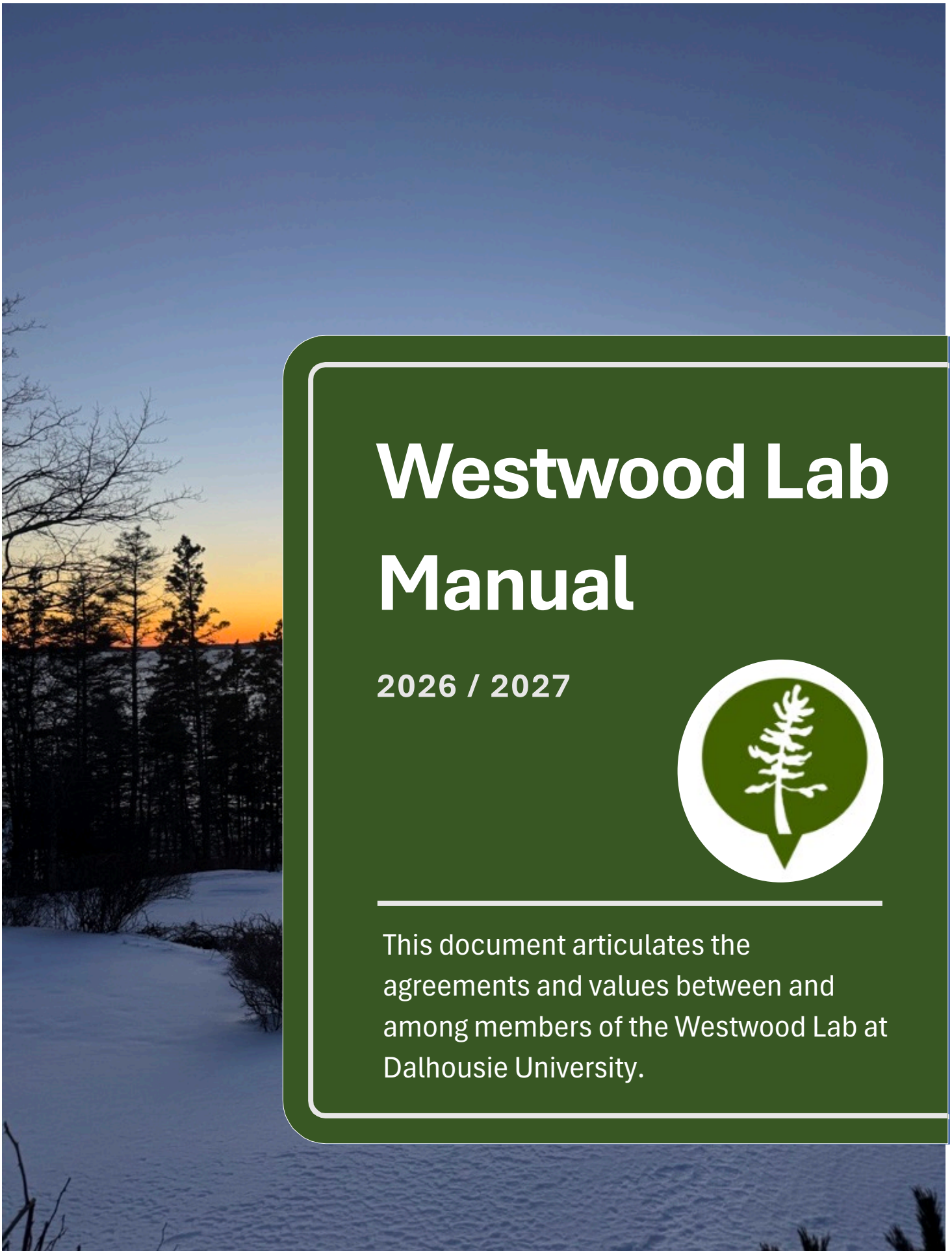


Westwood Lab Manual

2026 / 2027

This document articulates the agreements and values between and among members of the Westwood Lab at Dalhousie University.

