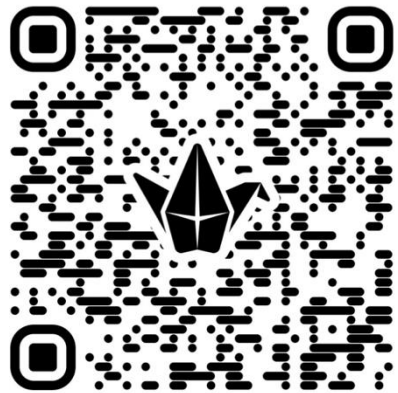


Seeing Rivers Together: Photovoice for river caretaking



[Link to Padlet](#)

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

Rivers are Connectors of Land, Water & People
IAGLR & SCAS-SCSA 2026 Joint Conference

May 26, 2026,
Winnipeg MB,
Treaty 1. Territory

thetestlab.ca/photovoice

Evan Bowness

Assistant Professor
Canada Research Chair in
Sustainability and Equity



Assiniboine River Walk

- The brings together several ways of noticing and learning with rivers:
- **MacroBlitzing** (river biodiversity.)
- **Water Rangers kits** (water quality)
- **Photovoice** (to articulate the relationships, responsibilities, meanings flowing from these observations)

🕒 May 27th, 2026, 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM CDT 📍 Assiniboine River

Immersive Assiniboine River Walk: Participatory methods in river biomonitoring and visual storytelling along the Assiniboine River

We invite you to join us for an immersive river walk on the Assiniboine during which we'll practice [MacroBlitzing](#) (i.e. finding cool aquatic insects and documenting them with iNaturalist), use [Water Rangers](#) kits to document local water quality and share this information with others, and engage with a [Photo Voice activity](#). Most importantly, we will spend time along the riverbank getting to know each other and the waters that flow through Winnipeg, building community and connecting all the while learning about and applying tools that people who love and steward rivers can use and share with others.

