## **DETAILED TENTATIVE AGENDA**



**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!** 





	Monday, April 13, 2026		
E	OPTIONAL Pre-conference Field Trip to Copeland Bend WMA & Levee Setback  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.		
1:00pm - 5:30pm	Field Trip Details: TOUR LEADER: Dave Crane, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Omaha, NE		
1:0	Early Cost: \$50 / Person (by December 5, 2025 - or until trip is full)  Regular Cost: \$65 / Person (After December 5, 2025)  [Arrive by 1:00pm; Bus loads at 1:15pm; Bus departs at 1:30pm and returns at 5:30pm]		
	Visit the NCER website for more detail at: <u>conference.ifas.ufl.edu/ncer/pre-conference-field-trip</u>		
4:00pm- 7:00pm	Conference Registration Opens Poster Presenters and Sponsors Move-In Displays		
5:00pm- 6:30pm	Informal Gathering in the Hotel Lobby Lounge Join us for a relaxed get-together with colleagues—everyone will cover their own food and drinks.		
	T		
<u> </u>	Tuesday, April 14, 2026		
7:30am- 5:00pm	Conference Registration Open		
7:30am- 8:30am	Coffee Service in Poster & Sponsor Display Area (Attendees are on their own for breakfast.)		
	Plenary Session — 8:30am - 10:00am		
	Capitol Ballroom Sections 2, 3 & 4		
	Opening Plenary Session  "Nebraska and the Great Plains:  Whooping Crane Conservation at the Continental Scale"		
Ē	MODERATOR: Chad Smith, President, Headwaters Corporation, Kearney, NE		
8:30am-10:00am	8:30 Moderator Introduction & Overview — Welcome to NCER 2026		
8:30am	8:40 <b>Larkin Powell</b> , Director and Professor of Conservation Biology/Animal Ecology, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE		
	9:00 <b>Mike Forsberg</b> , Conservation Photographer, Research Assistant Professor, School of Natural Resources, University of Nebraska Lincoln, Lincoln, NE		
	9:40 Q&A with the Audience		
10:00am- 10:30am	AM Break in Poster Hall		

	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
	<b>Gina Paduano Ralph</b> USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	<b>Maya Kocian</b> Earth Economics, Tacoma, WA
10:30am	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
iam	Eva Velez USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Harry Stone, Ohio River Basin Alliance, Cincinnati, OH
10:35am	Vision in Fruition: Envisioning and Evaluating the Future with CERP	<b>Ben Eubanks,</b> Resource Environmental Solutions (RES), Bellaire, TX
am	<b>Zulamet Vega-Liriano</b> USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Kelly Watkinson, The Land Trust Alliance, Washington, DC
10:50am	Assumptions for a Projected CERP in the Second Periodic CERP Update	Paul Hindsley, The Everglades Foundation, Palmetto Bay, FL  Bryan Van Stippen, National Indian Carbon Coalition, Little
Ē	Pierre Massena USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Canada, MN
11:05am	What Insights do the Second Periodic CERP Update Modeling Results Provide about CERP?	Restoring natural ecosystems delivers measurable economic returns. Drawing from recent Earth Economics studies, five partners representing diverse ecosystems across the US will
Ē	<b>Gina Paduano Ralph</b> USACE, Jacksonville, FL	discuss how they have used ecosystem services valuation to further their conservation and restoration goals. Attendees will gain insights into valuation methods, public and private
11:208		sector use of valuation, and how to communicate nature's ROI to decision-makers.