Westwood Lab Manual



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Table of Contents

TABLE OF CONTENTS **0**

ABOUT THE WESTWOOD LAB **1**

Overview 1
To whom does this document apply? 1
Treaty statement and commitments 1

VALUES **2**

Values that guide our research 2
Values that we practice in our lab community 3
Ideal values that we strive for 4

WHAT THE LAB PROMISES YOU **4**

Place and time of work 4
Pay 5

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL OPPORTUNITIES **8**

WHAT YOU PROMISE THE LAB **9**

Lab meetings 10
Work hours 12
Socials 12
Lab Retreats 12
Community Support 13
Data Management 13
Concluding with the lab 13

FIELDWORK **14**

Accessibility and accommodations 14
Safety & Training 14
Project Lead Responsibilities 15
Equipment & Travel 15

AI USE **15**

RESOURCES FOR NEW LAB MEMBERS **17**

CONFLICT RESOLUTION FRAMEWORK **17**

Purpose 17
Preventing Conflict: Everyday Practices 18
Conflict Resolution Reporting Protocols 18
Ongoing or Unresolved Conflicts ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Conflicts Involving the Lab Head ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**
Lab Culture ..... **Error! Bookmark not defined.**

About The Westwood Lab

Overview

This document was created by members of the Westwood Lab, for members of the Westwood Lab. It reflects our agreements to each other with regard to our work environment, and we renew it annually as a collective.

To whom does this document apply?

This document applies to the Lab Head (Dr. Alana R. Westwood), who is responsible for the financial, human resources, and administrative oversight of the lab. This document also applies to:

- Undergraduate Honour's thesis students at Dalhousie University for whom the Lab Head is their supervisor or co-supervisor;
- PhD and Master's students in a thesis-based program at Dalhousie University for whom the Lab Head is their supervisor or co-supervisor;
- Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Assistants, Research Associates, Lab Managers, and other Grant-Paid Employees for whom the Lab Head is their assigned manager.

This document does **not** apply to:

- Students in classes or taking Directed Studies courses with the Lab Head;
- Master of Resource and Environmental Management (MREM) students for whom the Lab Head is their degree advisor;
- Students for whom the Lab Head is a member of their supervisory committee, but not their supervisor or co-supervisor.

Treaty statement and commitments

We acknowledge that the Westwood Lab is an institution based in Kjipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki, the traditional, ancestral, and contemporary lands of Indigenous peoples. The lab was founded by uninvited guests on land that was cared for and called home by the Mi'kmaq from time immemorial. This unceded land holds great historical, spiritual, and personal significance for its original stewards, the Native nations and peoples of this region. This territory is covered by the "Treaties of Peace and Friendship," which Mi'kmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) people first signed with the British Crown in 1725. We vow to acknowledge this as

truth, and continually support and advocate for the sovereignty of the Indigenous peoples in this territory and beyond. We affirm that we are all Treaty people.

Land acknowledgements like this are a starting place for non-Indigenous (Settler) lab members in affirming the colonial past, but they can be meaningless and performative if they are unsupported by action toward reconciliation. Settler lab members commit to learning about our obligations under the Treaties of the lands on which we live and fulfilling our obligations to them to the best of our abilities. We also commit to regular and repeated conversation about how to approach our work in a way that upholds our Treaty commitments.

Values

Values that guide our research

We are committed to orienting our research work to bring scientifically rigorous, inclusive solutions to real-world environmental challenges.

1. We produce research to support immediate, real-world decisions and actions

We prioritize work that can support evidence-informed decision-making and actions to support ecosystem conservation and/or sustainable management of natural resources. As part of this commitment, we engage in early planning for knowledge exchange so that the information we generate can reach those who can benefit from it.

2. We develop research with those affected by, and responsible for, the policy implications associated with the topics we study

We endeavour to have our work and research questions be guided by those who are affected by the issues we study and/or who are responsible for managing them. Every effort will be made to be inclusive of those people, while being cognizant of practical constraints and willingness to enter relationship. Where possible, when we enter research partnerships with institutions or persons external to the lab, we will do so with the intent of an enduring, mutually beneficial relationship. We also recognize and respect research partners' autonomy over their own information and data.

3. We uphold principles of scientific integrity

We commit to principles of scientific integrity in the conduct and communication of our research work. These include rigour, openness, transparency, honesty, fairness, and, when appropriate, replicability.

4. We approach research with curiosity and humility

We are committed to the pursuit of knowledge, and to preserving humility in our approach to research partnerships, our assumptions, understandings, and lines of inquiry. We question our own findings before accepting them as fact, and trust our intuition when challenges arise.

5. We recognize and value diverse contributions to research

In our research outputs, we will take a thoughtful approach to author inclusion and order. The lead researcher of a project has ultimate say on the contributions required to participate as a (co-)author, and we encourage this process be done by consensus with the project team. We ensure that all contributions are recognized in author lists, contribution statements, and acknowledgements, including but not limited to research design, data collection and analysis, writing, physical labour, and emotional labour.

Values that we practice in our lab community

Above all, we are committed to learning and growing together.

1. We strive for equity in opportunities and compensation

We commit to doing everything in our power to ensure compensation and opportunities are equitably distributed (rather than equally) among lab members while acknowledging it is not always possible to remedy imbalances.

