

# Ecology Action Centre

Annual General Meeting 2025

Tuesday September 16, 2025 – 6:00-8:30pm

Held at the St. Andrew's Church, Mary Holmes room and virtually on Zoom

**(Co)Chairs of AGM:** Christina Macdonald, Helga Guderly

**Secretary:** Michael Sime

**Members in Attendance:** 70 in person and 40 virtual

For more information, please see the [2025 EAC Annual Report](#)

## 1. Welcome

Elanor, new Operations Director welcomes the room and goes through housekeeping rules. The AGM is hosted in person and virtually on zoom. The meeting is recorded on Zoom

## 2. Land Acknowledgement & Moment of Silence

Helga, Co-Chair of the EAC Board:

Epchilaasi I'm Helga Guderley co-chair of the board of the EAC. I've been living in Mi'kmaq'ki for 15 years. Before, I lived 30 years on Huron Wendat lands after having studied on the Musqueam and Salish lands. It is a pleasure and a privilege to live in Mi'kmaq'ki. Tonight, we are in (Kjipuktuk) which translates as Great Harbour. The harbour has long been an important gathering and travel place, well before European colonialists established Halifax. The abundance of marine life and easy availability of fresh water allowed the area to support many people. In the 1500's it was common knowledge among European sailors that their ships were not welcome and Kjipuktuk was generally avoided by fishing vessels and sailors in the 1600's. The Mi'kmaq were and I believe still are extremely attached to Kjipuktuk, considering it a place of the spirits. In Mi'kmaq'ki we are living on the unceded territories of the Mi'kmaq. The nation-to-nation treaties made by the colonial government have not been respected. Rather European culture was imposed upon the indigenous people. The systemic racism and cultural genocide experienced by Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island are now widely recognized, but decolonisation has a long way to go. In parallel, our governments subordinated African Nova Scotians. Polluting industries and dumps have been placed near racialized and indigenous communities. Environmental racism has deeply affected our first nations and black communities. Yes, we have much to do! Yet we have even more to learn. I've been reading Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's essays in the Theory of Water. She is a Michi Saabig Nishnaabeg scholar. In the essay "Sintering" she presents the following: "When a snowflake falls from the sky and lands on the earth, it immediately begins a transformation as it

bonds at temperatures below zero with its neighbouring snowflakes to create the fabric of a snowpack. Sintering is joining. It is communal transformation that creates a fabric of former snowflakes bonded to each other, forming a snowpack, a denser more compact, linked formation. She continues to explain that sintering is how Michi Saagig Nishnaabeg weave themselves into the land without destroying it. A snowstorm reminds her of what radical overturning and transformation can be accomplished when sintering creates deep attachments across many many individuals. She asks whether sintering could be a foundational concept for grounding solidarity, strengthening and renewing connections across communities of struggle towards new constellations of co-resistance. In solidarity I say perhaps we can be such a snowstorm of transformation! On behalf of the board of the EAC, I thank the first nations of Canada for their millennia of stewardship of the shores and forests that we are all working to protect.

### 3. Acceptance of Agenda and Approval of Minutes of 2024 AGM

For more information, see the [2024 AGM Minutes](#)

- Agenda:
  - Moved by Maggy Burns
  - Seconded by Roland Evborokhai
- Minutes:
  - Moved by Lisa Lee Steckler
  - Seconded by Trevor Parsons
- Unanimously approved

### 4. Board Report

Helga, Co-Chair of the EAC Board, provided some reflections on the EAC's work, including the following:

The board of the EAC is different from any of the boards I've been on. In its role of oversight of EAC governance and activities, it has much in common with boards of large companies and organisations such as universities. In its direct interactions and connections with the staff and leadership team of the EAC, it serves to extend the EAC into the larger world. In some ways, I see the board as an overseeing cheerleader for the EAC, we're like caring parents who aim to facilitate and nurture the organisation. We're not all raging grannies, though, that's for sure. Depending how one perceives years, 2025 can take on a variety of faces. If the year starts with the last AGM, there was a fine phase during which the EAC marshalled arguments and forces to present environmental solutions during the provincial election campaign. We as board members cheered on staff and things seemed quite good. Then came the overwhelming win by the current government and trouble appeared on the horizon. Then the election results in our giant neighbour awakened some previously hidden populist attitudes in our provincial government, leading them to claim that accelerated resource extraction was essential for Nova Scotia's well being and suddenly, the EAC was in the government's crosshairs. Take the No out of Nova Scotia, crowed the government, stop listening to special interest groups. WHOA!! We

