

DETAILED TENTATIVE AGENDA



NCER

National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration

April 13-16, 2026

Omaha, Nebraska

**"Return on Investment: How Are We Doing and
What Is the Future?"**

<https://conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ncer/>

The National Conference on Ecosystem Restoration (NCER) is a leading interdisciplinary event focused on advancing ecosystem restoration through cutting-edge science, engineering, planning, and policy — all within a collaborative framework. NCER brings together a diverse network of decision-makers, scientists, engineers, policymakers, planners, and stakeholders from government agencies, industry, NGOs, Tribal nations, academia, and other organizations actively engaged in restoration efforts.

Conference sessions will dive deep into bold ideas and the mechanics behind large-scale aquatic restoration programs. In addition to aquatic systems, topics will span terrestrial ecosystems, decision-making frameworks, funding mechanisms, and project prioritization strategies. Themes of transformation, resilience, and the future of restoration will be explored through interactive discussions and cross-disciplinary dialogue.

Attendees will gain critical insights into restoration challenges, key lessons learned, and emerging opportunities. The conference offers a unique platform to learn from peers, build new partnerships, exchange innovative ideas, and enhance professional experience — all essential elements for those working in the restoration field.

NCER is the premier national forum for ecosystem restoration professionals, and if you're involved in this vital work, we invite you to be a part of it.

Join us and contribute to shaping the future of restoration!

UF | IFAS
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

Monday, April 13, 2026	
1:00pm - 5:30pm	<p style="text-align: center;">OPTIONAL Pre-conference Field Trip to Copeland Bend WMA & Levee Setback</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Join us for an exploration of the Missouri River L-575 Levee Setback at Copeland Bend Wildlife Management Area, a landmark example of engineering integrated with ecological restoration, designed to reduce flood risk while restoring natural river functions.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Field Trip Details:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TOUR LEADER: Dave Crane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha, NE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Walk-ins welcome if seats are available. Cost: \$65 / Person</p> <p style="text-align: center;">[Arrive at Registration by 1:00pm; Bus loads at 1:15pm; Bus departs at 1:30pm and returns at 4:30pm]</p>
4:00pm-7:00pm	<p>Conference Registration Opens</p> <p>Poster Presenters and Sponsors Move-In Displays</p>
5:00pm-6:30pm	<p>Informal Gathering in the Hotel Lobby Lounge</p> <p><i>Join us for a relaxed get-together with colleagues—everyone will cover their own food and drinks.</i></p>
Tuesday, April 14, 2026	
7:30am-5:00pm	<p>Conference Registration Open</p>
7:30am-8:30am	<p>Morning Refreshments in Poster & Sponsor Display Area</p> <p>(Beverages, assorted pastries, bagels, fruits, cheese and a variety of light breakfast fare will be available.)</p>
Plenary Session — 8:30am - 10:00am	
Capitol Ballroom Sections 2, 3 & 4	
8:30am-10:00am	<p style="text-align: center;">Opening Plenary Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">"Nebraska and the Great Plains: Whooping Crane Conservation at the Continental Scale"</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MODERATOR: Chad Smith, President, Headwaters Corporation, Kearney, NE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:30 Moderator Introduction & Overview — Welcome to NCER 2026</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:40 Larkin Powell, Director and Professor of Conservation Biology/Animal Ecology, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9:00 Mike Forsberg, Conservation Photographer, Research Assistant Professor, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska Lincoln, Lincoln, NE</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9:40 Q&A with the Audience</p>
10:00am	<p>BOOK SIGNING OPPORTUNITY</p> <p>Forsberg and Powell will both be available in the poster hall immediately following the Opening Plenary. Stop by to purchase an autographed book and meet these incredible Nebraskans who are dedicated to wildlife and conservation in North America's Great Plains. <i>Payment accepted via MasterCard, Visa or Discover.</i></p>
10:00am-10:30am	<p>AM Break in Poster Hall</p>

Tuesday, April 14, 2026	
Concurrent Sessions — 10:30am - 12:00noon	
Session 1	Session 2
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4
What Does the Future Hold? A Glimpse of the Everglades Post Comprehensive Everglades Restoration Plan (CERP) Implementation	Nature's ROI: Quantifying the Economic Value of Ecosystem Restoration
Gina Paduano Ralph USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	Maya Kocian Earth Economics, Tacoma, WA
Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
10:30am	
10:35am	
10:50am	
11:05am	
11:20am	
11:35am	
11:50am	
12noon-1:30pm	
Lunch on Own	
The Marriott has a restaurant lobby level, and there are plenty of nearby restaurants and small shops and if you venture a bit further. It's a 12-minute walk to Old Market area, boasting hundreds of restaurants, shops and unique businesses.	