2. We build an accessible, inclusive, and reciprocal lab community

An inclusive community space means all lab members strive commit to participating in the lab community to grow reciprocal and supportive relationships where all people and their uniqueness is celebrated and encouraged. In doing so, we recognize that people have different styles of communication and preferred ways of working. We create space for each lab member to work in the way they prefer so long as operational requirements are met. We also commit to holding space and time in our work schedules to help one another, whether that be by reviewing a document, brainstorming, or providing other forms of support.

3. We treat each other and our research partners with respect

We commit to always demonstrating respect for ourselves, and for each other in our work and in our relationships by honouring each others' time, space, capacity, boundaries, and interests. We do not mock or degrade or dismiss each other in our personal conversation, or in our workspaces.

Ideal values that we strive for

We acknowledge that our ideals are not always possible or within our control to achieve. Here, we detail those values that we aim to work towards.

1. We build trust in ourselves and each other

Trust in yourself and trust in your community is vital to functional work environments. We commit to being as honest as we can about our capacities, and to take the time to develop trusting relationships among lab members.

2. We prioritize individual and collective wellness

It is important to care for our physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing and to prioritize our individual and collective health. Wellness includes physical safety in lab work and fieldwork, as well as acknowledgement of risk in conducting controversial research. We endeavour not to valorize overwork or burnout, as is characteristic of many academic environments.

3. We seek out diverse experiences, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Communities influenced by diverse perspectives are proven to be better informed, and contribute to more creative, innovative, and impactful outputs. We intend for our community to include this diversity as much as possible.

4. We practice courage in advocacy and conflict management

We commit to courageously proactive conflict management. This means asking questions, challenging assumptions, and holding brave spaces for lab members to express their honest thoughts and feelings.

Where lab members are comfortable and resourced to do so, we encourage them to advocate for themselves, on behalf of each other, and on behalf of broader communities and the natural world.

What the lab promises you

Place and time of work

The Westwood Lab includes physical space as Dalhousie University and operates virtually via Microsoft Teams. Physical desk space, equipment, and a computer equipped for GIS processing is available for lab members to use in located in the ‘Annex’ portion of the Kenneth C. Rowe Building. Shared offices may be available for use by lab members upon request. Lab computer use is prioritized for those conducting GIS analyses.

Upon starting your position at the Lab, you will receive an invitation to the Westwood Lab Teams platform. Lab members are free to use whatever platforms they wish for digital communication and file management related to their own projects, but Teams will be used for centralized Lab business and communication.

Lab members are expected to check and respond to email and Teams messages at least once per day on workdays (Monday to Friday). Vacations and time off are encouraged, and the time allocated for that will be negotiated with your direct supervisor. Vacations are recorded in the shared lab calendar. We encourage members present in Halifax to be on-campus two-days for week (specific days to be determined at the beginning of each semester based on member schedules). This ensures opportunities for getting help, collaboration, and building trust. Lab members may work on or off campus on their own schedule so long as operational requirements (e.g. deadlines) are met. If operational requirements are not being fulfilled with a flexible work arrangement, time and place of work will be set by their immediate supervisor.

If you require specific accommodations to conduct work as a lab member virtually or in the physical lab space, Dalhousie students must request accommodations through the Dalhousie Accessibility Office. We will do everything in our power to accommodate lab members, including within the scope of fieldwork (see "Fieldwork" for more details).

Pay

We use salary band guidelines to ensure relatively equitable pay among lab members. The salaries set out below are not within full control of the Lab Head due to external factors associated with grant funding agencies and scholarship administration. Our goals[1] are to ensure that lab members are compensated to the best of the lab's abilities and to ensure compensation is not out of line with members of other labs at Dalhousie University.

We strive for balanced pay, with the primary objective of ensuring that average per-year salary over the course of a lab members' time with the lab falls within their respective salary band guideline. Fluctuating year-over-year academic funding means that annual pay may sometimes fall outside of each band. The Lab Head will proactively support lab members in applying for scholarships, grants, and other funding sources by providing a list of these sources and reviewing drafts of applications.

[1] The Lab Head and other members have and continue to advocate for fair compensation for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows through initiatives such as Support Our Science.

If the Lab Head has allocated grant money towards the stipend of a graduate student and because of other funding sources the student's total stipend for all years of the degrees *exceeds* the maximum amount as described in the salary bands, the grant funding will be withdrawn from stipend. If grant budgets permit, these funds will be prioritized to support research and outreach expenses for that student's project.

