

Environmental Engineering Seminar

9 November 2015, 3PM, 202 GLRC

Roundtable Discussion: Seed for a Great Lakes Commons

Discussion Leader: Dr. Nancy A. Auer, MTU Biological Sciences

Our Roundtable Discussions this semester have focused on *tragedies of the commons*, i.e. a degradation of shared resources most commonly addressed today through government policy and regulation. Assignment of this role to the government, however, has encouraged many who share the commons to disengage from the governance process that ultimately shapes the nature and even the presence of that commons for future generations. An alternative concept of governance, a *peoplehood*, might be considered for re-engagement of stakeholder involvement. Peoplehood looks to a shared language, sense of place, ceremony and transmittal of wisdom by elders as means of forming an ethic well suited to the sustainable stewardship of a commons.

Dr. Nancy Auer hosted a session entitled, “*Exploring the Idea of a Great Lakes Commons*”, at the 57nd Annual Conference on Great Lakes Research. Dr. Auer subsequently co-authored a paper entitled, “*Growing the Seed for a Great Lakes Commons*” published this fall in the *Journal of Great Lakes Research*. Today’s Roundtable Discussion will focus on the value and prospect of embracing a commons approach to Great Lakes management and the need for such a paradigm shift in a time of severe, perhaps endgame, ecosystem stress. A copy of the JGLR paper cited above is available on CANVAS-ENVE5991 and may also be downloaded from the MTU library’s electronic journal collection.

