How we’re organizing the Mentorship Program at the Conference

We will assign mentors and mentees a few weeks before the conference as well as distribute a database of all mentors and mentees who are participating in this year’s program.

For in-person attendees:
- Mentors and Mentees will have special nametags identifying them as participants.
- During Wednesday’s breaks, the Discovery Center will be a perfect place to meet with each other — this room will be set up for the evening’s poster session, providing plenty of conversation potential. Mentors should consider joining the mentees at Wednesday’s career panel and inviting them to their table at Thursday’s lunch.

For virtual attendees:
- Set up a plan for checking in during the day, using whatever technology works best for the both of you.
- We will host a special zoom meeting during Wednesday’s career panel with break-out rooms where you can meet.

Mentors, some ideas for providing mentees with a valuable conference experience:

Reminders:
- Demonstrate active listening — ask questions and follow-up questions; listen to their answers and invite their questions.
- Who can you introduce your mentee to at the conference or in your network — think of others with relevant subject matter, career path, or shared interests.
- Share SERCAL’s job board (http://www.sercal.org/job-openings), other job boards, and resources for career opportunities.
- Highlight skills that may be valuable to prospective employers (e.g., data entry & analysis, field experience, technical writing skills, etc.).
- If comfortable, please share your contact information and encourage ongoing conversation.

Example question prompts for your mentee:
- How did you become interested in ecological restoration?
- Have you attended a professional conference before?
- How are you applying the concepts you’ve learned in your education/previous jobs in ecological restoration?
- Do you have questions about advice you’ve heard previously?
- What advice would you give other students/early career professionals?
- What would you like to get out of the conference? How can I help with that?
- Is there anything I can do to make this a more enjoyable and effective conference?

Mentees, some suggestions for how to get the most value out of the conference:

Reminders:
- Practice asking follow-up questions to presenters.
- Practice introducing yourself — in person, via the chat function, or over email.
- Practice taking notes in a format that will be easy to review in the future.

Example question prompts for your mentor:
- What was your education and background that helped you get to where you are now?
- What are key points I should be looking to take away from a conference?
- What are some methods that I can practice to approach a speaker or session chair to get more information?
- What inspired you to serve as a mentor during the conference?
- Why is [insert particular subject] important within ecological restoration?