All salaries will increase 2% annually. Student stipends are set before tuition, which will be extracted from the total amount. Graduate students should also be aware that Dalhousie University may cap scholarship funding depending on the source of award they hold. Depending on the Lab member's employment classification, they may be paid biweekly or monthly.

For graduate students and postdoctoral fellows, the following salary bands are defined in terms of scholarships and grant stipends earned to support you in conducting your thesis work and research. Any hired work as a research assistant (at Westwood Lab or elsewhere), a teaching assistant, or a marker/demonstrator is not counted towards a students' salary band. Paid work (that is unrelated to thesis students' research) with external organizations is also not counted towards the salary band.

For additional funding opportunities, see optional positions as a teaching assistant, research assistant, marker/demonstrator, or student aid. Cost of living estimates and tuition calculators, along with other financial tools and resources can be accessed via Money Matters on the Dalhousie University website.

Salary guidelines for Westwood Lab members

Type	Rate of pay (Academic year)			
	2026 - 2027	2027 - 2028	2028-29	2029-30
Undergraduate student research assistant (RA) hourly rate*	$24.96	$25.46	$25.97	$26.49
Graduate student or non-student RA hourly rate*	$31.26	$31.88	$32.52	$33.17
Masters student annual stipend range	$21,224 - $36,414	$21,648 - $37,142	$22,081 - $37,885	$22,523 - $38,642
PhD student annual stipend range	$26,563 - $52,020	$27,060 - $53,060	$27,602 - $54,121	$28,154 - $55,204
Postdoctoral Fellow annual salary range	$42,448 - $78,030	$43,297 - $79,591	$44,163 - $81,182	$45,050 - $82,810
Other grant-paid employee annual salary range (see below)	Variable	Variable	Variable	Variable

**Amount inclusive of vacation pay and before required deductions for CPP and EI. Gross pay will be slightly less.*

Undergraduate Honour's students are not salaried as their project is being completed as coursework towards earning their degree. Where possible, undergraduate Honour's students in the lab will be offered RA-ships the summer term before their Honour's will commence. Dalhousie Students receive health, dental, and travel benefits and insurance provided by the university and are represented by the Dalhousie Student Union.

Hourly Research Assistants (RAs) will receive communications from their supervisors about the number of hours available for their employment and the time periods over which they are to be undertaken. If RAs are not students, these positions do not include health, dental, or life insurance benefits. Note that the base wage **does not include** required deductions for Employment Insurance or Canada Pension Plan and an RA's take-home pay will be lower than the base wage. The base wage includes 4% vacation pay as paid vacation days are not provided.

Postdoctoral Fellow health coverage, benefits, and union membership depends on whether you are hired as a "PDF Employee" or a "PDF Scholar", as determined by the source of the funding for the position. PDF employees are covered by the PSAC local 86001 collective agreement.

Other grant-paid employees (full-time, contract or permanent) – Salaries are not fixed. These rates will be determined on a case-by-case basis as they depend on position responsibilities and qualifications (e.g. coordinator, research associate, manager, director). These positions include health, dental, and life insurance benefits and are unionized as part of the PSAC Grant-Paid Union.

Personal and professional opportunities

Lab members are expected to lead their own project and take advantage of the autonomy they have to whatever degree they desire, including proactively building relationships with external partners or pursuing relevant training opportunities. The Lab Head will ensure that all members are provided with the opportunities described below.

Networking and collaboration

Networking and collaboration are emphasised and encouraged, with regular invitations to do so. However, you are not required to take on additional work outside of your capacity and interest unless you choose to.

Some examples of what this could look like include:

- Contribute to another lab member's work by helping analyze data, edit a paper, co-present a research project, draft a press release to alert the media of a new publication, etc.
- Give a guest lecture in a course at Dalhousie
- Attend a networking or training session
- Post an update on an award, scholarship, or publication on the lab website
- Write and publish a blog post
- Attend networking and training hosted by other lab members
- Work with external groups

Onboarding

There are many resources available to support new lab members as they orient themselves in the beginning stages of the lab. Questions regarding contracts, funding, and logistics can be directed to the Lab Head or the Project Coordinator. New lab members are

encouraged to reach out to senior lab members for other questions and support needs. Senior lab members are likewise encouraged to support junior lab members.

Training

Every effort will be made to ensure each lab member has access to all training that is required for their project. On occasion, additional training opportunities will be offered or suggested based on relevance or interest. Where possible, postdoctoral fellows and permanent grant-paid employees will have training and development as a formal portion of their workplan. Some past examples of these trainings include media training, facilitation training, wilderness first aid, chainsaw safety training, Canadian Aquatic Biomonitoring Network (CABIN) training, and CPR/Standard First Aid. If there is a specific training you are interested in, you can request it from the Lab Head.