Tuesday, April 14, 2026			
Concurrent Sessions — 1:30pm - 3:00pm			
Session 3	Session 4		
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4		
Connecting Research and Restoration in the Upper Mississippi River System	Nature Positive and Nature Based Solutions		
Jeffrey Houser U.S. Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI	Jeremy Thomas Jacobs, Sacramento, CA		
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview		
1:35pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Nathan De Jager US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions at Reno Bottoms: From Scenario Building to Flood Inundation Modelling to Forest Succession Model Outputs </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Christopher Allen Jacobs, Sonoma, CA Optimizing Multi-Benefit ROI: Vision and Strategy Approaches for Nature Positive and Nature-Based Solutions </td> </tr> </table>	Nathan De Jager US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions at Reno Bottoms: From Scenario Building to Flood Inundation Modelling to Forest Succession Model Outputs	Christopher Allen Jacobs, Sonoma, CA Optimizing Multi-Benefit ROI: Vision and Strategy Approaches for Nature Positive and Nature-Based Solutions
Nathan De Jager US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions at Reno Bottoms: From Scenario Building to Flood Inundation Modelling to Forest Succession Model Outputs	Christopher Allen Jacobs, Sonoma, CA Optimizing Multi-Benefit ROI: Vision and Strategy Approaches for Nature Positive and Nature-Based Solutions		
1:50pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Andrew Meier USACE, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Evaluation of Proposed Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions At Reno Bottoms: Forest Succession Modeling, Habitat Evaluation, and Incremental Cost Analysis </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Debra Bishop Jacobs, Sacramento, CA Reconnecting Floodplains Along the San Joaquin River, California </td> </tr> </table>	Andrew Meier USACE, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Evaluation of Proposed Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions At Reno Bottoms: Forest Succession Modeling, Habitat Evaluation, and Incremental Cost Analysis	Debra Bishop Jacobs, Sacramento, CA Reconnecting Floodplains Along the San Joaquin River, California
Andrew Meier USACE, La Crosse, WI Collaborative Modelling Improves Evaluation of Proposed Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions At Reno Bottoms: Forest Succession Modeling, Habitat Evaluation, and Incremental Cost Analysis	Debra Bishop Jacobs, Sacramento, CA Reconnecting Floodplains Along the San Joaquin River, California		
2:05pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Nicole Buckley US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Wind-Driven Sediment Resuspension in the Upper Mississippi River: Understanding Wave Dynamics to Guide Habitat Restoration </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Kit Hamblen Jacobs, Bellevue, WA Nature Positive Approaches in Rehabilitating Omaha's Cole Creek Watershed </td> </tr> </table>	Nicole Buckley US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Wind-Driven Sediment Resuspension in the Upper Mississippi River: Understanding Wave Dynamics to Guide Habitat Restoration	Kit Hamblen Jacobs, Bellevue, WA Nature Positive Approaches in Rehabilitating Omaha's Cole Creek Watershed
Nicole Buckley US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Wind-Driven Sediment Resuspension in the Upper Mississippi River: Understanding Wave Dynamics to Guide Habitat Restoration	Kit Hamblen Jacobs, Bellevue, WA Nature Positive Approaches in Rehabilitating Omaha's Cole Creek Watershed		
2:20pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Jeffrey Houser US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI <i>(on behalf of Nicole Ward, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lake City, MN)</i> A Systems Approach to the Science – Management Interface: Improving Both Research and Decision Making </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Patrick Hickey Jacobs, Denver, CO I-25 Highway Improvement Project Use of Process Based Restoration Techniques to Provide Wildlife Habitat Connectivity and Mitigation for Federally Threatened Species </td> </tr> </table>	Jeffrey Houser US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI <i>(on behalf of Nicole Ward, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lake City, MN)</i> A Systems Approach to the Science – Management Interface: Improving Both Research and Decision Making	Patrick Hickey Jacobs, Denver, CO I-25 Highway Improvement Project Use of Process Based Restoration Techniques to Provide Wildlife Habitat Connectivity and Mitigation for Federally Threatened Species
Jeffrey Houser US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI <i>(on behalf of Nicole Ward, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lake City, MN)</i> A Systems Approach to the Science – Management Interface: Improving Both Research and Decision Making	Patrick Hickey Jacobs, Denver, CO I-25 Highway Improvement Project Use of Process Based Restoration Techniques to Provide Wildlife Habitat Connectivity and Mitigation for Federally Threatened Species		
2:35pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Kristen Bouska US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI A Restoration Science Framework for Linking Restoration Actions and Ecological Responses at Site to System Scales </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Elise Ibendahl Jacobs, Saint Louis, MO Flooding to Renewal: Brentwood Bound Flood Mitigation </td> </tr> </table>	Kristen Bouska US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI A Restoration Science Framework for Linking Restoration Actions and Ecological Responses at Site to System Scales	Elise Ibendahl Jacobs, Saint Louis, MO Flooding to Renewal: Brentwood Bound Flood Mitigation
Kristen Bouska US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI A Restoration Science Framework for Linking Restoration Actions and Ecological Responses at Site to System Scales	Elise Ibendahl Jacobs, Saint Louis, MO Flooding to Renewal: Brentwood Bound Flood Mitigation		
2:50pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Discussion</td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;">Discussion</td> </tr> </table>	Discussion	Discussion
Discussion	Discussion		
3:00pm-3:30pm	PM Break in Poster Hall		

