



Ecological Forecasting Initiative
UNDERSTAND · MANAGE · CONSERVE

Ecological Forecasting Initiative 2026 Conference Handbook

August 4-7, 2026

Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Science

222 College Street

Toronto, Canada

Contents

May 19, 2026, v3. This document will be updated periodically as we approach the conference, and the details about the schedule are finalized.

Key Dates	3
Hosts	3
Submissions	4
Abstract submissions.....	4
Working Group submissions.....	5
Workshop submissions.....	5
Visa Requests.....	6
Travel Scholarships.....	6
Registration.....	6
EFI Futures Outstanding Student Presentation Award	7
EFI Futures Outstanding Student Presentation Award Criteria.....	7
Code of Conduct	8
Meeting logistics	8
The Fields Institute Meeting Venue.....	8
Traveling to Toronto.....	8
Housing Options.....	9
Hotels.....	10
Hostels.....	10
Weather in Toronto.....	10
Poster Printing.....	11
Accessibility & Childcare.....	11
Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Your Child at Fields.....	11
Childcare.....	11
Food.....	12
Organizing Committee	12
Sponsoring Partners	12
Things to do in Toronto and more information	13
Land Acknowledgement	14

Key Dates

Dates subject to change as needed

Activity	Date
Abstract, travel scholarships, and visa request submissions open <i>Individuals particularly concerned about visa processing time can email info@ecoforecast.org their request and abstract starting before Dec 8.</i>	December 8, 2025
Proposals for workshops & working groups close	January 23, 2026
Registration opens	March 15, 2026
Abstract and travel scholarships submissions close	April 15, 2026
Accepted contributions and travel scholarships announced	May 1, 2026
Registration closes	Early bird deadline: May 29, 2026 Full registration: July 1, 2026
EFI2026 Conference	August 4-7, 2026

Hosts

The Canadian EFI Chapter (CEFI) is proud to be hosting the upcoming EFI annual meeting in Toronto, Ontario. CEFI was the first EFI chapter to form in 2018, and has grown the ecoforecasting community in Canada through multiple efforts. In 2021, a CEFI led working group published "[Bridging the divide between ecological forecasts and environmental decision making](#)" in Ecosphere, outlining guidelines to improve the reliability and policy relevance of ecological predictions. In 2022, the group led an organized oral session on "[A comparative perspective on integrating ecological forecasting with decision-making](#)" for the joint Ecological Society of America-Canadian Society for Ecology and Evolution conference. And in 2023, CEFI hosted a short course on "[Forecasting for Decision-Making: An Epidemiological & Ecological Perspective](#)", which includes recorded

lectures and open access course materials. You can learn more about CEFI and sign up to become a CEFI/EFI member at <https://canadianefi.ca/>.

Submissions

Abstract submissions

Poster and oral presentation abstract submission will close April 15, 2026. Please submit abstracts at: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/8592450/EFI-2026-Abstract>

To foster more diverse and stimulating discussions across all parts of the conference, we are encouraging poster and oral presentation submissions from researchers at all career stages. In other words, we encourage early career researchers to consider applying for an oral presentation and for more senior researchers to consider applying for a poster presentation. The selection committee will consider abstracts for oral or poster presentations to create a balanced and engaging program and will reserve a number of oral talks for early career participants (i.e., student or postdoctoral researcher).

Contributors will be notified of abstract acceptance and the type of presentation by May 1, 2026.

The abstract form includes sections for:

- Title
- Abstract (less than 250 words)
- Author, co-authors, and affiliations
- Author approval confirming the submission has been approved by all co-authors
- Permission to publish the abstract in the conference electronic media
- Type of presentation requested (oral, poster, or either)
- Presenter career stage at the time of abstract submission
- Themes of the presentation or poster to help Conference organizers group presentations and posters
- Keywords (up to 5)
- Sign-up for undergraduate or graduate students who are a presenting author to participate in the competition for the EFI Futures Outstanding Student Presentation Award (details of the Award [below](#) and [on the EFI website here](#))
- Anything else the Conference organizers should be aware of

Only one abstract submission per person can be submitted.

