

Vision2030 ENGO Impact Profiles

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Ecology Action Centre



Maggy Burns
Executive Director

The [Ecology Action Centre](#) (EAC) is a member-based environmental charity in Nova Scotia. EAC's work focuses on seven action areas: built environment, coastal & water, energy and climate, transportation, marine, food, and wilderness. Maggy Burns is the Executive Director of EAC. She is responsible for guiding organization-wide priorities, organizational change, operations, and staff culture. Maggy has participated in two Vision2030 programs: the JEDI Lab and Responsible AI Literacy. Maggy is also part of the Leadership Council for Vision 2030, which provides advice and guidance to the Sustainability Network on priorities for programming topics.

The experience of being on the Leadership Council broadened her perspective on capacity-building priorities and helped inform her decisions of where to focus her leadership attention. Her role places her at the intersection of strategy and day-to-day organizational practice. Her involvement with the Leadership Council has helped her support EAC to respond to emerging issues while ensuring that staff have the guidance, systems, and space needed to do their best work.

Maggy was drawn to the artificial intelligence workshop series as she observed the increasing pervasiveness of AI, and the range of curiosity, skepticism and concern among EAC's staff. EAC was developing an AI policy and grappling with the challenges that AI poses, socially and environmentally. She saw the course as a timely opportunity for deeper reflection and informed guidance. She saw the AI series as an opportunity to build enough literacy to help EAC engage with AI more deliberately.

The workshop series gave Maggy a more informed understanding of the organizational effort required to understand AI and how to relate to it well, and ethically. A stand-out lesson was a task-assessment rubric that involves breaking work into clear steps,

identifying tasks people dislike, and asking whether those tasks could be effectively completed with AI. This helped highlight that individuals and their work preferences can remain central when an AI process is being considered and that repetitive, time-consuming tasks may be good candidates for AI experimentation. This reframed AI as a selective tool for improving the quality of work rather than a sweeping replacement for human contribution.

She also learned that effective use depends on carefully crafted prompts and repeatable processes. The experience encouraged her to distinguish generative AI from ordinary automation: some burdensome processes may be automated without AI, while others may benefit from it. More broadly, Maggy gained literacy about the risks of AI's scale and rapid development, and she came to see that effective and ethical AI use is nuanced and requires strong governance, ongoing learning and discussion, and clear internal and external communications.

The main benefits for EAC to date from the AI course are strategic clarity, policy development, and change management. Insights from the course directly informed EAC's Generative AI policy. One central principle of the policy is to take a learning approach: EAC encourages staff to build understanding and ongoing dialogue so that individuals and the organization can make sound decisions in a fast-changing environment.

The course has also informed how Maggy leads internal conversations. Rather than relying only on all-staff discussions, she has begun speaking directly with managers and encouraging them to create open dialogue within their teams about the potential and risks of AI. She hopes these smaller conversations will make it easier for staff to express their views, experiment responsibly, and consider where AI may be useful and where it should be limited. She is also planning a 'Lunch and Learn' for supervisors to share key course lessons and extend the learning and discussion across EAC.

A next step for EAC will be examining how technology can support human resources and in particular, recruitment. As traditional resumes and cover letters are increasingly AI-generated, EAC's HR is at times overwhelmed. Hiring processes are an area where EAC will systematically review its processes and consider appropriate uses of technology.

Overall, the workshops have helped EAC move towards more informed experimentation. It has given her a practical framework, a clearer leadership agenda, and a grounded way to explore AI use with integrity.