Ē	Chloe' Vorseth USACE, Jacksonville, FL	
11:35am	RECOVER's Scientific Evaluation of the Second Periodic CERP Update (CERP Goal 2: Enhance Economic Values and Social Well Being)	
11:50am	Discussion	
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
	<b>Jeffrey Houser</b> U.S. Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI	<b>Jeremy Thomas</b> Jacobs, Sacramento, CA
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
	Nathan De Jager US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI	Christopher Allen Jacobs, Sonoma, CA
1:35pm	Collaborative Modelling Improves Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions at Reno Bottoms: From Scenario Building to Flood Inundation Modelling to Forest Succession Model Outputs	Optimizing Multi-Benefit ROI: Vision and Strategy Approaches for Nature Positive and Nature-Based Solutions
	Andrew Meier USACE, La Crosse, WI	<b>Debra Bishop</b> Jacobs, Sacramento, CA
1:50pm	Collaborative Modelling Improves Evaluation of Proposed Floodplain Vegetation Management Actions At Reno Bottoms: Forest Succession Modeling, Habitat Evaluation, and Incremental Cost Analysis	Reconnecting Floodplains Along the San Joaquin River, California
	Nicole Buckley US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI	Kit Hamblen
2:05pm	Wind-Driven Sediment Resuspension in the Upper Mississippi River: Understanding Wave Dynamics to Guide Habitat Restoration	Jacobs, Bellevue, WA  Nature Positive Approaches in Rehabilitating Omaha's  Cole Creek Watershed
	Jeffrey Houser	Patrick Hickey
2:20pm	US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI (on behalf of Nicole Ward, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Lake City, MN)  A Systems Approach to the Science – Management	Jacobs, Denver, CO I-25 Highway Improvement Project Use of Process Based Restoration Techniques to Provide Wildlife Habitat Connectivity and Mitigation for Federally Threatened
	Interface: Improving Both Research and Decision Making	Species
Ē	Kristen Bouska US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI	Elise Ibendahl Jacobs, Saint Louis, MO
2:35pm	A Restoration Science Framework for Linking Restoration Actions and Ecological Responses at Site to System Scales	Flooding to Renewal: Brentwood Bound Flood Mitigation
2:50pm	Discussion	Discussion
3:30pm- 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	
	<b>Benjamin Vandermyde</b> US ACE, Rock Island District, Rock Island, IL	<b>Nick Aumen</b> Private Citizen, Loxahatchee, FL	
3:30pm	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview	
3:35pm	Molly Van Appledorn US Geological Survey, La Crosse, WI Leveraging Big Data and Expert Knowledge to Develop a	Chadwin Smith Headwaters, Vestal, NY Refining the Trinity River Restoration Program to Improve	
3:3	Forest Classification System for Improved Stewardship of Mississippi and Illinois River Floodplain Ecosystems	Collaboration and Outcomes	
	Brian Stoff USACE, West Alton, MO	<b>Heidi Mehl</b> The Nature Conservancy, Lawrence, KS	
3:50pm	Identifying Local Area Inundation Expectancy, Drainage Capacity, and Geomorphology Conditions to Correlate Suitable Forest Community Type to Manage	Leveraging Federal Partnerships to Meet Global Ecosystem Restoration Goals	
	Bruce Henry	Margaret Pemberton	
4:05pm	US Fish and Wildlife Service, Onalaska, WI  Considering Floodplain Forest Dynamics and Expectations of Growth and Structural Development Potential for Unique Forest Community Types	USACE, Kansas City, MO Sustainable Rivers Program E-Flow and E-Pool Efforts on the Kansas and Osage River Basins	
	Alicia Carhart Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, La Crosse, WI	Rod Wittler Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA	
4:20pm	Using Simple Models to Understand the Distribution of Areas Suitable for Vegetation Restoration in a Large River	Implementing On-the-Ground Salmon Habitat Projects Based on Priorities Derived from the CVPIA Structured Decision Making Process	
	<b>Benjamin Vandermyde</b> USACE, Pleasant Valley, IA	<b>Melissa Mosier</b> Audubon Great Plains, Lincoln, NE	
4:35pm	Landform Alteration to Enable Natural Function of Ridge and Swale Geomorphology to Establish Suitable Conditions for Forest Community Types	Vision for an Ecologically Sound Platte River (VESPR): Building Resilience Through Informal Collaboration	
4:50pm	Discussion	Discussion	
5:00pm- 7:00pm	Welcome Networking Reception		
5:1	(Beverages & Hors d'oeuvres Provided)		

	Wednesday, April 15, 2026		
7:30am- 5:30pm	Conference Registration Open		
7:30am- 8:30am	Coffee Service in Poster & Sponsor Display Area (Attendees are on their own for breakfast.)		