We welcome contributions and participants from across the foundations and applications in ecological forecasting. Here are examples of the themes.

Foundations:

- Forecasting with the knowledge, value, and engagement of underrepresented groups
- Co-production and decision-relevant forecasts
- Cyberinfrastructure
- AI and statistics
- Digital twins
- Predictability across scales
- Education
- Spatial modeling

Applications:

- Marine and coastal ecosystems
- Forecasting challenges
- Freshwater ecosystems
- Biodiversity conservation
- Climate change & solutions
- One health & human infectious diseases
- Animal disease ecology (wildlife & domesticated animals)
- Plant, agricultural & forest diseases
- Invasive species & pests
- Terrestrial ecosystems
- Biogeochemistry

Working Group submissions

Working Group sessions provide extended time (1/2 day or full day) to work on specific projects with others in the EFI community. These sessions, open to all conference participants, will take place on August 4. Working Groups can be related to the [standing EFI Working Groups](#), other projects, or targeted topics of discussion of interest to the EFI community that will benefit from dedicated in-person time at the conference.

Workshop submissions

As a community of practice, sharing hands-on knowledge is foundational to EFI. To advance this goal, we invite workshop submissions for the Conference. Workshops are an opportunity to provide topical training, tutorials, and demonstrations for the EFI community. You can find other examples of workshops held at the [EFI2024](#) and the [EFI2025](#) conferences. Workshops are approximately 1-2 hours in length and will be interspersed in the schedule on August 5-7.

Visa Requests

Determine if you need a visa to enter Canada using the visa requirement tool provided by Immigration Canada. <https://www.ircc.canada.ca/english/visit/visas.asp>.

Please note that people required to have an [eTA](#) do not need an invitation letter.

If you need a letter of support for your visa, email info@ecoforecast.org by July 1, 2026.

Please provide the following information in your request email:

1. Full name
2. Title/Position, Organization, and address that should appear on the letter
3. A copy of your abstract (this does not have to be the final version if you are submitting your visa request before the abstract submission deadline on April 15, 2026)
4. Email, phone number, and nationality
5. Duration of stay in Canada: arrival & departure dates
 - a. If you are extending your stay, please let us know the reason, such as "meet with colleagues at _____ (name of institution)" or "tourism in _____ (location)";

All expenses incurred in relation to EFI2026 Conference attendance are the responsibility of the participant. Whether you are sponsored by your institution or another source of travel support, please work with your funding agency to obtain financial support documentation, should it be required for your visa application. Individuals who apply for a [travel scholarship](#) will be notified by May 1, 2026.

Travel Scholarships

Travel scholarships are available to support partial or full flight/ground transportation and residence dorm accommodation expenses during the Conference on an as-needed basis until the funds are used up. Anyone can apply for travel scholarships. We especially encourage travel scholarship applications from early-career and underrepresented groups. Travel scholarships are in addition to the lunches and the social dinner that are provided during the conference. Per diem food rates are \$20 for breakfast, \$30 for lunch, \$50 for dinner CAD.

The modest registration fees are **not** included in the travel scholarships and will need to be paid separately at the time of registration. If the registration fees are a hardship, please email info@ecoforecast.org to explore options.

Applications for a travel scholarship must be submitted by April 15, 2026.

The Organizing Committee will review applications and respond by May 1, 2026.

Submit travel scholarship applications to: <https://bit.ly/efi2026-travel-scholarship>

Registration

Registration opens on March 2, 2026. Space is limited to 100 participants due to conference venue constraints. Students, postdocs, and individuals within a year of graduation are offered a discounted rate, as are EFI & CEFI members. Early bird

registration for non-students ends on May 29, 2026. Full registration closes on July 1, 2026. Registration rates are in CAD.

	Member	Non-Member
Students & Postdocs	\$100	\$150
Early-bird registration for others	\$250	\$300
Full registration for others	\$350	\$400

You can determine if you are a Member on the [Member Directory here](#). If you are not a Member, consider joining to connect to a vibrant network of peers and receive benefits, such as discounted conference rates. **Note that [EFI](#) & [CEFI](#) membership is free, and signing up for [CEFI](#) automatically signs you up for [EFI](#).**

Members affirm their commitment to the [EFI Shared Values and Operating Principles and Procedures](#) and their interest in building a community of practice around ecological forecasting. Learn more about the [CEFI membership here](#), or if you are outside of Canada, find the general [EFI membership here](#).