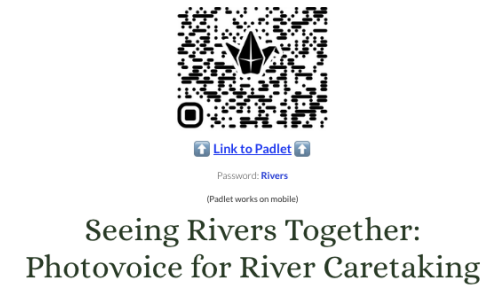
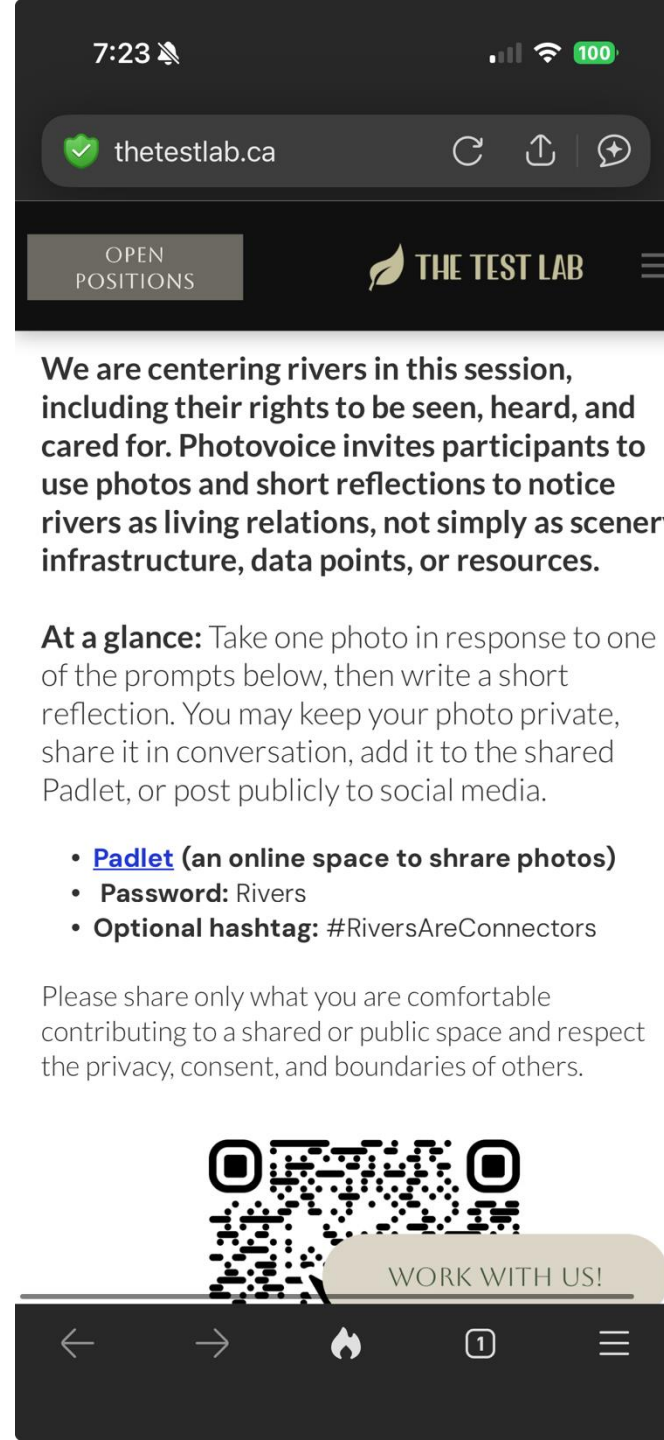
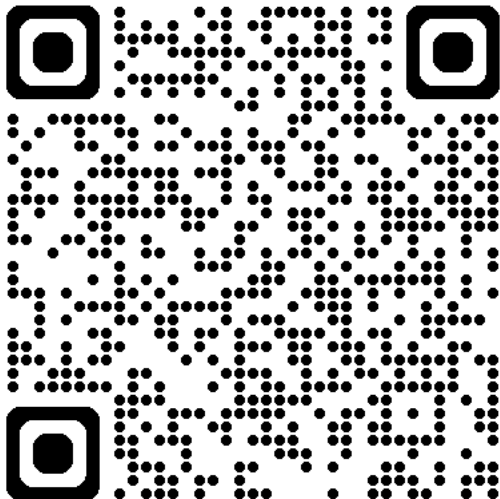
Meet at the entrance of the RBC Convention Centre in downtown Winnipeg (375 York Avenue, Winnipeg), or join us along the shoreline of the Assiniboine River via the Kennedy Street entrance. We will walk ~1km from the convention centre to the shoreline of the Assiniboine.

Come dressed for the weather & we'll bring the rest!

Eventbrite registration required: <https://tinyurl.com/iaglrscas26-riverwalk>

Some Guidance

www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice



A participatory activity for the Rivers are Connectors of Land, Water & People session and Assiniboine River Walk.

note: You do not need to post anything to participate. Taking a photo and reflecting privately is also part of the activity.

We are centering rivers in this session, including their rights to be seen, heard, and cared for. Photovoice invites participants to use photos and short reflections to notice rivers as living relations, not simply as scenery, infrastructure, data points, or resources.

During the river walk or elsewhere during the conference, you are invited to take one photo in response to the prompts below. You may keep the photo for your own reflection, share it in conversation, add it to the shared [Padlet](#), or post publicly using the optional hashtag.

Please share only what you are comfortable contributing to a shared or public space, and take care to respect the privacy, consent, and boundaries of others.

How to participate

1. Spend time noticing the river, shoreline, water, beings, traces, sounds, movements, absences, and relationships around you.
2. Take one photo that responds to one of the prompts below (or make your own).
3. Write a short reflection.
4. Optional: add your photo and caption to the shared [Padlet](#) (password: Rivers).
5. Optional: share publicly using [#RiversAreConnectors](#).

You do not need to post anything to participate. Taking a photo and reflecting privately is also part of the activity.

Prompts

Choose one prompt, or create your own.

