

IMPACT

SUSTAINABILITY
TRAVEL & TOURISM

**A COLLABORATIVE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON INNOVATION
AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF TOURISM TO CANADA'S
SUSTAINABLE FUTURE.**

VICTORIA, BC
JANUARY 19-22, 2020
2020 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS PAPER



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Open Letter from IMPACT's Co-Founders:

During IMPACT 2020 delegates were clear in their feedback. The time is now to focus on measurable actions if tourism's legacy across Canada and globally is to be a positive one. We immediately began exploring ways we could build 2021's program around tools, resources, attainable measures and best practices - all that had been touched upon during previous IMPACTS, but it was time for a deeper commitment.

While COVID-19 was a soft murmur in January, never did any of us imagine the devastating blow it would have to tourism globally. It is fair to say, the tourism industry will never be the same. Like all of you, we turned our full attention to our businesses, our clients and our industry partners, seeking ways to survive. Trust in tourism, the industry many blame for the initial spread of the global pandemic, has plummeted as communities struggle with bringing back the visitors who can provide badly needed business yet can also be carriers of a potentially deadly virus for which there is currently no vaccine.

The pressure that had been building up, demanding tourism change, has now exploded. Destinations who were drowning under the weight of over tourism are welcoming cleaner air, drastic reductions in traffic and people congestion and are reclaiming their cities and towns. Global voices are requesting tourism not return to the way it was, but rather take this moment in time to define a better industry standard. Those of us who had been advocating for years that tourism, when managed sustainably, is undervalued as a foundation of our economies - watched in horror as tourism effectively shut down across Canada - contributing to the highest unemployment rate in our country's history, in just 30 days. We learned how few people in power understood how our industry operates as they struggled to provide stimulus funding to prop up the tourism economy that has hit rock bottom. We commend so many in our industry who are working tirelessly, educating and demanding the proper funding tools needed for recovery.


And while we work hard on recovery across Canada, we must focus on resilience - knowing a second wave is a certainty. We have the attention of Canadians who have not only experienced, but watched many they love face their greatest fears for survival. IMPACT will continue, as the smartest and most innovative people in our industry gather virtually to discuss what tourism's future and legacy continues to be for Canada. Together we will build that resiliency - for we must as we are all believers that sustainable, regenerative, resilient tourism is our future.

Sincerely,

The IMPACT Co-Founders

Kayli Anderson, Partner & COO, Synergy Enterprises
Deirdre Campbell, Managing Director, Beattie Tartan
Starr McMichael, Founder, Starrboard Enterprises Inc
Paul Nursey, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria





The 2020 IMPACT conference took place on the traditional, unceded territory of the Songhees Nation and Esquimalt Nation and the Lekwungen speaking peoples.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism is a powerful industry, one that can facilitate conservation, cohesive cultural connections, and prosperity. However, if unchecked, tourism can place an invisible burden on infrastructure and resources, displace locals, and leave communities questioning the benefits travellers are supposed to bring. The IMPACT Conference wrangled with some tough questions: How can we re-focus our economics and measures of success to include our social and environmental values? How does the language we use shape our future?

At the third annual IMPACT Sustainability Travel and Tourism conference the delegates focused on creating a legacy of regenerative tourism in Canada. This conference brings together diverse voices from across the country including operators, students, entrepreneurs, industry groups, to academics, scientists, and policy experts to learn from each other's successes and address the challenges head-on.

At IMPACT 2020 the conversations shifted beyond best practices and "sustainability" recognizing that hope for a vibrant future lies in regenerative tourism as the next frontier for our industry. The delegates explored what regenerative tourism could mean for natural systems, culture heritage and the economy. Common themes included the power of partnerships, striking balance between visitors and locals and new economic frameworks for prosperity.

Topics covered included:

- ▶ Innovation in clean transportation
- ▶ Social and environmental impacts of food systems
- ▶ Carbon capture
- ▶ Economic value of wildlife conservation
- ▶ Circular Economy
- ▶ Indigenous Tourism
- ▶ Furthering the United Nations Sustainable Development goals (SDGs)
- ▶ Accessibility – Travel for all
- ▶ Emergency preparedness
- ▶ And more

Over the past three years, IMPACT has sparked new partnerships, advanced new research and created a space for a new vision for tourism that goes beyond simply being sustainable. Globally, tourism can advance the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals beyond a threshold of sustainability towards a new era of regeneration. The decade ahead, with its challenges and opportunities, will be the most transformative our industry has seen.