the EAC board sensed that choppy waters were headed our way. The wonderful staffers at the EAC have countered with reasoned analyses putting the KNOW in Nova Scotia. But courage is needed in these times. Board activities in 2025: Continuing the pattern of quarterly substantive board meetings. These focus on EAC Impact, Fund-raising, Financial status and Human resources. In depth small groups discussion of articles provided before the meetings is followed by integration of ideas raised in the small groups. Implementing consensus-based decision making: majority doesn't rule. Supporting Senior leadership team during externally imposed turmoil Supporting the Senior leadership team through major staffing changes Staff and board evaluation of Executive director Beside the quarterly meetings that involve the entire board, several major committees composed of a subset of board members carry out crucial work. The governance committee has established the rules and norms of board activities, the nominations committee has been responsible for excellent recruitment of board members, and the audit and risk committee maintains careful financial oversight of the EAC. The executive committee holds monthly meetings with the Senior Leadership team of the EAC, thereby keeping the board executive aware of wins and challenges facing the SLT. Finally, the annual Retreat at the Deanery provides a wonderful means of integrating the board with EAC staff in an informal, but guided format. I've learned a great deal from these wonderful retreats.

## 5. Executive Director's Report

Maggy Burns, EAC's Executive Director

- Maggy recounts coming upon a dragonfly nursery on a recent wilderness trip and what a profound experience that it was. How you can be never be sure about what you're stepping into until it begins to unfold.
- Tough times are when we need our imaginations more than ever, to step fiercely into the unknown. Frequent government overstepping creates such challenging times. If you're overwhelmed by this, you're not alone!
- The EAC movement is fueled by care, it's heartening to see the ground swell of support from our communities that are rising to the challenge.
- Maggy described some of the recent work done by EAC, from coastal work and opposing extractive agendas. The Many versus the Money, a townhall intended to oppose forces that are seeking profits at the cost of the environment.
- Eel grass work has led to better data on how those eco systems store carbon. Our work involves working with and working for communities, helping faith-based communities convert their worship structures to be more energy efficient.
- We see these changes, and so much more, happening everyday because of the EAC members, staff, and supporters. There's strength in community.
- The EAC is 54 years old, we continue to support communities and speak truth to power. My father, Steven Burns, died this time last year. Warren Heaty described him as gentle, "it requires great strength to be gentle. Like love, gentleness is more powerful than force...." Gentleness can be steadfast and powerful, it's an exceptional antidote to the brutality so often seen today.

## Question & Answer

Q: What's the latest with the Coastal Protection Act?

A: **Maggy**: They don't want to talk to us about Coastal Protection. There's some short term fights we're doing with municipalities, but we're gearing up for the long game. The government is incredibly resistant. We don't see an easy way through, we're not quitting, but we're in it for the long game.

Q: What is the biggest challenge the EAC is facing in the coming year or years?

A: **Maggy**: I think we're seeing it now. The resource extraction agenda, and worrying political movements right now.

Q: EAC and other groups were locked out of the budget this year, including Marla specifically. Can you comment on this?

A: **Marla**: Immediately after this happened, I assumed it was a mistake, but it was very intentional. I am doing work now to make sure this doesn't happen again.

Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Executive Director's Report

- Moved by Grant MacDonald
- Seconded by Ray Plourde

Unanimously approved

## 6. Financial Report

**Roland Evborokhai**, the Treasurer, delivered the financial report. For additional details, please see the [2024- 2025 Annual Report](#).

**Roland**: Has anyone here received Maggy's "No more BS"? emails? We also don't do "SF" at the EAC, I'll explain with a story. I was getting lunch recently and noticed I was paying more for less food, Shrink-flation. With tighter funds, with harsher conditions, we *could* downsize, we could decrease our services, that would be reasonable. But we don't to SF at the EAC. Our revenues and expenses both went up this year, it means increased activity! The EAC does not do SF.

The EAC is in strong financial shape, we have growing revenues and surplus and strong cashflow management, responsible debt management.

Q: What is the project fund?

A: **Roland, Maggy**: The project fund this year was divided into 3, the wilderness, marine, and cross team projects that are emerging or dynamic. This is one of the things that ensures project and staffing continuity.

Q: The professional and consulting fees are a sizable chunk. Can you explain?

A: **Maggy: A** chunk goes to into other partnerships, transferring money to other organizations. Some goes into consulting, like experts in energy efficiency modelling. Auditors' fees, systems platforms costs,

Q: Are the auditors volunteers? Would this be a way to save money?