Tuesday, April 14, 2026															
Concurrent Sessions — 3:30pm - 5:00pm															
Session 5	Session 6														
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4														
Leveraging Data Analysis to Inform Implementation Actions for Habitat on the Upper Mississippi River	Partnerships Enhancing Restoration														
Benjamin Vandermyde US ACE, Rock Island District, Rock Island, IL	Nick Aumen Private Citizen, Loxahatchee, FL														
3:30pm	Introduction & Overview														
3:35pm	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Molly Van Appledorn US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Leveraging Big Data and Expert Knowledge to Develop a Forest Classification System for Improved Stewardship of Mississippi and Illinois River Floodplain Ecosystems </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> Chadwin Smith Headwaters, Vestal, NY Refining the Trinity River Restoration Program to Improve Collaboration and Outcomes </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Brian Stoff USACE, West Alton, MO Identifying Local Area Inundation Expectancy, Drainage Capacity, and Geomorphology Conditions to Correlate Suitable Forest Community Type to Manage </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Heidi Mehl The Nature Conservancy, Lawrence, KS Leveraging Federal Partnerships to Meet Global Ecosystem Restoration Goals </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Alicia Carhart Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse, WI Using Simple Models to Understand the Distribution of Areas Suitable for Vegetation Restoration in a Large River </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Margaret Pemberton USACE, Kansas City, MO Sustainable Rivers Program E-Flow and E-Pool Efforts on the Kansas and Osage River Basins </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Benjamin Vandermyde USACE, Pleasant Valley, IA Landform Alteration to Enable Natural Function of Ridge and Swale Geomorphology to Establish Suitable Conditions for Forest Community Types </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Rod Wittler Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA Implementing On-the-Ground Salmon Habitat Projects Based on Priorities Derived from the CVPIA Structured Decision Making Process </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Discussion </td> <td style="padding: 5px;"> Melissa Mosier Audubon Great Plains, Lincoln, NE Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River (VESPR): Building Resilience Through Informal Collaboration </td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding: 5px;">4:50pm</td> <td style="padding: 5px;">Discussion</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="background-color: #f2f2f2; text-align: center;">5:00pm-6:30pm</td> <td style="background-color: #d9ead3; text-align: center;">Welcome Networking Reception (Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres Provided)</td> </tr> </table>	Molly Van Appledorn US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Leveraging Big Data and Expert Knowledge to Develop a Forest Classification System for Improved Stewardship of Mississippi and Illinois River Floodplain Ecosystems	Chadwin Smith Headwaters, Vestal, NY Refining the Trinity River Restoration Program to Improve Collaboration and Outcomes	Brian Stoff USACE, West Alton, MO Identifying Local Area Inundation Expectancy, Drainage Capacity, and Geomorphology Conditions to Correlate Suitable Forest Community Type to Manage	Heidi Mehl The Nature Conservancy, Lawrence, KS Leveraging Federal Partnerships to Meet Global Ecosystem Restoration Goals	Alicia Carhart Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse, WI Using Simple Models to Understand the Distribution of Areas Suitable for Vegetation Restoration in a Large River	Margaret Pemberton USACE, Kansas City, MO Sustainable Rivers Program E-Flow and E-Pool Efforts on the Kansas and Osage River Basins	Benjamin Vandermyde USACE, Pleasant Valley, IA Landform Alteration to Enable Natural Function of Ridge and Swale Geomorphology to Establish Suitable Conditions for Forest Community Types	Rod Wittler Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA Implementing On-the-Ground Salmon Habitat Projects Based on Priorities Derived from the CVPIA Structured Decision Making Process	Discussion	Melissa Mosier Audubon Great Plains, Lincoln, NE Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River (VESPR): Building Resilience Through Informal Collaboration	4:50pm	Discussion	5:00pm-6:30pm	Welcome Networking Reception (Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres Provided)
Molly Van Appledorn US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Leveraging Big Data and Expert Knowledge to Develop a Forest Classification System for Improved Stewardship of Mississippi and Illinois River Floodplain Ecosystems	Chadwin Smith Headwaters, Vestal, NY Refining the Trinity River Restoration Program to Improve Collaboration and Outcomes														
Brian Stoff USACE, West Alton, MO Identifying Local Area Inundation Expectancy, Drainage Capacity, and Geomorphology Conditions to Correlate Suitable Forest Community Type to Manage	Heidi Mehl The Nature Conservancy, Lawrence, KS Leveraging Federal Partnerships to Meet Global Ecosystem Restoration Goals														
Alicia Carhart Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse, WI Using Simple Models to Understand the Distribution of Areas Suitable for Vegetation Restoration in a Large River	Margaret Pemberton USACE, Kansas City, MO Sustainable Rivers Program E-Flow and E-Pool Efforts on the Kansas and Osage River Basins														
Benjamin Vandermyde USACE, Pleasant Valley, IA Landform Alteration to Enable Natural Function of Ridge and Swale Geomorphology to Establish Suitable Conditions for Forest Community Types	Rod Wittler Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA Implementing On-the-Ground Salmon Habitat Projects Based on Priorities Derived from the CVPIA Structured Decision Making Process														
Discussion	Melissa Mosier Audubon Great Plains, Lincoln, NE Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River (VESPR): Building Resilience Through Informal Collaboration														
4:50pm	Discussion														
5:00pm-6:30pm	Welcome Networking Reception (Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres Provided)														