RECOGNITION

Co-Chairs

Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
Marion Joppe, Professor, University of Guelph, and President, Tourism Environment and Chair of the Executive Committee, Travel and Tourism Research Association

Strategic Partners



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POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

At IMPACT 2020, we heard from political representatives at all levels of government about their visions for tourism in Canada. Topics ranged from tourism's responsibility to future generations, to the need for compassion in politics and the opportunity for tourism to lead our country in responsible practices.

Elected Officials

Adam Olsen, BC MLA – Saanich North and The Islands

Councillor Jeremy Loveday, City of Victoria

Hon. Jeannie Dendys, Yukon Minister of Tourism and Culture

Hon. Lisa Beare, BC Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture

Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria

Terry Duguid, MP – Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Economic Development

Elizabeth May, MP – Saanich – Gulf Islands

Non-Elected Officials

Andrew Little – Province of BC

April Froment – District of Tofino

Claire Avison, Government of BC

Eleanor Mickette, Town of Canmore

Kathy Krawchuk, Town of Calmar

Kealey Pringle, Government of BC

Ken Craig – Province of BC

Lisa Christensen, Government of Yukon

Lori Risling Wynn, Town of Canmore

Michelle Lavasseur, Town of Calmar

Mike Furey, Resort Municipality of Whistler

Rob Seeley, Town of Canmore

Sarah Marsh, Government of Yukon

Suzanne Ferguson – Province of BC

Toni Metcalf, Resort Municipality of Whistler

Valerie Royal, Government of Yukon

Wendy Magnes, Government of BC



BEYOND CARBON NEUTRAL

SPEAKERS:

Kayli Anderson, Partner & COO, Synergy Enterprises

Christina Beckmann, Vice President, Strategy, Adventure Travel Trade Association

Leigh Barnes, Chief Customer Officer, Intrepid Travel

IMPACT, the Adventure Travel Trade Association and Intrepid Travel are going carbon neutral and beyond, driving climate action and drawing down carbon.

Travel is responsible for 8% of global carbon emissions. The past five years are, collectively, the warmest years in the modern record. According to the IPCC, we need to ensure global temperature increases do not get above 1.5 degree Celsius. To ensure we do not experience blunt climate trauma, organizations are going beyond carbon neutral. Climate positive means removing more carbon from the atmosphere than we create.

The IMPACT conference practices regenerative tourism. Working with intention, we celebrated our local entrepreneurs and continued to build relationships with the Nations whose lands we gathered on. Emissions were minimized by hosting at a BOMA BEST Platinum conference center that has been working on energy and water conservation for over a decade. All events were at a walkable distance and meals featured low-carbon proteins. The conference's emissions including attendee travel are offset by carbon credits from Offsetters, Canada's leading carbon offset provider. The funds support two projects, the Great Bear Forest Carbon Project in Canada and efficient wood cookstoves in Uganda.

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) has launched two major initiatives to help their members mitigate their emission and remove carbon from the atmosphere. Neutral Together is a bulk carbon offset purchase program for ATTA members making carbon neutrality accessible to all their operators. Tomorrow's Air focuses on the next phase of climate action: carbon removal.





“We used to want to be the best travel company in the world. Now, we want to be the best travel company for the world.”

- Leigh Barnes, Chief Customer Officer, Intrepid Travel

Intrepid’s commitment to the environment has bolstered their business and solidified their position as a travel company for the planet. Carbon neutral since 2010, Intrepid has invested in six international renewable energy projects that allow environmental, social and economic benefits. As part of their commitment to being climate positive Intrepid is now investing in projects such as the [Seaweed Regeneration project off the coast of Tasmania](#) that uses marine permaculture to capture and store carbon.