Note: *The Lab Teams space hosts several lists of other relevant opportunities for lab members, including lesser-known scholarships, placements, and learning or job opportunities*.

Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Coordinator

In pursuit of the lab's JEDI goals, each fall members will select one lab member to act as their ***JEDI learning coordinator***. This volunteer role will displace a comparable amount of other lab duties, to be determined with the Lab Head at the beginning of the year. The *coordinator* will be responsible for facilitating a discussion early in the academic year to identify individual and collective learning goals within the group. Based on these goals, the coordinator will arrange 2-3 learning sessions with guest presenters throughout the year and/or share relevant news items, events, and other resources that will support lab members' learning. Near the end of the academic year, the coordinator will facilitate an evaluation discussion during a lab meeting to identify if learning goals were met and to support lab members in consolidating their learning on the subject.

Travel

Where possible, based on budget availability, support will be provided to travel to present research work and/or engage in learning through conferences, guest lectures, workshops, visiting scholar appointments, and other venues.

What you promise the lab

In general, expectations of work are the same for all lab members regardless of full-time status, Labour is expected proportional to your level of involvement and seniority at the lab

(i.e., expectations for grant-paid employees are different than for graduate students but they are both full-time lab members).

Lab members are encouraged to tell the Lab Head what they need to feel supported and empowered to succeed in their work. This should be done in the beginning of a lab members' time in the lab and continuously as needed. Communicating these expectations to the Lab Head is important for ensuring mutual understanding and fostering a healthy and productive working relationship.

Lab meetings

Lab meetings are a space for creating opportunity to connect and learn about each other's work.

The lab meets bi-weekly during the fall and winter semesters (September – April) and once a month during summer semester (May – August). Meetings are virtual unless determined otherwise, and the day of the week and time are set in accordance with all lab members' schedules to the extent possible.

All full-time lab members are expected to make every effort to attend all meetings, with allowance for time off due to illness or vacation. If a meeting is missed for any reason, lab members are expected to review the minutes and action items before the next meeting. Meeting attendance is optional for part-time members and does not count toward paid hours.

Each full-time lab member will be encouraged to be responsible for facilitating and taking notes (as minutes captain) on a rotating schedule. New lab members will not be expected to fulfill these roles until they have attended a few meetings to get a sense of the duties. All lab members have the option to request a co-facilitator if preferred.

Facilitator	Minutes Captain
Before the meeting: - Draft an outline of the meeting agenda - Remind other lab members of the upcoming meeting and offer the opportunity to add any additional agenda items *During the meeting:* - Introduce and close each agenda item and time keep to ensure the meeting agenda is completed in the allotted timeframe - Use the last couple minutes in the meeting to go over any action items - Take notes on behalf of the minutes captain when/if they are the one speaking or presenting	*During the meeting:* - Take notes under each agenda item on the discussion (most take notes in real time to avoid missing any important details throughout) * *Whenever the minutes captain is speaking or presenting, the facilitator will step in to take notes

Each full-time lab member will also be expected to lead one to two presentation(s), activities, or discussions at lab meeting(s) per term. These may include:

- **Presentations** *are typically research- or work-focused and can be practice runs of presentations required outside of the lab context, (i.e., thesis defence presentation; poster presentation; class presentation; guest lecture; pitch for conference; etc.)*
- **Discussions** *are also typically work- and research-oriented. In past meetings, research papers or articles that are of interest have been shared with the lab, and the 'presenting' lab member has led a discussion with the lab on the implications or recommendations or research methods used in the article.*
- *Previous* **activities** *have included virtual yoga class, online games, and tutorials on gamified versions of research tools and technologies.*

All full-time lab members will be expected to meet with the Lab Head bi-weekly, or as determined on a case-by-case basis, and to come prepared for those meetings by providing an agenda. If needed, additional meetings may be requested by lab members, but may not necessarily be granted depending on timing and capacity.

Work hours

Ensuring each lab member's comfort with their own definition of work/life balance is a priority at the lab and being able to define it is a privilege. We acknowledge that life, including emergencies and major life events, happen. In those cases, our intention is always to create space to honour those realities and changes to accommodate for them.

Unless otherwise determined and approved by the Lab Head, lab members will be expected to complete all the work pertinent to their project/contract/position in the timeline determined by the program, course, or contract. All additional work opportunities offered via lab membership are optional.