	Wednesday, April 15, 2026
7:30am- 5:30pm	Conference Registration Open
7:30am- 8:30am	Morning Refreshments in Poster & Sponsor Display Area (Beverages, assorted pastries, bagels, fruits, cheese and a variety of light breakfast fare will be available.)
	Plenary Session — 8:30am - 10:00am
	Capitol Ballroom Sections 2, 3 & 4
8:30am - 10:00am	<p style="text-align: center;">Plenary Session</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Salmon and Bison as Indicators of Ecosystem Restoration Success (or not?)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">MODERATOR: Matt Grabau, Adaptive Management Group Manager Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River, Multi-Species Conservation, Tucson, AZ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:30 Moderator Introduction & Overview</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8:35 Chris Jordan, Mathematical Biology and Systems Monitoring Program Manager, Northwest Fisheries Science Center, Mathematical Biology and Systems Monitoring Program, NOAA Fisheries, Seattle, WA</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9:10 Jason Baldes, Member, Eastern Shoshone Tribe, Executive Director, Wind River Tribal Buffalo Initiative, Adjunct Professor, Central Wyoming College and Wind River Tribal College, Board of Directors, Inter-Tribal Buffalo Council, Board of Trustees, Conservation Lands Fund, Senior Tribal Buffalo Program Manager National Wildlife Federation Tribal Partnerships Program, Kinnear, WY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">9:45 Q&A with the Audience</p>
10:00am- 10:30am	AM Break in Poster Hall