Calls to Action

- ▶ Measure your emission so you can better understand how to limit them.
- ▶ Invest first in reducing emissions from your operations
- ▶ Offset emissions by purchasing offsets to support carbon reduction projects
- ▶ Go beyond carbon neutral: invest in projects that are drawing down and storing carbon

IMPACT POLICY IN ACTION 2020

Pre-Conference Tour

HOSTS:

Greater Victoria Harbour Authority & Eagle Wing Tours

SPEAKERS:

Jacques Sirois, Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary

David Roberts, Pacific Northwest Transportation Services

Calen McNeil, Big Wheel Burger

Chris Hildreth, TOPSOIL

Brian Cant, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority

Sarah Webb & Phillip Bellefontaine (City of Victoria)

Brian Henry & Lee Philips (Ocean River Sports)

Craig Norris (Victoria International Marina)

IMPACT's Policy in Action Tours are all about the cutting-edge sustainable initiatives taking off in Victoria. The 2020 tours featured electric coaches, urban farming, carbon neutral fast food and more. Presentations were followed by a trip on Eagle Wing Tour's carbon neutral catamarans with a rare viewing of Southern Resident Orcas including a young calf! A rainbow emerged in the sky as attendees visited the Eco Guardians at Race Rocks, where they were greeted by Elephant Seals, Stellar Sea Lions, Harbour Seals, Eagles, Cormorants, Brandts and Oyster catchers, and even a pair of Humpback Whales, making it truly a once in a lifetime experience.



- I sat next to a gal as we disembarked the dock at Fisherman's Wharf and she said to me, "Anything over and above the presentations this morning will just be icing on the cake!"

- There were no words to describe the experience but we did share a few tears of appreciation for the glorious experience we had just shared.

WELCOME RECEPTION 2020: náwiləŋ

**Venue: Royal BC Museum's Clifford Carl Hall & the First Peoples Gallery
Tuesday, January 19, 2020**

The third annual IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Conference kicked off in the Clifford Carl Hall at the Royal BC Museum, where the delegates were welcomed by Songhees Nation representative Cecelia Dick and a beautiful performance by the Lekwungen Traditional Dancers of the Songhees Nation.



Following initial speeches, delegates explored the Museum's impressive First Peoples Gallery. The Royal BC Museum has been practicing environmental stewardship for decades, decreasing energy and water use, carrying out a comprehensive recycling program and participating in the annual Earth Hour challenge. Exquisite local hors d'oeuvres were provided by Songhees Events & Catering, who incorporate sustainability into every aspect of their business.



THE GATHERING 2020: Hyš'qa gwns áné teč'al i? n'áw?iləŋ ə? cə s'qepəŋ

Venue: The Atrium
Tuesday, January 21, 2020

On the third night of the conference delegates gathered to enjoy local food and drink and engage in meaningful conversation.



This year's Gathering took place at The Atrium, a certified LEED Gold building, which features forward thinking architecture and dynamic public spaces. The evening showcased some of the best local food and drink Vancouver Island has to offer, allowing delegates to experience a cornerstone of Pacific Northwest culture. These providers included Truffles Catering & Events, Zambri's, Songhees Catering & Events, Wayward Distilleries, BC Ale Trail, Merridale Cidery & Distillery, Sheringham Distillery, Blue Grouse Winery, Unsworth Vineyards and Pamela Sanderson of Hire A Somm.



REALITY CHECK: CLIMATE

SPEAKER:

Robert Sandford, Global Water Futures Chair, Water and Climate Security United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment & Health

Robert Sandford returned to IMPACT to offer the annual reality check on the state of climate change. Robert's insight in atmospheric science addressed the irreversible climate threshold, and the leading role tourism can play in restoration.

We now know that climate change effects are accelerating far more rapidly than projected. Slower, more persistent weather patterns and a warmer atmosphere are resulting in the intensification of disastrous events we witness today: endless wildfires in 2018; the melting of Antarctica in 2019; and Australia's bushfires in 2020. Severe and sudden climate disruptions are going to make travel more unpredictable, more dangerous, and introduce new and greater liabilities for tourism providers. We must begin looking at tourism through the climate lens.

Greenhouse gas emissions have increased 4% since the Paris Agreement was ratified. To have any hope of avoiding blunt climate trauma we need a 7% annual emissions reduction by 2030. Yet, this reality is unlikely as climate impacts are already occurring 50-70 years ahead of projections. The question remains: Have we crossed an irreversible threshold?

The Anthropocene

BC's Pacific Climate Impact Consortium research demonstrates that during the current decade, the combined effects of anthropogenic and natural climate forces have made extreme fires risks in western Canada 1.5-6 times more likely.