- What is the river asking us to see?
- What is the river asking us to hear?
- What is the river asking us to care for?
- What signs of the river's life, stress, movement, or memory do you notice?
- What responsibilities become visible when you spend time with the river?
- What forms of river caretaking are already happening here?
- [What story of river care do you want to carry forward?](#)

Caption guide

Your caption can be brief. You might write 2 to 4 sentences.

You can use this structure:

- I noticed...
- I wonder...
- This image helps me think about river care because...

Or respond to one of these questions:

- Where was this photo taken?
- What drew your attention?
- What does this image call on us to see, hear, or care for?
- What question does this image raise?

Shared Padlet

We are using a Padlet to gather optional photo reflections from the session and river walk.

Add one photo and a short caption under the prompt that best fits your reflection.

Posting to the Padlet is optional. Please share only images and captions you are comfortable contributing to this shared conference space.

- [Link to Padlet](#)
- Password: Rivers

Optional public sharing

If you choose to share publicly on Instagram or another platform, use:

- [#RiversAreConnectors](#)
- Please only post images you are comfortable making public.

Ethics and care

- This activity is grounded in care for people, places, and the living world around us. As you take photographs, please pause to consider what is appropriate to capture and share.
- Please make sure that people who are identifiable in your photos have given permission. Take special care with sacred, sensitive, private, or vulnerable places, and only share images of these places when permission is clear.
- Please also be attentive to the plants, animals, insects, shorelines, and habitats around you. The photograph should never come at the expense of the place being photographed.
- Please share only what you are comfortable contributing to a shared or public space, and take care to respect the privacy, consent, and boundaries of others.

River Walk

The Assiniboine River Walk brings together several ways of noticing and learning with rivers.

- [MacroBiting](#) helps us notice aquatic insects and river biodiversity.
- [Water Rangers](#) kits help us notice water quality.
- [Photovoice](#) helps us notice relationships, responsibilities, memories, meanings, and forms of care.

Together, these practices support the broader goal of supporting an ethos of stewardship across river science, storytelling, and local knowledge.

Contact

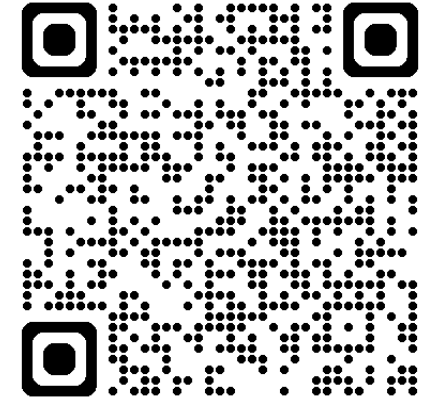
For questions about this activity, contact:

- riversareconnectors@groups.uwo.ca

WORK WITH US!

Photovoice

- Research method (started in Community Health Sciences)
- A way to “see” worlds hidden from researchers and to “empower” research participants to share about their lived experiences
- **Photo** (a picture) + **Voice** (a reflection)
- A simple activity with 4 steps:
 1. Take one **photo**
 2. Choose or create a **prompt**
 3. Write a short **reflection**
 4. *** Share only if you want to ***



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



[Link to Padlet](#)

Password: **Rivers**

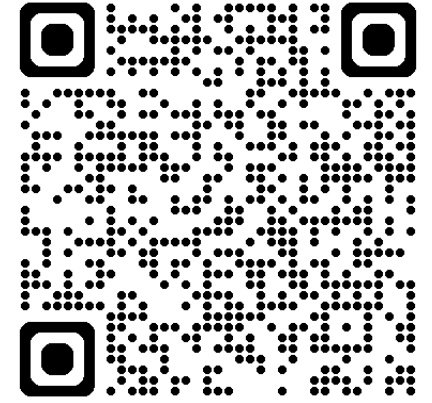
(Padlet works on mobile)

1 - Take a photo

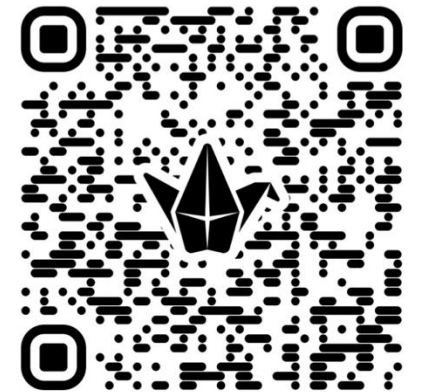
- Pause. Spend a moment noticing what draws your attention.
- Focus on a relationship, detail, or moment. This might include movement, textures, shorelines, life, infrastructure, or interactions between people and water.
- Experiment with perspective. Move closer, step back, lower your angle (rule of thirds, depth of field...)
- Think about what the image is helping you notice or understand. The photo does not need to be technically “perfect” to be meaningful.