Wednesday, April 15, 2026	
Concurrent Sessions — 10:30am - 12:00noon	
Session 7	Session 8
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4
Frameworks and Feedback Loops: RECOVER's Role in Ensuring Everglades Restoration Objectives are Met	River Restoration Success Stories: Lessons Linking Decision-Making & Science
Jenna May USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	Clint Alexander ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada
Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
Tasso Cocoves USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Craig Fischenich FISCH Engineering, Vicksburg, MS
Are We There Yet? How RECOVER Determines Everglades Restoration Progress and Success	Adaptive Management in Action: Lessons from the Fort Peck Dam Test Flow for Pallid Sturgeon Recovery on the Upper Missouri River
Jessica Dell USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Matthew Grabau Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Boulder City, NV
Are We Heading in the Right Direction? Evaluating Restoration Progress to Inform Decision Making Along the Way	The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program: Lessons from the First 20 Years
Jenna May USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Clint Alexander ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada
Assessing and Communicating Stepwise Gains in Large Restoration Efforts	Weight-of-Evidence Approach for Understanding the Recovery of Okanagan Sockeye Salmon
Kiah Williams USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Marc Nelitz ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada
Continuous Improvement in Our Understanding of Future Restoration Performance	Bringing the Salmon Home: An Indigenous-Led Approach to Pacific Salmon Reintroduction in the Columbia River
Stephanie Verhulst USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Michael Belchik Yurok Tribe, Klamath, CA
Building Ecological Tools to Aid in Determining Everglades Restoration Success	Klamath Dam Removal: The World's Largest Fisheries Restoration Project Becomes Reality
Discussion	Discussion
Lunch on Own	
The Marriott has a restaurant lobby level, and there are plenty of nearby restaurants and small shops and if you venture a bit further. It's a 12-minute walk to Old Market area, boasting hundreds of restaurants, shops and unique businesses.	

Wednesday, April 15, 2026	
Concurrent Sessions — 1:30pm - 3:00pm	
Session 9	Session 10
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4
Tools for Restoration Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring — Part 1 of 2	Managing Complex Restoration Programs
Howie Gonzales USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	Darcy Austin State Water Contractors (SWC), Sacramento, CA
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview
1:35pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Devin Wilson CDM Smith, Inc., Kansas City, MO</p> <p>Leveraging Advanced Remote Sensing and Machine Learning Data to Inform Ecological Restoration, Design, and Monitoring</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Rama Rani Hazen and Sawyer, Boca Raton, FL</p> <p>Modeling the Return to a Living River: Groundwater–Surface Water Dynamics in the Kissimmee Basin, Florida</p> </div> </div>
1:50pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Zhenghong Tang University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE</p> <p>Developing a Near Real-Time Information Platform to Monitor and Assess Hydrological Performance of Conservation Lands</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Jim Howe The Nature Conservancy, Rochester, New York</p> <p>USACE Sustainable Rivers Program - Scaling River Restoration through Operational Changes and Adaptive Management: Overview</p> </div> </div>
2:05pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Edward Stowe USACE, Athens, GA</p> <p>Predicting Upper Mississippi River Backwater Fish Community Attributes from Site- and Patch-Scale Characteristics to Inform Restoration Decision-Making</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Michelle Mattson USACE, Alexandria, VA</p> <p>USACE Sustainable Rivers Program - Scaling River Restoration through Operational Changes and Adaptive Management: Case Studies</p> </div> </div>
2:20pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Erich Hester Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA</p> <p>Watershed-Scale Effects of Floodplain and Stage 0 Restoration on Hydrologic Attenuation</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Jesse Ray USACE, Rock Island, IL</p> <p>Managing Evolving Priorities: System-Scale Adaptive Management on the Upper Mississippi River</p> </div> </div>
2:35pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Andrea Nocentini Seminole Tribe of Florida, Hollywood, FL</p> <p>Monitoring the Forested Wetlands of the Seminole Tribe of Florida’s Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Anticipation of Hydrologic Restoration</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Andrew LoSchiavo USACE, Jacksonville, FL</p> <p>All Hands on Board: Partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration</p> </div> </div>
2:50pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Discussion</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Discussion</p> </div> </div>
3:00pm-3:30pm	PM Break in Poster Hall