EFI Futures Outstanding Student Presentation Award

[This Award](#) will be given to promote, recognize, and reward an outstanding student presenter and provide valuable feedback to student presenters on their research and presentation skills. Students presenting either a poster or giving an oral presentation are eligible for this award. Prizes will be awarded to one student in the poster category and one in the oral presentation category. Both students will receive \$50 to spend at [the EFI shop!](#)

Students - will be able to sign up to participate in the competition when they submit their abstract. Individuals must be students at the time of the conference.

Reviewers - individuals who are not students who are willing to review student presentations and posters will be able to sign up to participate in the Registration Form.

EFI Futures Outstanding Student Presentation Award Criteria

Also see details [here](#).

Presentation and Visuals

1. Are slides (oral presentations), or graphics and layout (poster presentations), clear, readable, and comprehensible, with the appropriate degree of complexity?
2. Are tables or figures used effectively?
3. Are the main points, conclusions, and interpretations developed and integrated in a logical fashion?
4. Is the speaker able to articulate the ideas in a clear manner?

Scientific Approach

1. Does the study show originality and creativity?
2. Is related work recognized where appropriate?
3. Does the presenter display knowledge and understanding of the study topic?
4. Are the design and methods appropriate and adequate for the purpose of the study?
5. Are statistical procedures and/or computational methods used correctly?
6. Are conclusions based on presented results?

Code of Conduct

EFI stands by a set of principles and practices to foster a welcoming environment for all EFI activities. Please see the [EFI Code of Conduct document](#) that governs all EFI members, the EFI virtual forums, and participants at EFI-sponsored virtual and in-person meetings, working groups, and events. If issues arise during the Conference, two points of contact will be shared with conference participants prior to the conference. Alternatively, conference participants can submit issues anonymously using [this Incident Reporting Form](#).

The Fields Institute is committed to providing an atmosphere that encourages the free expression and exchange of ideas in a harassment-free, friendly and respectful environment. All reports of harassment will be investigated by staff, and may result in removal from the Institute. Learn more about the Fields Institute's [harassment policy](#), or find the [shortened version here](#).

Meeting logistics

The Fields Institute Meeting Venue

The Conference will take place at [The Fields Institute for Research in Mathematical Sciences](#), located at 222 College Street, Toronto.

See the list and a map of amenities near The Fields Institute below. You can also see them saved as a Google map list here: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/A37KEWQVrL5upXzP6>

Traveling to Toronto

There are two main airports in Toronto

- 1) The [Toronto Pearson International Airport \(YYZ\)](#), the city's main international hub located in Mississauga, and
- 2) The [Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport \(YTZ\)](#), a regional airport on the Toronto Islands closer to downtown.

Pearson handles most international flights, while Billy Bishop focuses on domestic and U.S. regional flights, with the two airports offering different experiences in terms of size, convenience, and amenities.

See the public transportation options for the Billy Bishop airport here:

<https://www.billybishopairport.com/to-from/public-transit/>

See options for Toronto Pearson airport here:

<https://www.torontopearson.com/en/transportation-and-parking/up-express>

Train tickets (UP Express) can be purchased at kiosks at the Pearson airport. Take the train all the way to its final stop, Union Station. From the UP Express arrival platform, it is a short, well-signed indoor walk to the main Union Station concourse. Note: the UP Express does not run 24 hours (Weekdays: First train 5:27 a.m. ; Last train 12:54 a.m.). Once you reach the Union Station concourse, take the TTC subway to St. George Station. From there, it is a short walk to the residence, if that is your final destination. For Canadians, you should be able to use tap on a Presto device for payment. At the moment, the subway (TTC) ticketing system is not integrated, so you do have to pay separately. TTC tickets can be easily bought at any TTC station, or your credit card can be used on a TTC divide to tap on and off. For more information on the train from the airport, see here:

<http://upexpress.com/en>. For more information on the subway system, see here:

<https://www.ttc.ca/>

If you prefer not to pay extra for the UP Express, you can instead use only TTC buses and the subway (approximately \$4). The bus stop is located just outside the arrivals area. Take bus 900 (Airport Express) from Pearson to its final stop, Kipling Station. From there, take the subway (Line 2 – the only subway line at this station) to St. George Station. From St. George, it is a short walk to the residence, if that is your final destination. See the route from the airport to Fields here: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/78MnrWfxid5fjvYA>

Here is the route from Pearson to the residence dorm (75 St. George St., Toronto, ON M5S 2E5). <https://maps.app.goo.gl/vha3UjZWW5AnwBAT8>

Uber, Taxi and other car services are available. However, the cost is around \$50-75CAD one-way.

Housing Options

Participants, other than those who have been awarded travel accommodations, are responsible for booking their own accommodation.

We've coordinated with the University of Toronto to offer low-cost residence (dorm-style) accommodations for attendees who would like this option. Our official residence is University College (<https://www.uc.utoronto.ca/residence/buildings>), located at 75 St. George St., Toronto, ON M5S 2E5.

Residence rooms are single-occupancy, air-conditioned, and include access to a shared restroom. Rooms are \$75 CAD/night, with ~30 rooms available on a first-come, first-served

basis. If this is of interest, email uc.summerres@utoronto.ca with reservation code “UCIMMSA” to book your room. Payment will need to be made in-person at the time of check-in.

Additional rooms are reserved separately for individuals with travel scholarships. All the residence dorms are an [8-minute walk](#) from the Fields Institute.

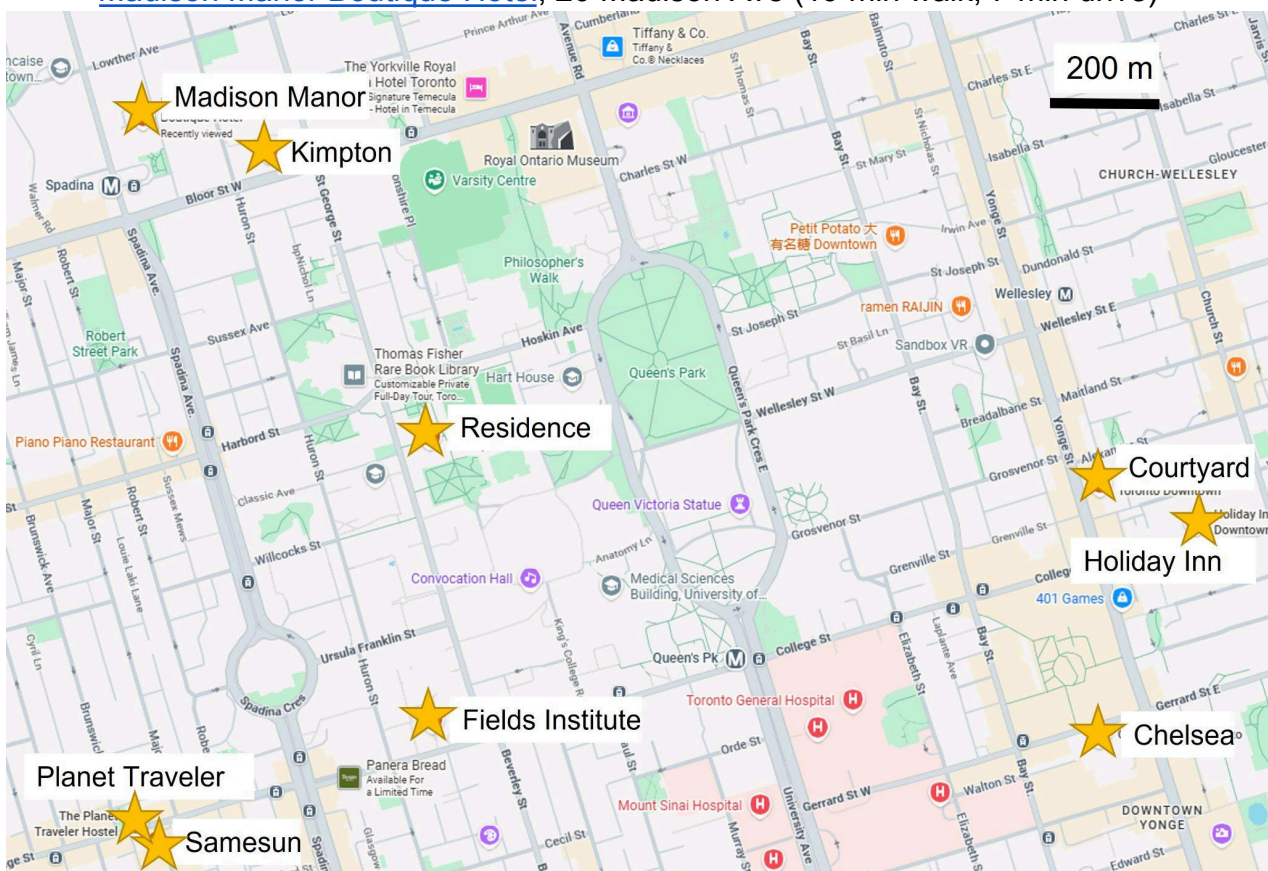
Otherwise, there are several suitable hotels and hostels within walking distance of the Fields Institute.