Required work generally does not take place outside of weekdays (Monday – Friday) between 9am and 5pm Atlantic Time (AT), however, there may be exceptions (e.g. fieldwork, travel for conferences). Each individual member's working hours are set by the individual and vary by local time zone. As a lab member, you will be expected to respect the working hours of others when waiting for an email response, booking meetings, etc. You may send communications at your time of preference but do not expect response outside of the recipients' working hours

Note: You can use the "schedule send" feature to ensure messages sent by email or Teams are delivered during work hours.

At the beginning of each semester, Lab members will discuss when to have shared core hours. These are hours during which members can expect quick responses on Teams and where Halifax-based members will be on campus.

Unless you notify the Lab Head that you are not available, you are expected to respond on Teams within 24 hours (weekdays) and to emails within 48 hours. If you are taking leave you are expected to notify the Lab Head in advance (within reason).

Socials

Lab members will be invited to attend 1 – 2 social events per term, planned by lab members on rotating basis. We encourage social connection at the lab as much as we encourage professional networking opportunities, to celebrate each other's milestones in particular. Lab socials are encouraged by optional to plan (individually or collaboratively) and attend. Efforts to include non-local lab members will be made to the best of our abilities.

Lab Retreats

When the Lab Head can secure funding to host a lab retreat, lab members will be invited to attend. These retreats support and develop our community norms as lab members can both socialize and contribute to the co-production of the lab manual. Participation in lab retreats is optional and flexible for lab members. Retreats will be planned by the lab retreat

committee which operates on a voluntary and rotating basis. Their responsibilities include but are not limited to: arranging carpooling and travel arrangements, creating a meal plan, designing and facilitating lab values conversations, communicating plans to lab members, and action item follow-up.

Community Support

In general, it is an expectation that as a member of the lab you will hold space for community relationships that reflect the lab's shared values and offer support (within reason and within your capacity) to other lab members. The lab is built on principles of co-production, community, and a desire to learn and grow together.

Data Management

Reasonable privacy and confidentiality are expected of all lab members pertinent to their own research projects, and the projects being conducted by other lab members whose information they are privy to. Generally, we expect responsible file management including backing up data, organized files, and no interference with files that do not belong to you. All data collected should be password protected on any device used to access it.

Upon termination of a project, all data should be transferred to the appropriate individuals or groups. In the case of projects involving approval by Dalhousie's Research Ethics Board (REB), this should be done in accordance with the specific data management protocol approved by the REB. Basic training on these will be provided on a case-by-case basis (more information about this is included in the onboarding information provided to all new incoming lab members).

Concluding with the lab

Under ideal circumstances, lab members will conclude their time in the lab with projects that are fully complete. This may not always be the case (e.g., personal circumstances arise that require a lab member to step back from their degree program).

Regardless, prior to leaving the lab:

- Return all equipment that is owned by the lab or by other lab members (default location is the Rowe building lab space unless specified by the Lab Head).
- Return any keys for lab storage/equipment spaces
- For projects without REB implications: save finalized or working copies of datasets, spatial data layers, scanned copies of paper field sheets (if relevant), and any other relevant project data in a folder on the lab computer and the locked hard drive.
- For projects that required REB approval, ensure that all files have been saved in accordance with the data management protocols included in the approved ethics

application. Make sure to include an easy to locate ReadMe file that explains folder architecture as well as data destruction and retention protocols.
- Save final or working copies of proposals, theses, and defense presentations in the relevant 'lab examples' folder within the lab Teams channel.

Fieldwork and Travel

Working in the field can be both rewarding and challenging and poses a unique set of conditions in comparison to 'normal' duties as a lab member. Fieldwork involves long working days under difficult conditions and close proximity to your field team. During student/HQP recruitment, relevant personal information that may impact you or your field team must be disclosed to the lab head to ensure safe and informed working conditions for all. Members of field teams will be required to consent to acknowledgement of risks.

Specific risks that may arise when conducting fieldwork, and measures to mitigate those risks, are specifically outlined in the lab's field safety protocol. Medical insurance is included in tuition fees (unless specifically opted out of) for all Dalhousie students – specific coverage details can be found here.

Lab members engaged in 'field travel' for conducting social science / participatory research such as interviews or focus groups are also expected to follow these guidelines.

Accessibility and accommodations

Fieldwork can be accommodated to the best of our abilities to reduce accessibility barriers. We acknowledge that not all forms of accommodation can be met due to the challenges posed by specific field environments and required duties. Alternative roles may be possible to support with fieldwork even if accessibility barriers prevent lab members from conducting core field duties.