Wednesday, April 15, 2026		
Concurrent Sessions — 3:30pm - 5:00pm		
Session 11	Session 12	
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4	
Tools for Restoration Planning, Implementation, and Monitoring — Part 2 of 2	Adaptive Restoration: Clean Water and Ecological Resilience	
Ken Bradshaw USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	Jason Hassrick ICF, San Rafael, CA	
3:30pm	Introduction & Overview	
3:35pm	<p>Brook Herman USACE-ERDC, Vicksburg, MS</p> <p>Nationwide Network for Monitoring Ecosystem Recovery</p>	<p>Joseph McMahon The University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD</p> <p>The Benefits of Riparian Restoration During Floods: From Drinking Water Quality to Wider Society</p>
3:50pm	<p>Denise Reed Denise Reed LLC, Montegut, LA</p> <p>Ecosystem Restoration Planning for the Atchafalaya River System: Models and Metrics to Assess Project Performance</p>	<p>Steve Bartell Stantec, Nashville, TN</p> <p>Adapting a Bioenergetics-Based Food Web, Ecosystem Model to Inform Nitrogen Management and Ecosystem Restoration in Old Tampa Bay</p>
4:05pm	<p>Heather Page Anchor QEA, Inc., Seattle, WA</p> <p>Multi-Benefit Solutions: Crafting an Integrated Plan for the Chehalis Basin</p>	<p>Robb Lutz EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. PBC, Lincoln, NE</p> <p>Lake Rehabilitation: Enhancing Water Quality, Habitat, and Recreation</p>
4:20pm	<p>Ash Zemenick Delta Stewardship Council, Sacramento, CA</p> <p>Assessing the Impact of Delta Science Program Funded Research on Decision Making in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta</p>	<p>Paul Sawyer Amite River Basin Commission, Baton Rouge, LA and</p> <p>Ryan Clark, Halff, Inc., Baton Rouge, LA</p> <p>Restoring Fluvial Stability and Mitigating Flood Hazards in the Upper Amite River Through Ecosystem Restoration of Sand & Gravel Mines</p>
4:35pm	<p>Marley Bonaquist Cornell University, Ithaca, NY</p> <p>Environmental Graphics as a Tool to Communicate Ecological Complexity in Supporting Resource Management and Public Policy Decision Making</p>	<p>Jason Hassrick ICF, San Rafael, CA</p> <p>Managing Chinook Salmon Resiliency Under Climate Change: Demonstrating Return on Investment in Ecosystem Restoration and Water Management</p>
4:50pm	Discussion	Discussion
5:00pm - 7:00pm	Poster Session & Networking Reception (Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres Provided)	

