning. He served three terms as a Councillor in Wainfleet and has taught public policy at Brock University. He has also presented at numerous conferences across Canada and in the U.S. Germany, Japan and South Africa. He is currently on the Board of Directors of the Golden Horseshoe Food and Farming Alliance.

Victoria Serda

Victoria Serda has spent most of her life in Saugeen Ojibway Nation traditional territory as a settler ally, currently lives in Port Elgin with her husband Jamie, and enjoys spending time with her daughter Corrina and grandson Creegan in their community at Neyaashiinigiing (Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation). Victoria sits on the board of SauGreen for the Environment, Bagida'waad Alliance (Neyaashiinigiing's fisher-led not-for-profit corporation), and the Climate Reality Project Canada. She served as a municipal councillor in Saugeen Shores from 2006 to 2010. By invitation, worked as a Strategic Advisor to the Chippewas of Saugeen First Nation Band Council

for four years, doing community engagement and project development. She holds a Bachelor of Independent Studies degree specializing in democratic education and a post-graduate Certificate in Indigenous Governance and Administration. She hopes to help lead the Niagara Escarpment Biosphere Reserve into a meaningful and trusting relationship with Indigenous communities across the Escarpment, engage all communities together to support protection and enhancement of the current Biosphere ecosystems, and promote planning and action on the climate crisis.

Liette Vasseur

Dr. Liette Vasseur is a full professor in the Department of Biological Sciences at Brock University where she is also a member of the Environmental Sustainability Research Centre. Since 2014, she has held the UNESCO Chair on Community Sustainability: From Local to Global at Brock. Her research program is highly interdisciplinary and links issues such as community-based ecosystem management, climate change adaptation and resilience, and sustainable agriculture. She works in China, where she is a visiting scholar at Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University. Her work in Ecuador focuses on community sustainability and ecosystem-based adaptation to climate change of rural native communities in the Andean region of the Chimborazo. In Canada, in addition to her research program in sustainable agriculture, climate change and ecosystem management, she works with various groups on environmental stewardship, especially regarding conservation. She is also involved in women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) in her program and is the past president of the Canadian Coalition for Women in Engineering, Science, Trades and Technology. She is President of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO). She also is the vice-chair for North American Region of the Commission for Ecosystem Management at the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and leads the thematic group on Ecosystem Governance. She has been involved with Southwest Nova and Fundy Bay Biosphere Reserves and has conducted periodic evaluations for the CCUNESCO.