



## 1) BGYN MEETING | GUEST SPEAKER: ZOFIA SMEJA | KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- 🔹 Email Zofia: [zsmeja@gmail.com](mailto:zsmeja@gmail.com). Visit Zofia's Instagram page: [@loveletterstotheriver](https://www.instagram.com/loveletterstotheriver)
- 🔹 **Did you know?** In Iceland, you are able to drink out of any creek, river, or stream as there is virtually no pollution, keeping the water fresh and pristine.
- 🔹 Burlington is in the **Sixteen Mile/Credit Watershed**. The GTHA is in the **St. Lawrence Watershed**. Check out a cool interactive map via Conservation Halton [here](#).
- 🔹 Zofia's passion for water spurred from a 5-day kayaking course that she participated in when she was 16. This experience encouraged Zofia to pursue a career working with nature, water, and the environment.
- 🔹 Water and Nature has helped Zofia to improve her mental health. She believes that work with nature can help to improve the mental health of others as well. Zofia believes that **outdoor therapeutic programs**

could be used as a substitute to more **Eurocentric** approaches to combating mental health issues.

- **Riparia** is a non-profit organization that Zofia works with that aims to **educate women in Environmental Studies through river expeditions**. Visit the website [HERE](#).
- A **Water Rangers Kit** is an accurate, affordable, and accessible water testing kit. Learn more [HERE](#).
- [Merlin Bird ID](#) is a resource that allows you to identify birds based on their characteristics.
- Zofia believes that individual activism (doing little things in your community) can have a ripple effect and create a bigger cause.
- Zofia's advice for young people interested in pursuing an environmental profession is to find focus on what brings you joy. Ask yourself: What are you interested in? What are you naturally drawn to? What are your gifts? What solutions would you like to implement?

**Books she mentioned/ + bonus one she loves** (+ a note to please visit a local bookseller or library):

- [Braiding Sweetgrass](#) by Robin Wall Kimmerer
  - + Beautiful article on the [grammar of animacy](#)
  - + Beautiful 'On Being' podcast interview - [The Intelligence of Plants](#)
  - + Beautiful 'Ologies' podcast interview - [Bryology \(MOSS\)](#)
- [All We Can Save](#) edited by Dr. Ayana Elizabeth Johnson & Dr. Katharine K. Wilkinson
  - + Podcast ep on ['Is your carbon footprint BS?'](#)
  - + Venn diagram re: ['what can I do to help address the climate crisis?'](#)
- [Trauma Stewardship](#) by Laura van Dernoot Lipsky
- [Emergent Strategy](#) by adrienne maree brown
  - Check her OUT!
- Organizations Zofia mentioned
  - [Skeena Watershed Conservation Coalition](#) - youth on water river program
  - [Riparia](#) - young women & science on the water
  - [Water Rangers](#) - citizen science water quality testing
- Special Note: It is WILD and unacceptable that there are >58 boil water advisories in Indigenous communities in our country. There are [several groups/ petitions](#) calling for action on this. Keep talking about it and asking your local representatives what they are doing about it.
  - Excellent podcast episode on this topic from [Secret Life of Canada](#)
- Free [Indigenous Canada](#) course U of Alberta