Thursday, April 16, 2026			
7:30am - 5:00pm	Conference Registration Open		
7:30am - 8:30am	Morning Refreshments in Poster & Sponsor Display Area (Beverages, assorted pastries, bagels, fruits, cheese and a variety of light breakfast fare will be available.)		
	Concurrent Sessions — 8:30am - 10:00am		
	Session 13		
	Session 14		
	Capitol Ballroom Section 2		
	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4		
	Remote Sensing Applications for Adaptive Management		
	Large-Scale Levee Setbacks for Missouri River Resilience		
	Becky Blasius Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, NV		
	Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA		
8:30am	Introduction & Overview		
8:35am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Quinn Lewis Headwaters Corporation Lakewood, CO Unoccupied Aerial Systems for Bridging Scale Gaps in Adaptive Management of River Systems: Opportunities and Challenges </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Robert Jacobson University of Missouri, Columbia, MO Geographic and Historical Context for Levee Setback Decisions, Lower Missouri River </td> </tr> </table>	Quinn Lewis Headwaters Corporation Lakewood, CO Unoccupied Aerial Systems for Bridging Scale Gaps in Adaptive Management of River Systems: Opportunities and Challenges	Robert Jacobson University of Missouri, Columbia, MO Geographic and Historical Context for Levee Setback Decisions, Lower Missouri River
Quinn Lewis Headwaters Corporation Lakewood, CO Unoccupied Aerial Systems for Bridging Scale Gaps in Adaptive Management of River Systems: Opportunities and Challenges	Robert Jacobson University of Missouri, Columbia, MO Geographic and Historical Context for Levee Setback Decisions, Lower Missouri River		
8:50am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Partick Farrell Headwaters Corporation Kearney, NE Learning by Doing: A System-Scale Flow Experiment to Adaptively Manage Habitat for Whooping Cranes </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Dave Crane USACE Omaha District, Omaha, NE L-536 Levee Setback Case Study and Applied Research Integration in New Projects Along the Lower Missouri River </td> </tr> </table>	Partick Farrell Headwaters Corporation Kearney, NE Learning by Doing: A System-Scale Flow Experiment to Adaptively Manage Habitat for Whooping Cranes	Dave Crane USACE Omaha District, Omaha, NE L-536 Levee Setback Case Study and Applied Research Integration in New Projects Along the Lower Missouri River
Partick Farrell Headwaters Corporation Kearney, NE Learning by Doing: A System-Scale Flow Experiment to Adaptively Manage Habitat for Whooping Cranes	Dave Crane USACE Omaha District, Omaha, NE L-536 Levee Setback Case Study and Applied Research Integration in New Projects Along the Lower Missouri River		
9:05am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Victoria Treto Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Increasing Accessibility and Utilization of Remote Sensing Tools for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Rabindra Parajuli University of Georgia, Athens, GA Monitoring and Predicting Biodiversity Conservation Benefits of Levee Setbacks </td> </tr> </table>	Victoria Treto Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Increasing Accessibility and Utilization of Remote Sensing Tools for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program	Rabindra Parajuli University of Georgia, Athens, GA Monitoring and Predicting Biodiversity Conservation Benefits of Levee Setbacks
Victoria Treto Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Increasing Accessibility and Utilization of Remote Sensing Tools for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program	Rabindra Parajuli University of Georgia, Athens, GA Monitoring and Predicting Biodiversity Conservation Benefits of Levee Setbacks		
9:20am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> David Gundlach Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Fusion of Satellite Imagery and Soil Moisture Data </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Mark Dixon University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD Forest Dynamics along the Lower Missouri River: Implications for Floodplain Management and Ecosystem Services </td> </tr> </table>	David Gundlach Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Fusion of Satellite Imagery and Soil Moisture Data	Mark Dixon University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD Forest Dynamics along the Lower Missouri River: Implications for Floodplain Management and Ecosystem Services
David Gundlach Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV Fusion of Satellite Imagery and Soil Moisture Data	Mark Dixon University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD Forest Dynamics along the Lower Missouri River: Implications for Floodplain Management and Ecosystem Services		
9:35am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Conor McMahon University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA Aerial and Terrestrial LiDAR and Time Series of Multispectral Satellite Imagery for Characterizing Bird Habitat Structure and Composition on the Santa Clara River </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA Return on Investment for Missouri River Levee Setbacks </td> </tr> </table>	Conor McMahon University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA Aerial and Terrestrial LiDAR and Time Series of Multispectral Satellite Imagery for Characterizing Bird Habitat Structure and Composition on the Santa Clara River	Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA Return on Investment for Missouri River Levee Setbacks
Conor McMahon University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA Aerial and Terrestrial LiDAR and Time Series of Multispectral Satellite Imagery for Characterizing Bird Habitat Structure and Composition on the Santa Clara River	Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA Return on Investment for Missouri River Levee Setbacks		
9:50am	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">Discussion</td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;">Discussion</td> </tr> </table>	Discussion	Discussion
Discussion	Discussion		
10:00am - 10:30am	AM Break in Poster Hall		

Thursday, April 16, 2026	
Concurrent Sessions — 10:30am - 12:00noon	
Session 15	Session 16
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4
Adaptive Management and Decision-Making for Large-Scale Restoration	The Role of Compensatory Mitigation in Ecosystem Restoration - A Candid Conversation Between Practitioners, Bankers, and Local and State Government
Patrick Farrell Headwaters, Vestal, NY	Brian Murphy River Network, Denver, CO
10:30am	Introduction & Overview
10:35am	<p>Gretchen Ehlinger USACE, Jacksonville, FL</p> <p>Incorporating Adaptive Management in Ecosystem Restoration and Navigation Projects: Lessons from the Everglades and Application to Coral Reef Environments</p>
10:50am	<p>Brian Johnson USACE, St. Louis, MO</p> <p>Small Changes Big Impact: Making Operational Changes at USACE Infrastructure on the Mississippi River to Create Ecosystem Benefits</p>
11:05am	<p>Mark Cornish USACE, Rock Island, IL</p> <p>Mississippi River Fish Passage Design, Construction, and Monitoring</p>
11:20am	<p>Daniel Levish Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, CO</p> <p>Central Valley Project Salmonid Habitat Structured Decision Making Process</p>
11:35am	<p>Jenna Paul Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA</p> <p>Using NOFOs As an Instrument to Improve Performance of Decision Support Models</p>
11:50am	Discussion
12noon-1:30pm	<p style="text-align: center;">Lunch on Own</p> <p>The Marriott has a restaurant lobby level, and there are plenty of nearby restaurants and small shops and if you venture a bit further. It's a 12-minute walk to Old Market area, boasting hundreds of restaurants, shops and unique businesses.</p>