2 – Pick a Prompt

- Examples:
 - What is the river asking us to see?
 - What is the river asking us to care for?
 - What responsibilities become visible when we spend time with the river?
 - Others?



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



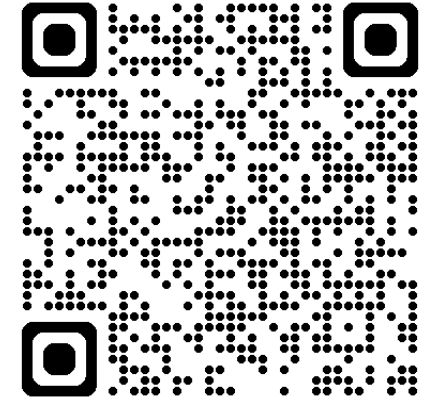
 [Link to Padlet](#) 

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

3 - Reflect

- Some simple reflection starters:
 - “I was drawn to this image because...”
 - “Before taking this photo, I had not noticed...”
 - “This changed how I think about...”
 - “This image raises questions about...”
 - “This image reminds me that rivers...”



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



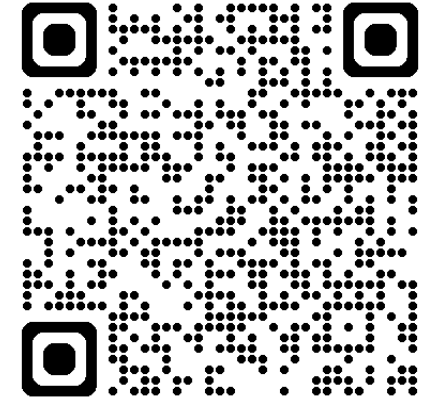
 [Link to Padlet](#) 

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

Building a Photovoice Reflection

- Start with observation: What do you literally notice?
- Move toward interpretation: Why did this moment stand out?
- Connect to relationships: What connections, tensions, or responsibilities become visible?
- End with significance: o Why might this matter for river care?



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



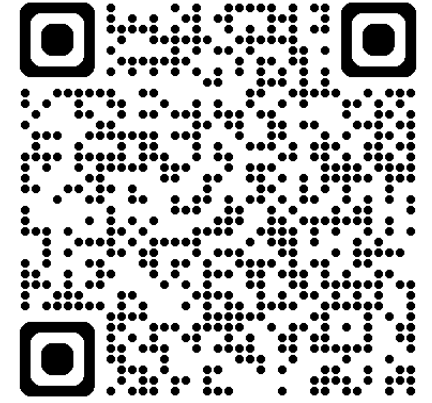
[Link to Padlet](#)

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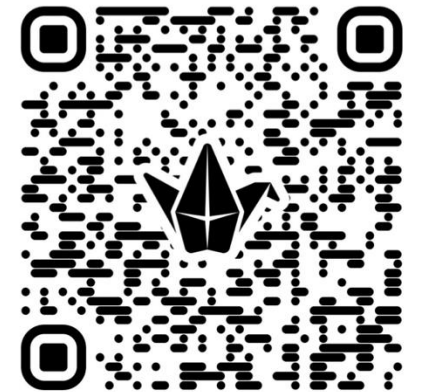
(Padlet works on mobile)

4 - Share (optional)

- Ways to participate:
 1. Keep the photo private
 2. Share it with someone in conversation
 3. Add it to the shared Padlet
 4. Post publicly with the hashtag “#riversareconnector”
 - *** Sharing is optional ***
 - Password to padlet: Rivers