A: **Roland:** the auditors are paid, which is required for ensuring their independence, which is also required for a successful audit.

#### **Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Treasurer's Report**

- Moved by Virginia Olsen
- Seconded by Olga Malosevic

(online 95% in favour, 5% against) unanimously approved in person

#### **Motion to approve the 2024-2025 Financial Statements**

- Dawn Burstall
- Rowan Swaine

(online 95% in favour, 5% against) unanimously approved in person

#### **Motion to approve the BDO as the 2026 auditors**

Lisa Lee Steckler

Holly Isnor

(online 95% in favour, 5% against) unanimously approved in person

## **7. Appointment of Volunteer Board of Directors 2025-2026**

Helga acknowledged departing Board Members:

#### **Christina MacDonald**

Board member since 2019, co chair since 2022, Christina has been a warm and thoughtful board co-chair. She joined the board, not long after returning from 9 years in the Yukon, during 4 of which she was the Executive Director of the Yukon Conservation Society. Her focus has consistently been on sustainability and the environment, climate change adaptation, energy conservation and advocacy for wildlife and habitat protection. She has taken these passions to Cape Breton where she is working for Parks Canada. Christina's integrative analyses of the complex, sticky problems with which we and the EAC are often faced will be sorely missed, particularly by her current co-chair.

#### **Michael Sime**

Board member since 2018 (he joined after an AGM), Michael has been a strong

contributor in various roles on the board, including during the last 18 months as board secretary. Mike consistently asks some of the best questions at board meetings and retreats. He has an uncanny capacity to integrate the salient points of a situation and to see ways forward. It has been a pleasure working with Mike and he will be missed by all.

### **Rhiannon Davies**

Rhiannon moved to Halifax in 2018 after spending a year sailing on a 44 ft sailboat with her family. She came out of this experience profoundly convinced of the importance of protecting our oceans and our global environment. Being on the board of the EAC since 2019 was one of the ways she took on an active role in protecting the world around us. Rhiannon has worked with international companies involved in consumer goods and food production, helping increase transparency and accountability. Her experience with governance has been invaluable for the EAC board, particularly in her work on the governance and audit and risk committees.

### **Keith MacMaster**

Keith joined the board in 2022 during his studies as a PhD student at the Schulich School of law at Dalhousie. His work concentrates on legal issues involving environmental issues for banking and ocean-based industries, particularly seabed mining. He contributed ably to the audit and risk committee during his time on the board as well as providing excellent critical insight during board discussions on impact and finance, in particular. His clear and thoughtful comments will be missed!

Introduced new board members: Scott Biggar, Natasha Burgess, Ben Grieder

### **Motion to approve the 12 continuing Directors and 3 new Directors as Board members.**

- Moved by Lisa Lee Steckler
- Seconded by Liz Landry
- Unanimously approved

## **8. Recognition of milestone years of service of EAC staff**

Maggy spoke on the many wonderful accomplishments and character traits of the milestone reaching staff.

**Rebecca Brushett** – 5 years

**Holly Isnor** – 5 Years

**Simone Mutabazi** – 5 years

**Maggy Burns** – 5 Years

**Stephanie Johnstone-Laurette** – 15 years

## 9. EAC Annual Awards

Awards were presented by Marla Macleod. This is where we get to acknowledge leaders and visionaries who are making great progress during this polycrisis. This year we had an incredible number of nominations which is a testament to the great work people are doing this year.

### Danielle Moore Sunshine

1. Anti-Uranium Mining Mobilization Group, People Not Plunder, and grassroots groups in East Dalhousie, Vaughan, and Tatamagouche
  - *for tirelessly working to protect their communities from dangerous uranium exploration and mining. People around the province have banded together, across political lines, across communities, and from all walks of life to step up and do phenomenal community organizing. It is most likely through their work that no companies submitted proposals for uranium exploration and mining to the government*
2. Save Our Old Forests (SOOF)
  - *for being instrumental in bringing together community members, creatives, and local businesses to raise awareness about the importance of protecting Nova Scotia's old forests. From community building events like free Soup Sundays & SOOFSTOCK music festival to citizen science activities like "Owl Prowl" at Goldsmith Lake and the "Lichen Looking" event, SOOF is empowering local communities to help protect our most biodiverse forests.*
3. Mike Lancaster
  - *For his amazing devotion and dedication to protecting forests in Nova Scotia, and particularly in the Ingram Valley. He has made extensive observations of the occurrence of species at risk, documented the oldest forest in Nova Scotia and even discovered a breeding population of Atlantic salmon. These observations have been crucial in the community's efforts to protect the Ingram Valley with a Wilderness Area*