Thursday, April 16, 2026	
Concurrent Sessions — 1:30pm - 3:00pm	
Session 17	Session 18
Capitol Ballroom Section 2	Capitol Ballroom Sections 3 & 4
Past, Present, and Future of Everglades and Florida Bay	Nebraska's Watershed-Based Approach for Water Quality and Quantity Management
Fahmida Khatun Everglades National Park, National Park Services, Boynton Beach, FL	Matt Pillard HDR Engineering, Inc., Omaha, NE
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview
1:35pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Christopher McVoy South Florida Engineering & Consulting, Lake Worth, FL</p> <p>Everglades Restoration – Where Are We Headed</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Amanda Grint, Assistant General Manager, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, Omaha, NE</p> <p>Ryan Chapman, Assistant General Manger - Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, Wahoo, NE</p> </div> </div>
1:50pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Wei Huang Florida International University, Miami, FL</p> <p>Hydrologic Connectivity Between the Greater Everglades and Florida Bay Through the Taylor River Slough Modified by Environmental Stressors and Water Management Activities</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Jennifer Schellpeper, Water Division Administrator, Nebraska Dept. of Water, Energy, and Environment, Lincoln, NE</p> </div> </div>
2:05pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Zaki Moustafa South Florida Engineering & Consulting, Lake Worth, FL</p> <p>Flow and Salinity: Understanding the Dynamics of Freshwater Inflow on Florida Bay's Ecosystem</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Nebraska uses a unique system for managing its most important natural resource – water. The backbone of this system is rooted in a watershed-based approach through the establishment of Natural Resource Districts. This system of locally driven decision-making and integration with Nebraska's state agencies, provides the framework for state water planning. Panel members represent Nebraska's administrative entities that collaboratively manage Nebraska's water resources. Panelists will be engaged in discussion highlighting the successes, challenges, and opportunities of Nebraska's system for water resource planning.</p> </div> </div>
2:20pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Caiyun Zhang Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL</p> <p>Integrating Geophysical and Remote Sensing Techniques to Model Peat Stability in the Everglades</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> </div>
2:35pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Alemayehu Dula Shanko Florida International University, Miami, FL</p> <p>The Future of Florida Bay: Modeling and Managing Flow for Healthy Bay</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> </div>
2:50pm	<div style="display: flex;"> <div style="flex: 1;"> <p>Discussion</p> </div> <div style="flex: 1;"> </div> </div>
3:00pm-3:30pm	PM Break in Poster Hall

Thursday, April 16, 2026	
Plenary Session — 3:30pm - 5:00pm	
Session 19	
Capitol Ballroom Sections 2, 3 & 4	
<p>Closing Plenary Panel Session</p> <p>Investing in Nature: Understanding ROI in Large-Scale Ecosystem Restoration</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>MODERATOR:</u></p> <p>Chad Smith, NCER 2026 Conference Chair, Headwaters Corporation, Kearney, NE</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>PANELISTS:</u></p> <p>Nicholas G. Aumen, UF/IFAS School of Natural Resources and Environment, Loxahatchee, FL</p> <p>Darcy Austin, State Water Contractors (SWC), Sacramento, CA</p> <p>Jason Farnsworth, Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP), Kearney, NE</p> <p>Matthew Grabau, Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Boulder City, NV</p> <p>Gina Paduano Ralph, US Army Corps of Engineers, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL</p> <p>Denise Reed, University of New Orleans, New Orleans, LA</p> <p>This panel session brings together leaders from major restoration initiatives across the U.S. to reflect on lessons learned, long-term outcomes, and the value of sustained investment in restoring complex ecosystems. Participants will share insights from large-scale restoration efforts nationwide, including major river and coastal restoration projects, multi-state river recovery programs, and large ecosystem restoration plans such as in the Everglades. The discussion will explore how “return on investment” can be understood across multiple dimensions, including ecological rehabilitation, water management, and long-term socioeconomic benefits. Panelists will share practical experiences, evolving metrics for measuring success, and the optimism that comes from seeing decades-long restoration investments begin to produce measurable outcomes. The session aims to provide both perspective and inspiration for advancing the next generation of large-scale ecosystem restoration initiatives.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">4:50 Closing Remarks</p>	
5:00pm	Conference Concludes
5:00pm - 6:00pm	Poster & Sponsor Display Removal (<i>displays must be dismantled and removed by 6pm.</i>)
NCER 2026 Concludes	