	Plenary Session — 8:30am - 10:00am		
	Capitol Ballroom Sections 2, 3 & 4		
8:30am - 10:00am	Plenary Session  Salmon and Bison as Indicators of Ecosystem Restoration Success (or not?)  MODERATOR: Matt Grabau, Adaptive Management Group Manager Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River, Multi-Species Conservation, Tucson, AZ		
	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  9:45 Q&A with the Audience		
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	
	<b>Jenna May</b> USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL	Clint Alexander ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada	
10:30am	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview	
٤	Tasso Cocoves USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Craig Fischenich FIScH Engineering, Vicksburg, MS	
10:35am	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	
10:50am	Jessica Dell USACE, Jacksonville, FL  Are We Heading in the Right Direction? Evaluating Restoration Progress to Inform Decision Making Along the	Matthew Grabau Bureau of Reclamation, Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program, Boulder City, NV The Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation	
	Way Jenna May	Program: Lessons from the First 20 Years  Clint Alexander	
11:05am	USACE, Jacksonville, FL	ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada	
11:	Assessing and Communicating Stepwise Gains in Large Restoration Efforts	Weight-of-Evidence Approach for Understanding the Recovery of Okanagan Sockeye Salmon	
E	Kiah Williams USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Marc Nelitz ESSA Technologies Ltd., Vancouver, BC, Canada	
11:20am	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	Michael Belchik	
11:35am	USACE, Jacksonville, FL  Building Ecological Tools to Aid in Determining Everglades Restoration Success	Yurok Tribe, Klamath, CA  Klamath Dam Removal: The World's Largest Fisheries  Restoration Project Becomes Reality	
11:50am	Discussion	Discussion	
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.		

	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	Collaborative Decision-Making, Water Development, and Endangered Species on the Platte River
	<b>Ryan Clark</b> Halff, Inc., Baton Rouge, LA	<b>Chadwin Smith</b> Headwaters, Kearney, NE
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
	<b>Devin Wilson</b> CDM Smith, Inc., Kansas City, MO	Jason Farnsworth, Headwaters/PRRIP, Kearney, NE  Brock Merrill, Bureau of Reclamation, Torrington, WY
1:35pm	Leveraging Advanced Remote Sensing and Machine Learning Data to Inform Ecological Restoration, Design, and Monitoring	Amy Ostdiek, State of Colorado, Denver, CO
E	Zhenghong Tang University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE  Jesse Bradley, State of Neb	Jason Mead, State of Wyoming, Cheyenne, WY  Jesse Bradley, State of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
1:50pm	Developing a Near Real-Time Information Platform to Monitor and Assess Hydrological Performance of Conservation Lands	The Platte River Recovery Implementation Program (PRRIP or Program) is a collaborative Recovery Implementation Program negotiated and implemented to address the needs of
Ē	Edward Stowe USACE, Athens, GA	four threatened or endangered species using the Platte River Basin while allowing water development to continue to occur. Structural and functional attributes of the PRRIP were
Predicting Upper Mississippi River Backwater Fish Community Attributes from Site- and Patch-Scale Characteristics to Inform Restoration Decision-Making	Community Attributes from Site- and Patch-Scale	specifically negotiated and designed to nurture collaborative decision-making and carefully link science learning with informed management decisions. Shared decision-making, an independent Executive Director and staff, agreed-upon
2:20pm	<b>Erich Hester</b> Virginia Tech University, Blacksburg, VA	goals, and defined contributions of money, land, and water are foundational to Program success. This panel of PRRIP decision-makers will provide top-level insight into the return
2:2	Watershed-Scale Effects of Floodplain and Stage 0 Restoration on Hydrologic Attenuation	on investment since 2007 in this unique case study.