### Tarred Duck

1. Tim Houston and the Provincial Government
  - *For lifting the ban on uranium mining and fracking, opening the door to threats to the health and livelihoods of all Nova Scotians despite strong scientific evidence that supported the ban, nearly unanimous opposition from Nova Scotian experts, and members of the public giving evidence against lifting the ban at the Public Bills Committee..*
2. Sean Kirby & The Mining Association of Nova Scotia (MANS)
  - *for spreading misinformation about fracking and uranium mining for corporate interests. He was the only voice in Public Bills to speak in support of lifting the ban and clearly influences government decisions despite public concern. No more MANSplaining!*
3. Tim Houston and the Provincial Government
  - *For planning to irrevocably damage unique and precious wilderness areas such as Sandy Lake and Blue Mountain Birch Cove through development of housing far removed from services, ignoring areas more suitable for development, and not providing sufficient housing for those in need.*

### Bubby Mooers

#### Honourable Mentions:

Mark Daye Jr, Dr. Nancy Covington, Dave Aalders, Peter Darnell

1. **Keaton Fougere & Mitchell Harris, Mi'kmawey Green Communities (CMM)**

- *for being an invaluable partner with the Pop-Up Bike Hub. They have supported the project with funding, towing the trailer between communities, and promoting the trailer's work every single year. Through their partnership, we have repaired over 1000 bikes in mainland Mi'kmaq communities, and the Pop-Up Bike Hub program would not be able to run without them.*
2. **The Bike Brigade HFX**
    - *for being an amazing member-led group that is focused on providing essential resources, like food, to people in need throughout the municipality. Not only are they helping people in need acquire some basic necessities, but they are also doing so with a minimal environmental footprint - they're biking! All food donations are gathered and distributed via bike. Having groups that are re-thinking ways to support their communities is an essential part of how we can ensure a safe future for both people and the environment.*
  3. **Marion Moore**
    - *for being a dedicated environmental and peace activist who has mobilized people across the province to resist fracking, offshore drilling, pipelines, unsustainable forestry practices, and uranium exploration and mining in Nova Scotia. She is a founding member and co-chair of the Council of Canadians South Shore Chapter, which has worked in solidarity with Mi'kmaq communities to demand accountability from industry and government since 2000. Her advocacy continues to advance real climate solutions and a just energy transition rooted in community well-being. Since February, Marion has been a key player in the fight against the Province's lift of the uranium ban. Notably, she has provided a safe and welcoming space for newer activists to learn and strategize, and shown up for countless community events, met with elected officials, and has shown up as both brave and creative.*

## Tooker Gomberg

1. **Michael Lea, Cat Fergusson, and the residents of Port Morien**
  - *for doggedly and creatively bringing attention to the intolerable level of noise still emanating from the Donkin Mine, the impacts this is having on their community, and the coldshoulders and shut doors they've been faced with from the provincial government as they've attempted to address this. The recording of the horrible noise which Michael brought to Province House during the "Special Interests For Democracy" rally was a visceral and powerful strategy to raise awareness of this ongoing issue and together more support.*
2. **Steve MacKay(Bike Mayor) &Halifax Cycling Coalition**
  - **For their creative "no scapegoating" rally, complete with goat masks, calling out the unfair scapegoating of cyclists when everyone knows that bikes do not cause congestion.**

## 10. In Memoriam as read by Marla Macleod

### Bill Zimmerman

The first is Bill Zimmerman, who passed away last year after a COVID-19 infection acquired following hospitalization for a suspected heart attack. Bill was a long-time EAC member, activist, former board member, and a volunteer with our Energy Action Committee. He was a person who was always dedicated to making the world a better place, whether that was in the realm of theatre, environmental issues, politics, or his own personal life. Bill and his wife Susan helped us to write the guide for "how to meet with your elected official," which is a resource that we are sharing very widely these days, and is helping to empower a whole new group of advocates for

the environment. We are grateful for all of Bill's contributions, and we remember him for his lively and generous spirit.