Hotels

- [Chelsea Hotel, Toronto](#); 33 Gerrard St W, Toronto (19 min walk, 6 min drive)
- [Kimpton Saint George Hotel](#); 280 Bloor St W, Toronto (17 min walk, 5 min drive)
- [Courtyard by Marriott Toronto Downtown](#); 475 Yonge St, Toronto (19 min walk, 6 min drive)
- [Holiday Inn Toronto Downtown Centre](#); 30 Carlton St., Toronto (20 min walk, 10 min drive)

Hostels

- [Samesun Toronto](#); 278 Augusta Ave (8 min walk)
- [The Planet Traveler Hostel](#); 357 College St (8 min walk)
- [Madison Manor Boutique Hotel](#); 20 Madison Ave (19 min walk, 7 min drive)



Exact locations can be found on this map: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/MX5sxT5pSo2prDK48>

Food

Morning and afternoon snacks, lunches, and the social dinner at Snakes & Lattes on Thursday will be provided.

Snakes & Lattes Social

On Thursday, August 6th, we will have a conference dinner at [Snakes & Lattes College](#), a board game bar and restaurant located in a 15-minute walk from the Fields Institute in the heart of downtown Toronto, in the lively neighbourhood of Little Italy. There will be trivia for our group as well as unlimited board games and delicious food. Cocktails and beers are available, but not paid for through the conference.

Weather in Toronto

Toronto is on the shore of Lake Ontario. The weather in Toronto in August is typically warm, sunny, and humid, with occasional rain, with daytime temperatures usually ranging from **22–28°C (72–82°F) with days up to 35°C plus humidity**. Plan on sun protection when you are outside. The Fields Institute is air-conditioned, so you may want to bring a layer for that.

Poster Printing

If you prefer not to travel with a poster, a shop (339 Bloor St. West, 2nd Floor, Room 215) near the Fields Institute (~15 min walk) can handle printing, including fabric versions, and accepts online submissions: <https://utposter.com/>. We recommend you submit your poster a few days ahead of time. If you run out of time, they will print faster for a fee.

Accessibility & Childcare

Please indicate your accessibility needs in the registration form when it opens on March 2, 2026.

Breastfeeding or Chestfeeding Your Child at Fields

A private office can be made available for breastfeeding/chestfeeding or to pump milk. See the Fields Liaison or a program coordinator for details. Please feel encouraged to e-mail in advance if you're attending a multi-day conference. There is also a refrigerator on the 2nd floor where parents and caregivers are welcome to store milk.

A diaper changing counter is available in the 2nd Floor women's washroom.

Childcare

The Fields Institute is not in a position to recommend childcare and assumes no liability for the services of the childcare centres listed here. This listing is for information only.