Ē	Andrea Nocentini Seminole Tribe of Florida, Hollywood, FL	
2:35pm	Monitoring the Forested Wetlands of the Seminole Tribe of Florida's Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Anticipation of Hydrologic Restoration	
2:50pm	Discussion	
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: Strengthening Water Systems for Resilience and Clean Water
	<b>Jason Hassrick</b> ICF, San Rafael, CA	<b>Ken Bradshaw</b> USACE, Jacksonville District, Jacksonville, FL
3:30pm	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
E	Brook Herman USACE-ERDC, Vicksburg, MS	Sarah Milligan Bandelier National Monument, Los Alamos, NM
3:35pm	Nationwide Network for Monitoring Ecosystem Recovery	Riparian Restoration in a Changing Ecosystem: Removing Invasives and Restoring Beavers and Habitat to a Post-Fire and Flood Landscape
٤	<b>Denise Reed</b> Denise Reed LLC, Montegut, LA	Joseph McMahon The University of Queensland, Brisbane, QLD
3:50pm	Ecosystem Restoration Planning for the Atchafalaya River System: Models and Metrics to Assess Project Performance	The Benefits of Riparian Restoration During Floods: From Drinking Water Quality to Wider Society
md	<b>Heather Page</b> Anchor QEA, Inc., Seattle, WA	Robb Lutz EA Engineering, Science, and Technology, Inc. PBC, Lincoln, NE
4:05pm	Multi-Benefit Solutions: Crafting an Integrated Plan for the Chehalis Basin	Lake Rehabilitation: Enhancing Water Quality, Habitat, and Recreation
	Ash Zemenick Delta Stewardship Council, Sacramento, CA	Steve Bartell Stantec, Nashville, TN
4:20pm	Assessing the Impact of Delta Science Program Funded Research on Decision Making in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta	Adapting a Bioenergetics-Based Food Web, Ecosystem Model to Inform Nitrogen Management and Ecosystem Restoration in Old Tampa Bay
	Marley Bonaquist Cornell University, Ithaca, NY	Oke Oguns Renaissance Africa Energy Company, Port Harcourt Rivers
4:35pm	Environmental Graphics as a Tool to Communicate Ecological Complexity in Supporting Resource Management and Public Policy Decision Making	Advancing Mangrove Restoration in Bodo Through Strategic Revegetation and Monitoring
4:50pm	Discussion	Discussion
5:00pm - 7:00pm		etworking Reception d'oeuvres Provided)

	Thursday, April 16, 2026	
7:30am- 5:00pm	Conference Registration Open	
7:30am- 7: 8:30am 5:	Coffee Service in Poster & Sponsor Display Area  (Attendees are on their own for breakfast.)	
	Concurrent Sessions	s — 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
	<b>Becky Blasius</b> Bureau of Reclamation, Boulder City, NV	Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA
8:30am	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
8:35am	Quinn Lewis Headwaters Corporation Lakewood, CO	Robert Jacobson University of Missouri, Columbia, MO
8:38	Unoccupied Aerial Systems for Bridging Scale Gaps in Adaptive Management of River Systems: Opportunities and Challenges	Geographic and Historical Context for Levee Setback Decisions, Lower Missouri River
	Partick Farrell	Dave Crane
8:50am	Headwaters Corporation Kearney, NE  Learning by Doing: A System-Scale Flow Experiment to  Adaptively Manage Habitat for Whooping Cranes	USACE Omaha District, Omaha, NE  L-536 Levee Setback Case Study and Applied Research Integration in New Projects Along the Lower Missouri River
m.	<b>Victoria Treto</b> Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV	Rabindra Parajuli University of Georgia, Athens, GA
9:05am	Increasing Accessibility and Utilization of Remote Sensing Tools for the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program	Monitoring and Predicting Biodiversity Conservation Benefits of Levee Setbacks
	David Gundlach	Mark Dixon
9:20am	Bureau of Reclamation Boulder City, NV  Fusion of Satellite Imagery and Soil Moisture Data	University of South Dakota, Vermillion, SD  Forest Dynamics along the Lower Missouri River: Implications for Floodplain Management and Ecosystem
		Services
	Conor McMahon University of California Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA	Matt Chambers University of Georgia, Athens, GA
9:35am	Aerial and Terrestrial LiDAR and Time Series of Multispectral Satellite Imagery for Characterizing Bird Habitat Structure and Composition on the Santa Clara River	Return on Investment for Missouri River Levee Setbacks
9:50am	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	<b>Brian Murphy</b> River Network, Denver, CO
10:30am	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview
	Gretchen Ehlinger USACE, Jacksonville, FL	Moneka Worah, ERO Resources, Lakewood, CO
10:35am	Incorporating Adaptive Management in Ecosystem	Jeremy Sueltenfuss, SWCA, Inc., Broomfield, CO
10	Restoration and Navigation Projects: Lessons from the Everglades and Application to Coral Reef Environments	Stephen Decker, Rocky Mountain Mitigation, Denver, CO
	Brian Johnson	Mary Powell, Mile High Flood District, Lakewood, CO
æ	USACE, St. Louis, MO	Due to changes at the federal level, Colorado is currently implementing a state dredge and fill program. During program
10:50am	Small Changes Big Impact: Making Operational Changes at USACE Infrastructure on the Mississippi River to Create	development, there has been a wide array of stakeholder
	Ecosystem Benefits	feedback on mitigation and how best to implement a mitigation program. This session includes a diverse panel
	Mark Cornish USACE, Rock Island, IL	discussing the role of compensatory mitigation in ecosystem restoration and how states, including Colorado, can
11:05am		encourage an array of mitigation methods to promote stream and wetland restoration at the watershed level. Panelists include representatives from the conservation sector,
=======================================	Mississippi River Fish Passage Design, Construction, and Monitoring	
	Rod Wittler	mitigation banking sector, local governments, and practitioners. Questions to the panel include "how can
am	Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA	mitigation banks and in lieu fee programs incentivize ecosystem restoration and create science-backed restoration
11:20am	Central Valley Project Salmonid Habitat Structured Decision Making Process	initiatives at the local level"? "How can permittee responsibl mitigation for local watershed managers be encouraged to
Jenna Paul	Jenna Paul	protect vital aquatic resources"? "What role should state governments play in incentivizing ecosystem restoration
Sam	Bureau of Reclamation, Sacramento, CA	projects"?
