

State of the Strait Conference Program – Sept. 17, 2026

8 a.m.	Registration (Coffee and pastries available)
9-9:20 a.m.	Welcome and Introductory Remarks Land Acknowledgement by Kevin Harris, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi, and Welcome from the Detroit Zoo
9:20-9:50 a.m.	Keynote Address: Forging Forward Collectively: Cultivating Ecological Literacy and Impact Through the Chicago Wilderness Alliance – Nathanael Pilla, Chicago Wilderness
9:50-10:10 a.m.	Rewilding the Detroit River Corridor: Evidence of Progress – John Hartig, University of Windsor
10:10-10:30 a.m.	Rewilding Ojibway Prairie: Restoration at Canada's Next National Urban Park – Mike Fisher, Friends of Ojibway Prairie
10:30 a.m.	Coffee Break
10:50-11:10 a.m.	Operation Mnomen: Restoring Wild Rice in the Detroit River – Kevin Harris, Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi
11:10-11:30 a.m.	Detroit: Urban Bird Treaty City – Diane Cheklich, Detroit Bird Alliance
11:30-11:50 a.m.	Rewilding Belle Isle: Ecological Renewal in an Urban Waterway – Cleyo Harris, Michigan Department of Natural Resources
11:50-12:10 a.m.	Partners for Fish and Wildlife: Rewilding Through Collaborative Conservation – Meridith Holm, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
12:10-1:10 p.m.	Lunch Break; Invitation to Explore the Zoo; Student Presentations
1:10-2:25 p.m.	Rewilding in Action Panel Discussion — Moderator: Lisa DuRussel, University of Michigan; Panelists: Terry Heatlie, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration; Tiffany Jones, National Wildlife Federation; Catherine Febria, University of Windsor; Kathryn Arthur, Essex Region Conservation Authority
2:25 p.m.	Coffee Break
2:45-4 p.m.	Policy Panel Discussion — Moderator: Conan Smith, Michigan Environmental Council; Panelists: Bob Hauser, Wild Ones; Gary Kirsh, ITC; Nadia Harduar, University of Windsor; Phil Roberts, Citizens Environment Alliance
4-4:20 p.m.	Residents Increase Physical Activity After Ecological Park Rehabilitation in Detroit – Madison Moore, Wayne State University
4:20-4:40 p.m.	Many Measures, Shared Vision – Donna Kashian, Wayne State University
4:40-5 p.m.	Concluding Remarks – Amy Greene, Diane Cheklich and John Hartig, Conference Co-Chairs

5-6:30 p.m.

Reception inside Fred and Barbara Erb Discovery Trails