The [City of Toronto Licensed Child Care System](#) has over 1,000 centres and home childcare agencies providing early learning and care for children up to 12 years of age. The City supports quality programs which promote healthy outcomes for all children. You can access the City's childcare locator map [here](#).

In addition, the City of Toronto [Parks and Recreation](#) runs a variety of low-cost programs for children and families, which includes everything from sports and fitness to arts and culture.

The following are Toronto companies that offer services for temporary childcare:

- [Kids & Company](#) provides flexible back-up child-care for children from the ages of 6 weeks to 12 years.
 - *Multiple locations within a few km from Fields. Queen West branch (416) 595-5537, queenwest@kidsandcompany.com*
Cost varies depending on the age of the child.
- [Nannies on Call](#) provides professional, pre-screened nannies for in-home babysitting (with membership fee).
- [The Nanny Solution](#) offers regular part-time or full-time nannies on a short-term (minimum of 2 weeks) or long-term basis.

Organizing Committee

- Korryn Bodner, University of Guelph
- Chris Brimacombe, University of Guelph
- Marie-Josée Fortin, University of Toronto
- Carina Firkowski, Independent Consultant
- Eliot McIntire, Natural Resources Canada
- Josie Hughes, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Steve Cumming, Université Laval
- Deepit Bhatia, Penn State University
- Cole Brookson, Yale University
- Brandon Edwards, Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Mike Dietze, Boston University
- Jude Kong, University of Toronto
- Marcus Lapeyrolerie, University of British Columbia
- Allison Patterson, Environment and Climate Change Canada
- Jody Peters, University of Notre Dame

Sponsoring Partners

- Canadian Forest Service, Natural Resources Canada
- Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of Toronto
- Ocean Tracking Network, Dalhousie University
- Centre for Ecosystem Management, University of Guelph
- One Health Institute, University of Guelph
- ApexRMS
- Ecological Forecasting Initiative

Things to do in Toronto and more information

Toronto is a world-class city with thousands of restaurants, attractions, and forms of entertainment. [BlogTO](#) is a local media outlet that is a great source of events and goings on, both [generally](#) and for the [time of the conference](#).

Additional ideas:

- There are a [number of hikes](#) for the outdoor lover, both in and nearby the city
- Incredible wilderness is also available a few hours north in [Algonquin Park](#)
- Toronto is home to the iconic [CN Tower](#), which held the record for many years of the tallest building in the world. The surrounding neighbourhood is also home to the [Ripley's Aquarium](#), and the Rogers Centre, home of the [2025 World Series Runner Up Toronto Blue Jays](#)
- The waterfront offers multiple excellent access points to Lake Ontario, one of the North American Great Lakes, with [multiple beaches](#) and the [Toronto Islands](#), the most popular ways to get out on the water
- Explore the city's vibrant music and art scenes including the Symphony in the Gardens at [Casa Loma](#), theater options at [Mirvish](#), the [Art Gallery of Ontario](#) and the [Royal Ontario Museum](#).
- For foodies, Toronto has a world-class food scene. Nearby the conference location is [Swatow Restaurant](#), the crown jewel (but one of hundreds!) of Toronto's [Chinatown](#), along with other [excellent food and beverage options](#). [Kensington Market](#) offers a distinctly bohemian atmosphere with a high concentration of restaurants, small food shops, and grab-and-go spots located nearby the Fields Institute. For those with extra grant money to spend, Toronto is Canada's first city to get a [Michelin Guide](#)!
- Niagara [Falls](#), some of the largest waterfalls in the world (nicknamed "the 8th Wonder of the World"), are <2hrs away by car, and can also be accessed by a few forms of public transit. As a bonus, one can easily see the falls from the undisputed "[better side](#)" of the falls (the Canadian side). Those looking to tack on a day or two to their trip to see the falls might consider staying in/visiting the "prettiest town in Ontario", [Niagara-on-the-Lake](#)

Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and most recently, the Mississaugas of the Credit River. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island, and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

**We are looking forward to meeting you all in
Toronto in August 2026!**