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



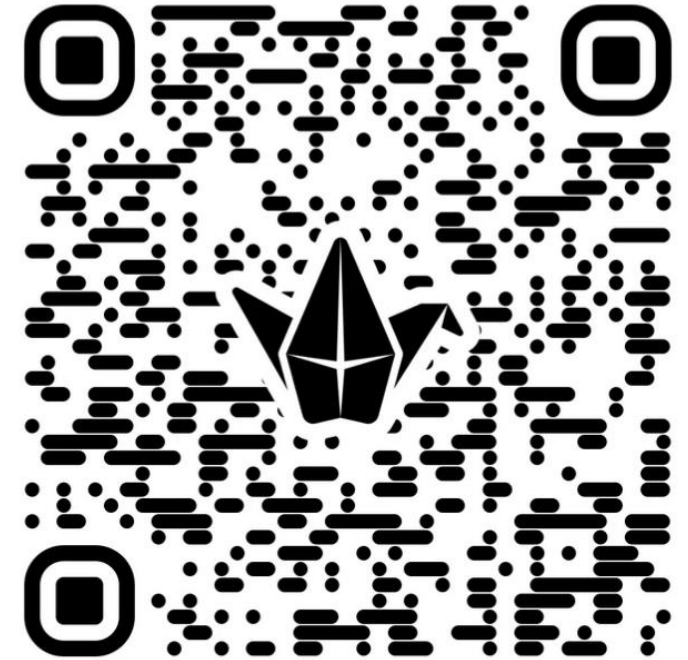
[Link to Padlet](#)

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

Padlet

- A shared digital space to share
- During the river walk or elsewhere during the conference, you are invited to take one photo in response to the prompts below. You may keep the photo for your own reflection, share it in conversation, add it to the shared [Padlet](#), or post publicly using the optional hashtag.



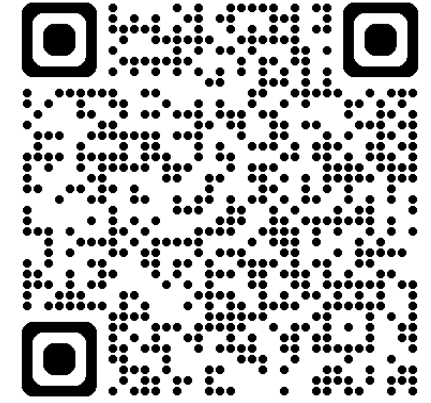
 [Link to Padlet](#) 

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

Ethics

- Photograph with care
 - Ask consent before photographing identifiable people
 - Avoid sacred, sensitive, private, or vulnerable places unless permission is clear
 - Do not disturb plants, animals, shorelines, habitats, or community activities
- Share with care
 - Participants decide what to share, keep private, or withdraw
 - Public sharing can change the meaning and circulation of images
 - Some stories, relationships, and places may not be meant for public viewing



Link to Guidance
(www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice)



 [Link to Padlet](#) 

Password: **Rivers**

(Padlet works on mobile)

Evan Bowness • 16d

Rivers Are Connectors



Pinned



Evan Bowness

17 days ago

Guidance:

- Click on "+ Post"
- Choose the camera or upload an image
- Include your prompt and reflection
- Publish :)

Example Prompts:

- What is the river asking us to see?
- What is the river asking us to hear?
- What is the river asking us to care for?
- What signs of the river's life, stress, movement, or memory do you notice?
- What responsibilities become visible when you spend time with the river?
- What forms of river caretaking are already happening here?
- What story of river care do you want to carry forward?
- or create your own!



Evan Bowness

17 days ago

Example



prompt -
reflection -



Evan Bowness

17 days ago

Example



Prompt: What is the river asking us to care for?

Reflection: At the entrance to this culvert on the Assiniboine River in 2012, I remember the tension between seeing the river as a living presence and the river as something channelled through concrete and metal of urban social metabolism. The image reminds me that river care involves paying attention to the systems that shape water's movement, and asking how we might relate differently to rivers that have been constrained or made invisible.

[+ Post](#)

All of this can be found here:

www.thetestlab.ca/photovoice