11:35am	Using NOFOs As an Instrument to Improve Performance of Decision Support Models	
11:50am	Discussion	
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.	

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	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	<b>Matt Pillard</b> HDR Engineering, Inc, Omaha, NE	
1:30pm	Introduction & Overview	Introduction & Overview	
1:35pm	Christopher McVoy South Florida Engineering & Consulting, Lake Worth, FL	<b>Jesse Bradley,</b> Director, Nebraska Dept. of Water, Energy, and Environment, Lincoln, NE	
1:3	Everglades Restoration – Where Are We Headed	<b>Amanda Grint,</b> Assistant General Manager, Papio-Missouri River Natural Resources District, Omaha, NE	
٤	Wei Huang Florida International University, Miami, FL	<b>Ryan Chapman,</b> Assistant General Manger - Lower Platte North Natural Resources District, Wahoo, NE	
1:50pm	Hydrologic Connectivity Between the Greater Everglades and Florida Bay Through the Taylor River Slough Modified by Environmental Stressors and Water Management Activities	Jennifer Schellpeper, Water Division Administrator, Nebraska Dept. of Water, Energy, and Environment, Lincoln, NE	
٤	Zaki Moustafa South Florida Engineering & Consulting, Lake Worth, FL	Nebraska uses a unique system for managing its most	
2:05pm	Flow and Salinity: Understanding the Dynamics of Freshwater Inflow on Florida Bay's Ecosystem	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	
2:20pm	Caiyun Zhang Florida Atlantic University, Boca Raton, FL	Nebraska's state agencies, provides the framework for state water planning. Panel members represent Nebraska's administrative entities that collaboratively manage	
2:20	Integrating Geophysical and Remote Sensing Techniques to Model Peat Stability in the Everglades	Nebraska's water resources. Panelists will be engaged in discussion highlighting the successes, challenges, and	
2:35pm	Alemayehu Dula Shanko Florida International University, Miami, FL	opportunities of Nebraska's system for water resource planning.	
2:35	The Future of Florida Bay: Modeling and Managing Flow for Healthy Bay		
2:50pm	Discussion		
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 **Managing Complex Restoration Programs** MODERATOR: Darcy Austin, SWC, Sacramento, CA 3:30 Moderator Introduction & Overview 3:35 John Hickey, USACE, Davis, CA "Sustainable Rivers Program: Implementing Environmental Actions via Adaptive Management of USACE Infrastructure" 3:50 Marissa Lack, USACE, Rock Island, IL "Managing Evolving Priorities: System-Scale Adaptive Management on the Upper Mississippi River" 4:05 Andrew LoSchiavo, USACE, Jacksonville, FL "All Hands on Board: Partnering with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Aquatic Ecosystem Restoration" 4:20 Discussion 4:30 Closing Keynote Presentation "The Federal Role in Ensuring a Return on Investment in Large-Scale Ecosystem Restoration" The conference will conclude with a dynamic keynote address offering a high-level federal perspective. This presentation will provide an inside look at federal decision-making and prioritization processes. Attendees will leave energized and empowered with a clear mission: to deliver the science, innovation, and on-the-ground strategies that inform leadership decisions and drive the future of ecosystem restoration 5:00pm Conference Concludes Poster & Sponsor Display Removal (displays must be dismantled and removed by 6pm. **NCER 2026 Concludes**