

NAI Heartland Region Conference March 2022

Wednesday, March 23	Thursday, March 24
8:30-8:50 Introduction	8:30 am Virtual Breakfast Chat
9:00-10:00 Keynote	9:00 am Welcome Back
10:15-11:15 Concurrent Session 1	9:15 am Messages from the Regional Board
11:30-12:30 Concurrent Session 2	10:15 am Virtual Field Session 1
12:30-1:00 Lunch Break	11:30 am Virtual Field Session 2
1:00-2:00 Concurrent Session 3	12:30 pm Lunch
2:15-3:15 Concurrent Session 4	1:00 pm Awards
	2:00 pm Workshop 2023
	3:00 pm Closing Remarks



Keynote: Cardaphonia – Utterances From the Heart by Ed Collins

Beyond biological inventories, species indexes and the precise language of science lies a deeper and more profound truth driving lives spent in the service of wild places. In a world where communication is increasingly defined by technology, the land seeks those who would learn a more ancient form of speech, taught in a language rising from the very bones of the earth itself.

We intuitively know the truth of that language not in the synapses of our minds but in the chambers of our heart. For it is our heart and not our head that understands the entire cosmos is scripture each time we marvel at a thunderstorm, gaze into a sea of nighttime stars or feel our breath race as the cranes call overhead on a foggy spring morning.

What is spoken by the heart, is heard by the heart and rediscovering our hearts in conservation work, empowers us to shape our destiny and paint the canvas of the future.

Ed's career spans thirty-five years with the McHenry County Conservation District where he currently serves as the Director of Land Preservation and Natural Resources, administering restoration and land preservation efforts on 25,000 acres of open space. During that time, he has been involved in a number of interesting projects including the re-meandering of Nippersink Creek in Glacial Park, the development of the first comprehensive spatial mapping of oak loss in the region and most recently playing an instrumental role in the creation of the Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge. Ed teaches across the region including classes in Forensic Ecology and Ecological Spirituality. His hobbies include collecting drain tile memorabilia, constructing stone labyrinths and working as a trained hypnotist.

Concurrent Session 1A– College student + global pandemic

We've all been through a lot over the course of the past couple of years. Let's see what we can learn from one another by sharing our stories. We'll go first: how have college students handled the pandemic?

Pearse Meighan and Becca Franzen, Student and Associate Professor

Concurrent Session 1B – Outdoor Orpheum

Puppets aren't just for kids and method actors! From making scripts to acquiring puppets and building a puppet theater join in as Naturalist Kristen Bieret shares how to build your interpretation puppet program from the ground up.

Kristen Bieret, Naturalist, Sac County Conservation

Concurrent Session 1C – Recreation Redesigned

Cultivating Hope Farms is dedicated to creating meaningful opportunities for inclusion and acceptance for those with autism and all disabilities. Learn about their partnership with Story County Conservation, and the safe and inclusive outdoor recreation activities they have developed for families of youth with disabilities in central Iowa.

Beth Waage- Story County Conservation Naturalist

Gina Perkins- Cultivating Hope Farms

Concurrent session 2A- Developing a Digital Map

From timelines to storytelling, a map is a tool that can be used to inspire or orientate. Come develop a digital map and usher in a new age of exploration!

Cortney Reedy, CHI

Park Ranger for the US Forest Service

Concurrent session 2B – For The Benefit of the People: Helping Teachers to Use Parks as Virtual Classrooms

Learn how to help classroom teachers effectively integrate free resources from parks and public land agencies into engaging and rigorous experiences for students of all ages using research-based project-based learning frameworks.

- James Fester, Teacher Coach, Nat'l Park Volunteer, Consultant

Concurrent Session 2C – The Spirit of Lincoln Youth Leadership Academy, incorporating youth into summer living history programs

Freedom stories are told each summer by youth at the Lincoln Home National Historic Site and the Old State Capitol State Historic Site to visitors. Discover how recruitment and training transformed this annual living history program with youth in period clothing.

Troy Gilmore, Assistant Superintendent, State Historic Sites at Springfield

Tim Townsend, Chief of Interpretation and Historian, Lincoln Home National Historic Site

Concurrent Session 3A – Exploring Human Impacts on Biodiversity -- Hands-on Lessons for Student Visitors

Discover hands-on activities to help students understand the delicate balance between people's environmental footprints and the sustainability of habitats and biodiversity.

Howard April, Naturalist, Wehr Nature Center (Milwaukee County Parks)

Concurrent Session 3B- Fantastical Forest: An Accessible and Whimsical Experience

Transitioning in Covid was a huge step, but how do we also make our programming accessible and sustainable? A \$2,000 grant transformed a forgotten ADA trail. Learn how to best utilize volunteers, think sustainably, and create magic on a budget.

Angelina Stancampiano, District Interpretive Ranger, Shoshone District, Wyoming State Parks

Concurrent Session 4A: What Universities and High Schools are Looking for in Interpretive Experiences

What do university and high school educators for when venturing off-campus for interpretive science programs? Naturalists and formal educators will offer their take and demonstrate what it takes for your site to meet these priorities.

Lorrie Ward, Naturalist, CIG

Sagawau Environmental Learning Center, Forest Preserves of Cook County

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Dan Martin, Science Department Chair, Chicago High School for the Agricultural Sciences

Chris Anderson, Assistant Professor, Dominican University

Concurrent Session 4B - Walk, Hike and Bike History

IDNR staff share their experiences developing and leading Walk, Hike and Bike History - a brand-new series of inspiring outdoor experiences that offer new connections to the amazing museums and monuments in Illinois' capital city.

Jennifer Caldwell (CIG), Site Interpreter

Troy Gilmore (CIG, CIT), Site Superintendent

Mikito Muroya, Site Interpreter

Illinois Department of Natural Resources