Safety & Training

Safety is of utmost priority in the field. Lab members will never be sent into the field alone. Our collectively-developed field safety protocol should be followed, regardless of the duration in the field. Other important safety-related items fieldwork guidelines:

- At least one person on every field team should ideally have an up-to-date Wilderness First Aid certification, and at least have current standard first aid (CPR-C) training.
- Lab members doing field research with wildlife/animals must have research ethics approval from the Dalhousie Animal Ethics committee. Certification from the Canadian Council of Animal Care (free online training course) may also be required, depending on the nature of the project and target taxa.

Project Lead Responsibilities

The **project lead** (usually the student/HQP who is leading the research project) is responsible for developing a field protocol that includes site-specific safety plan for their individual project. They are also responsible for ensuring their field team has read and understood these documents.

Before every field trip, the project lead will ensure a physical copy of the general lab field safety protocol and the site-specific safety plan is (1) in the field vehicle; and (2) inside every Westwood Lab-owned first aid kit. The project lead may also elect to print off copies of the field protocol, data sheets, and any other relevant materials that are specific to their project/study design for ease of reference in the field (in particular, when working in environments with limited to no cellular coverage).

Examples of fieldwork materials from past lab members are saved in the lab Teams channel here.

Equipment & Travel

Most field equipment available to Westwood Lab members (equipment inventory here) is stored in the Annex lab space. Keys are kept by the lab head and lab manager, and may be loaned to lab members. Other equipment may be available to rent through resources such as the Atlantic Water Network equipment bank or through Dalhousie's SEASIDE program.

Field equipment and travel budgets are necessary to discuss with the lab head and the lab manager (if necessary) in advance. The project lead or travelling members should keep records of all payment receipts for accommodations, vehicle rental agreements, food expenses, and other equipment purchases/rentals. Payment reimbursements are usually processed through Chrome River (Dalhousie University's expense management system).

A compilation of field stations in Nova Scotia that may be available for booking (depending on location) is here. Dalhousie University also has a discounted rate with a number of vehicle rental agencies, should a field vehicle be needed (and budget allow). The project lead should be aware of dietary restrictions for all field team members when planning meals.

Policy on AI use

We use the example of AI as a reminder of the value of face-to-face discussion, working things out together, and mentorship. We commit to making time to be available to our lab mates for brainstorming, problem-solving, and mentorship so that AI does not become a substitute for shared learning.

At the time of writing (2026), we are working in a context where pressures to adopt AI to accelerate productivity and displace labour are strong. These pressures are not distributed equally. Untenured and early-career researchers, and those with inequitable access to time and other resources, may face greater incentive to use AI than those with more resources, including tenure or institutional security.

We also recognize the environmental, cognitive, and equity-related consequences of widespread AI adoption, and have agreed to the importance of resisting them. We have discussed that collective, organized action is more effective than individual choice, while acknowledging that our individual decisions matter. We commit to questioning broader patterns of adoption, and they shape our relationships to our colleagues, our fields, and ourselves.

As AI and its relevance in society continues to unfold, we grieve time poverty, the loss of permission to fail, the erosion of intellectually exciting work, diminishing epistemic heterogeneity, the decline of face-to-face exchange, and the replacement of human jobs and relationships with machines.

We use the example of AI as a reminder of the value of face-to-face discussion, working things out together, and mentorship. When considering AI, we commit to first asking who may be available as a brainstorming friend or problem-solving mentor, and we commit to being available to our lab mates so that AI does not become a substitute for shared learning.

- We do not expect or require any member to use AI.
- If we do use AI for work purposes, we *only* use tools that offer privacy protections and data confidentiality (e.g., Co-Pilot at Dalhousie).
- If members do choose to use AI, we prioritize uses that help us learn and develop our expertise, rather than offload our expertise to AI. This means using AI in a way that enhances, rather than detracts from, cognitive challenge.
- In the spirit of cognitive challenge, we commit to only using AI in ways that we understand, can explain.
- We are accountable for the accuracy and truthfulness of all work outputs, regardless of whether AI was involved.
- We discuss our AI use practices openly with lab members, and ensure all collaborators on projects are aware if and how we are using AI.

AI use practices that are never acceptable:

- Uploading someone else's unpublished work, data, or intellectual property (e.g., teaching material) into AI systems without their explicit permission.
- Using AI to generate figures, images, or artwork for publication.
- Presenting wholly AI-generated text, analysis, or ideas as one's own – especially when we can not fully grasp or defend these ideas.
- Concealing or omitting AI use.

These are living commitments that will evolve in future versions of the lab manual as the technology, avenues for political intervention, social pressures, and our own practice change over time. When in doubt about appropriate AI use, always discuss with the Lab Head.

