



Leora Berman

Leora has been leading and developing large scale ecological projects for nonprofit groups and governments for almost 25 years. She began by studying Economics and English at McMaster University, but did not feel fulfilled with this learning and so pursued a focus in Hydrology and Environmental science at Sir Sandford Fleming College. She has since worked with governments and as an educator for the Ministry of Agricultural, Food and Rural Affairs, with large charities of Wildlife Habitat Canada and Ducks Unlimited Canada for wetland, landscape and species conservation; and she has worked privately in hydrogeological consulting, for septic designs, dam building, shoreline restoration and also goose control. Leora is the 2019 recipient of the Canada Wildlife Federation, Roland

Michener Award for outstanding achievements in wildlife research and conservation. As the Founder and COO of The Land Between, Leora is focused on building relationships, awareness and capacity. She is dedicated to grassroots, Indigenous and democratic systems and governance. Leora also runs a private consulting firm that develops and supports social sector efforts in her communities.

From the TLB Council:

Perhaps her early years had influenced her diverse portfolio and interests: Leora was born in South Africa during the years of Apartheid, and so (as she states) it would be impossible for her not to be obsessed with water, wildlife and social politics: "Water was precious in Africa, and I always found it magical- and so I studied water. Too, the land came alive in the early morning with the sounds of birds and singing hippos -and so the wildlife become my animate friends. But amidst all this beauty was a strange oppression that was based solely on colour. I saw how Apartheid affected the souls and spirits of all peoples in the country-and so I became consumed with social-politics, with the relationships of people to the land, culture, economies, and patterns around them, and with our responsibilities to one another." Leora is the Founder and COO of The Land Between charity. She has a remarkable ability for gathering and relating issues, sectors, and peoples in strategic alliances. She took the reigns from Peter Alley after his passing and used his foundation of interest and knowledge to develop the organization we have today. She extended the focus of the effort, from one that was based in the natural environment, to include all aspects of culture, economics and, of course, social-politics.

Leora is so dedicated to the vision and goals of the organization that she has never drawn a regular paycheque from the organization and has donated whatever time has been needed to develop the charity, including office space, supplies, and utilities.

Leora has worked in both private and public sectors, for governments, large NGOs, and consultants. Leora has built large programs in Ontario: She took a small project to restore wetlands in Aylmer and grew into a regional effort in partnership with six counties and all levels. The award-winning Wetland Drain Restoration Project has re-hydrated agricultural lands across southern Ontario benefiting wildlife and farmers alike. Leora, through her zeal and savvy has changed the Drainage Act in Ontario to ensure that the draining of valuable wetlands is not unduly subsidized. She has negotiated agreements and formed initiatives to conserve water through the International Joint Commission between Canada and the U.S.A., and she has been an adviser, lecturer, or team player for large initiatives. She has worked for and provided value to Ducks Unlimited Canada, Wildlife Habitat Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry, Ontario Drainage Superintendents Association, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, for the award winning Elgin Landscape Stewardship Plan, on the Spotted Turtle and American Badger Recovery Teams....and the list continues. Leora is also involved in her community: She builds and supports local initiatives from deterring geese in public spaces, to creating spaces for children, championing cultural and First Nations issues, to, and of course, saving all animal relatives including reptiles.

Leora is an honest ally and friend.

Submitted by The Land Between Council