

## 2025 Network Challenge- Syllabus

	Orientation	How to Keep Learning	How to Do Research	How to Tell a Story	How to Handle Haters	How to Build Your Resources	In Person – Pitch/Reunion Event
Date	January 21, 2025 (virtual) 7-8pm	January 28, 2025 (virtual) 10am – 12pm	February 4, 2025 (virtual) 10am – 12pm	February 11, 2024 (virtual) 10am – 12pm	February 18, 2025 (virtual) 10am – 12pm	February 25, 2025 (virtual) 10am – 12pm	March 4, 2025 (in person) Location: Guelph, ON (TBD)
Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get to know one another</li> <li>• Go over the agenda</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How adults actually learn</li> <li>• How to facilitate a discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to design your own on-farm trials</li> <li>• Make connections with researchers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss what makes a good story</li> <li>• How to stick with your message with the media</li> <li>• Media literacy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand and navigate different personalities</li> <li>• Learn a 4-step system for managing sticky situations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarize what we've covered</li> <li>• Discuss the value of building capacity and how to build on our resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let's Talk Soil with the whole OSN</li> <li>• Pitch us your ideas for the year ahead!</li> </ul>
Your Goal	<p>Meet the rest of the 2024 Network Challenge Cohort</p> <p>Identify our commonalities</p>	<p>Facilitate a Let's Talk Soil discussion</p>	<p>Network with researchers and explore what you are curious about</p>	<p>Share your story</p> <p>Sharpen your media literacy skills</p>	<p>Hone your conflict management skills</p>	<p>Set some goals for yourself for this year and identify resources</p>	<p>Meet the whole Network, talk all things soil, and pitch your project for the year ahead!</p>

### The Network Challenge:

The Network Challenge is an interactive, multidisciplinary approach to developing the soft skills needed for building a Network focused on supporting and enabling the long-term implementation of soil health practices, as well as develop and action the skills necessary to be soil health mentors in your communities. The program incorporates virtual learning modules, knowledge sharing opportunities, and a participant lead project/activity in order develop mentoring and networking skills to bring back to your communities and continue to engage others.

The OSN and the Network Challenge both operate from a learner centered approach, meaning that participants are encouraged to choose a project/activity that meet their own interests (i.e. cover crops, crazy strips, bio strips, N management etc.), and we will work to provide relevant resources, connections and supports to meet your goals.

### **Participant Led Project/Activity:**

As part of the Network Challenge, we ask participants to action a project/activity of their choosing. Some examples of past projects are:

- Hosting an event (field day, shop talk etc.)
- Speaking at conferences
- Doing on-farm research

- Sharing your learning on social media
- Creating your own community or network
- Podcasting
- Creating Videos or media materials

We will work with you to develop a plan and help you action your project/activity throughout the year.

## 2025 Program Outline:

### **Tuesday January 28, 2025 (10 am – 12 pm EST) – How to Keep Learning**

**Speaker:** Vicky Robinson, Head of Sustainability, Agricultural Industries Confederation (AIC)

**Moderator:** Paige Allen, Program Coordinator, Ontario Soil Network

#### **We will learn how to:**

- Engage adult learners
- Build your network
- Facilitate engaging discussions

#### **This will prepare you for:**

- Hosting events
- Having inquisitive conversations

### **Tuesday February 4, 2025 (10 am – 12 pm EST) – How to do Research**

**Speakers:** Sarah Larsen (Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario), Ian McDonald (Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Agribusiness) and Rosalie Gillis-Madden (Farmers for Climate Solutions)

**Moderator:** Lorraine Vandermyden, Research and Demonstration Coordinator, Ontario Soil Network

#### **We will learn:**

- The basis of how to conduct on-farm research
- The basis of how to design a research trial

#### **This will prepare you for:**

- Setting up a trial/group project
- Communicating your research
- Getting involved in academic research

### **Tuesday February 11 (10 am – 12 pm EST) – How to Tell a Story**

**Speakers:** Norm Lamothe, Woodleigh Farms/OSN Alumni and Tyson Devitt, Stone Bridge Flour/OSN Alumni

**Moderator:** Ian Virtue, Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Ontario Soil Network

#### **We will learn:**

- How to effectively tell your story
- Understand your audience
- Create a clear message
- Media literacy

#### **This will prepare you for:**

- Presenting at conferences and events
- Being interviewed by media/podcasts/etc.
- Sharing your story
- Critically evaluating your media sources

## **Thursday February 18, 2024 (10 am – 12 pm EST) – How to Handle Haters**

**Speaker:** Jim McComb, Farmers Edge/OSN Alumni

**Moderator:** Tori Waugh, Executive Director, Ontario Soil Network

### **We will learn:**

- How to navigate different personalities
- DiSC
- Lead with non-violent communication skills

### **This will prepare you for:**

- Building a network
- Being a mentor
- Being resilient to the social challenges of being an innovator

## **Tuesday February 25, 2025 (10 am – 12 pm EST) – How to Build Your Resources**

**Speaker:** Gordon Alblas, OSN Alumni

**Moderator:** Paige Allen, Provincial Coordinator, Ontario Soil Network

### **We will learn:**

- How to build a network
- The power of community and connection
- How to make the most of our resources

### **This will prepare you for:**

- Leveraging your connections and establishing new ones
- Actioning your project/activity
- Building and contributing to the growth of the Network

## **March 4, 2025 - Guelph, ON (Time/Place: TBD) – OSN Reunion & Pitch Event**

**Location:** TBD

**Room:** TBD

Networking with the whole Soil Network

- Meet the OSN Network
- Hear from other Alumni
- Pitch your Event/Activity – present your idea for collaboration/feedback from the OSN

At this event you will have the opportunity to share the beginning stages of your idea or project for this year with the broader OSN Network. This is a strategy session to hear feedback, suggestions and collaborate with your peers on how to take your idea into action!

**\*All meeting Zoom links will be sent via email as calendar invitations\***

## **Ontario Soil Network – Member Resources**

Website: <https://ontariosoil.net/member-resources/>

Password: soil

Here you will find lots of resources to help you plan:

- a handbook on leadership and change made by the 2021 cohort
- examples of the different projects OSN alumni have undertaken
- cheat sheets for planning
- presentation templates
- discussion cheat sheets
- event prep checklists to help you organize yourself

Connect with the Network:

- **WhatsApp group** - this chat group has the majority of the Ontario Soil Network members on it, and it's a great place to share and discuss our challenges and successes and troubleshoot new ideas together. Make sure to sign up on the member resources page or connect with Paige directly to be added!

**Register for the OSN WhatsApp Here:**

<https://chat.whatsapp.com/F31gu21wyZN8YDxMnzsXLq>

- **Discord** – Another great OSN platform where you can share and chat over text, voice or video.  
**Register for the OSN Discord Here:** <https://discord.gg/KRtVh8k3t7>

You will also find recaps and additional information for every session, so you can come prepared, revisit ideas, or catch up if you miss something. Recordings will be posted following the session each week.

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