Resources for new lab members

On the lab's '**Resources and Admin' tab in Teams**, you can find more information on:

- Dalhousie University Resources (policies, organizations and unions, student services, and student centers, clubs, and activities)
- Taking care of equipment
- Fieldwork instructions
- Accessing the lab
- Booking the lab computers
- Booking the Hayes room (shared meeting space)

Conflict Resolution Framework

Purpose

This framework is an integral part of the Lab Manual and is intended to support the Westwood Lab members and to encourage resolving conflicts between lab members that may arise during the course of their tenure with the lab. This is not intended to discourage participation or raise barriers, nor is it intentionally designed to force the members out of their comfort zones. We acknowledge that conflict resolution can be a challenge and view it as a shared responsibility amongst the members to be willing and able to strive for de-escalation.

This framework is not intended to signal a high-conflict environment. Instead, it reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and care for one another. Having clear

processes in place ensures that concerns, should they arise, can be addressed constructively and fairly.

Preventing Conflict: Everyday Practices

Lab members are encouraged to use the following practices to minimize unnecessary conflict and address concerns early:

- **Practicing curiosity and assume positive intent.**
  Approach differences with a mindset of learning rather than assuming intent. Ask questions and seek to understand perspectives before forming conclusions. Start from the assumption that all lab members are acting in good faith unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, in which case report it to the Lab Manager and then the Lab Head.
- **Maintaining professionalism**
  Address the concern(s) early when they arise so that they do not affect collaboration, cohesion or well-being. When issues arise, initiate direct and respectful conversations, ideally in person or via video. Text messages and chat can lead to misunderstandings.
- **Discussing needs and boundaries**
  Clearly communicating expectations, working styles, and boundaries at the outset and proactively can help prevent future misunderstandings.
- **Avoiding gossip and focus on self-experience**
  Concerns should be discussed directly with the individual involved or through appropriate channels, rather than with uninvolved parties, which could result in spreading rumours. When discussing conflict, frame concerns around how the situation affects you, rather than attributing motives, assigning blame, or making claims on behalf of others.

Conflict Resolution Reporting Protocols

If conflicts cannot be resolved informally, the following escalation framework is recommended. Lab members may enter this process at any level they feel comfortable with.

1. **Peer-to-peer discussion**
   When appropriate, address the issue directly with the person involved.
2. **Junior-to-senior support**
   Junior lab members may seek guidance from senior lab members (e.g., postdocs,

senior graduate students) for advice or informal mediation without getting into specifics.

3. **Senior lab members trained in conflict resolution**
   Designated senior lab members with conflict-resolution training may serve as neutral supports to help facilitate discussions.

4. **Formal Authority**
   If the conflict remains unresolved after reporting to the Lab Manager and the Lab Head, or requires formal attention, lab members may contact the SRES Director and/or their respective unions.

5. **Conflicts Involving the Lab Head**
   If a concern involves the Lab Head, lab members may choose from the following options, depending on comfort and context:

   - Internal options (e.g., SRES Director or another designated senior authority)
   - External or university-level resources (e.g., Dalhousie reporting offices, ombudsperson, harassment and discrimination services)

   Seeking support in these cases is considered appropriate and will not reflect negatively on the individual raising the concern.

6. **Institutional resources**
   If a conflict cannot be resolved through the steps above, lab members will be supported in identifying next steps, including mediation or external institutional resources. There is no expectation that individuals must "work through" situations that feel unsafe or unfair. Lab members may also engage university-level resources at any point, including those outlined in Dalhousie's Conflict Management Strategy, Harassment Policy and Discrimination Policy.

2025 / 2026

Lab Retreat- January 2026



Lab Retreat- January 2026



Small Mammal Training – May 2026





Rebeca's award- March 2026

Vegetation Sampling Training ft. Coconut? - June 2026





Summer Fieldwork- June 2026

Summer Fieldwork – June 2026



2024 / 2025

Mary's Farewell – April 2025



Holidays! – November 2024



Ben Comprehensive exam – July 2024



Mary Thesis presentation – April 2025



EFRI Kick-off workshop September 2024



WESTWOOD LAB MANUAL

WESTWOOD LAB
Natural resource management & science policy at Dalhousie University

2023 / 2024

Laser tag vs. the FOME Lab – October 2023



Master's thesis defense! – July 2024



Field trip to Conrad's Beach – October 2023



Guest lecture in ENVS Capstone – February 2024



Trip to Eskasoni – July 2024



Cumulative effects conference – November 2023



2022 / 2023

In-person Lab Meeting – April 2023



Lab Retreat! – March 2023



Summer Fieldwork – July 2023



Env Mgt Field Course – August 2023



Lab Retreat! (cont'd)