## Mrs Sylvia V. Mangalam

January 24 this year, we lost Sylvia Mangalam, long time member of the Ecology Action Centre community and fiery spirit, days before her 91<sup>st</sup> birthday. She lived a full and varied life. Born in upstate NY, she spent her early years living on a farm. She attended Cornell University and graduated with a master's degree in social anthropology and nutrition. With her husband, she moved from Ithaca, where they were married, to Lahore, Pakistan; then Kentucky; then Ontario; then finally Nova Scotia. She was many things – sheep farmer, poet, cookbook author, activist, mother, grandmother, and so much more.

Sylvia was instrumental in the fight against uranium mining in the 1980s. When a uranium company threatened the headwaters of the Avon River, she joined with two other women to found Citizen Action to Protect the Environment. They produced reports and fact sheets about the dangers of uranium exploration, held many public meetings around Nova Scotia, seeded other grassroots organizations, and did a tremendous amount of mobilization work. The resulting public outcry from around the province led to the uranium moratorium in 1981.

In the early 2000s, Sylvia was one of the founding members of the EAC's Food Action committee. She was a staunch supporter of local, sustainable agriculture. She helped support our harvest fests, rallied the Raging Grannies, wrote letters, attended conferences, taught cooking and preserving workshops, opened her home to root cellar tours and more. She greeted every success with enthusiastic cheers, and every disappointing government announcement with her trademark "Harumph". She lived her values and shared her knowledge broadly. Her backyard was and still is an abundant garden in the heart of Bedford, filled with vegetables, flowers, and pear trees, from which she generously shared the harvest. We carry her spirit with us as we continue to fight the good fight and build the world we want to live in.

## 11. Keynote Speaker

Janet Baker, Elizabeth Peirce, Ian Guppy spoke on "Lessons we've learned from 45 years of uranium resistance"

- Colby started the presentation about the history of uranium mining in Nova Scotia and how they initialized the movement to inform their community about what was happening.
- Action doesn't start when you know everything about the subject, but when you learn what's at stake. This isn't about one moment; it's about decades of collaboration. The moment you see the truth; you inherit the responsibility to act on it.
- Elizabeth Peirce - She is the 3<sup>rd</sup> generation in my family continuing the opposition to uranium mining in Nova Scotia. It means a lot to be supported here by the EAC.

- Janet Baker gave a history of what the activism was like when the ban was first put in place, to the feeling of having the moratorium recently overturned. She first learned about this subject from the brilliant Jillian Thomas. She spoke about how a company went into schools and gave kids uranium samples in an attempt to duplicitously woo the public. This was my first experience with the EAC when the organization was 4 years old, and with the marvelous Elizabeth May. Janet told a lively and humorous story that concluded with Judge McCleave passing the moratorium on uranium mining in NS. It's infuriating that we have to spend our time on this terrifying reality. Individuals matter greatly in such a battle, and it is a battle. Each person who engages with the issue helps solidify the opposition to the nightmare scenario, *again*.
- Elizabeth then walked through some of the lessons learned. Government used to hold real public consultation, there's less opportunity for discourse now. Mining companies are using reprehensible PR tactics and greenwashing. Settlers need to support the indigenous land and water protectors. Uranium is more polarizing than ever, many progressives are in favour of nuclear energy, but exploration around the densely populated regions that they are proposing to is not appropriate. Those who are not directly tied to the government need to speak out against government facilitation of uranium exploration.
- Ian Guppy – Our model is getting together, off our screens and in community. The people's parade really created a sense of community

## 12. Member's Forum

Members shared their thoughts and feelings about EAC's important work.

A suggestion was made to provide Certificate Awards to all recipients of the EAC Annual Awards and not just the first-place candidates.

Q: What are the next steps in the uranium process fight, is there a plan to stop it?

A: **Maggy, Sarah (of KnowUranium.ca)**: 6 municipalities have asked the province for a pause, and some have received threatening letters back from the province. We meet as a group every few weeks to strategize, EAC is applying for a grant to fund some of these initiatives. You can donate at [knowuranium.ca](http://knowuranium.ca)

Q: Membership revenue showed a slight dip, is this a concern? What's the trend?

A: **Maggy**: we have over 3500 members currently, which is not the peak but way up from when I started. Our most successful times were when we had a strong effort in door-to-door canvassers, we haven't done this as thoroughly for the last few years, partly due to covid, partly due to the costs. It's important because this is what keeps EAC independent, having many, small donors, allowing us to minimize government funding. We're watching it, but it is crucial.

**Motion to adjourn the 2025 EAC AGM**

- Motion by Maggy Burns
- Second by Helga Guderly

Unanimously approved in person

13. Adjournment 8:30 pm

Helga provided thanks to all those who made the AGM a success.