Greenland is Melting

On Thursday August 1st, 2019, the Greenland ice sheet broke all records by losing 12.5 billion tons of ice - the most ice to have ever melted in one day since records began. Daily ice losses on this scale were not projected to occur until roughly 2070.

CASE STUDY: Switzerland Mountain Ranges

In the last 5 years, Switzerland has lost 10% of its glacial mass resulting in the damage of vital infrastructure. With no ice or permafrost in place, the Alps are falling apart causing massive rocks falls, slides, and floods. Permafrost loss is a ticking time bomb for Switzerland and the high mountain regions everywhere in the world, including Canada.

The Future of Tourism

While the situation at hand is indeed a crisis, it is also a moment of extraordinary opportunity. Tourism's vision and reach transcends all national boundaries and interests. There is opportunity for tourism to become highly influential by assuming the role of transnational climate and global change diplomats. We must move beyond 'heads in bed', and in the direction of regenerative tourism and transformative travel experiences.

At the local level is where we hold the power to affect change by first starting with the restoration of local identity, dignity, morality, and equality, and in doing so resorting to common purpose and vision for humanity and the climate. Tourism is one of the few economic sectors that has the capacity to simultaneously achieve all of these goals.

"If as a society we have any hope of addressing the climate threat in time, we need reconciliation, meaningful reconciliation. First with one another, and at the same time with the earth. We now know what indigenous peoples have know for thousands of years. We can reduce and moderate the threat of climate disruption by protecting, restoring, and constantly rehabilitating natural system functions."

- Robert Sandford, Global Water Futures Chair, Water and Climate Security United Nations University Institute for Water, Environment & Health



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Implement policies that protect, restore, and rehabilitate natural system functions

Operators

- ▶ Take immediate action for incorporating restorative, sustainable climate action plans into your business models

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Take a leadership role in developing common goals for supporting and implementing restorative and transformative tourism practices
- ▶ Move away from "heads in beds" and towards other indicators of ecological and social sustainability

CANADA: STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

FACILITATOR: Paul Nursey, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria

SPEAKERS: **Katie Briscoe**, President, MMGY Global
Keith Henry, President and CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Charlotte Bell, President and CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Canada
Gloria Loree, Chief Marketing Officer, Destination Canada

Paul Nursey guided this leadership panel through a diverse conversation about the successes, research, challenges, and points of contention in Canadian tourism today.

At the turn of the decade, awareness around the impacts of climate change have been fused with travel consumption trends. Consumers have mixed feelings about travel and its associated impacts, a phenomenon broadly labeled 'The Greta Effect'¹ in 2019, after Swedish youth activist Greta Thunberg¹. Research from MMGY found travelers are spending substantially more on experiences and operators that promise social responsibility and despite GenX and Millennial generations broadly being perceived as the face of environmental concern, Boomers are more likely to devote time and money to sustainable travel experiences. The direction of the industry is becoming clear: sustainable practices need to be adopted. Businesses that neglect to act on the available research insights and case studies demonstrating this will be left behind.

"Travelers who made a purchase based on social concerns spent 39% more, year over year."

- Katie Briscoe, President, MMGY Global

Across the industry, there are varying degrees of connectivity to the science and consumer insights needed to shape sustainable strategies. A best practice offered by Briscoe is for the destination marketing plans to have complimentary strategies around sustainable destination management, including dispersion, resident education, and strategic product creation.



¹ The Greta Effect, The Economist, August 19th, 2019

Through the lens of Canadian Indigenous tourism development, the most pressing challenges related to partnership, economic benefit, and authenticity. Today, one in three international visitors to Canada are interested in an Indigenous tourism experience; the sector's growth is outpacing that of Canadian tourism, and consumer demand is expected to rise. Keith Henry, ITAC President and CEO, explained that some communities are feeling pressure as they are not yet equipped with the supplies and resources to meet the exploding demand. Lack of balance between community needs and tourism development has led a few Nations to purchase tourism assets for the sake of closure and visitor rejection.

Gloria Loree, CMO at Destination Canada, cited research indicating that pride is the top driver for those who choose to travel, and that people want to grow from their travel experiences. At the national level, focus will be placed on reconciliation and reciprocity, and on showcasing what that means in Canada. National tourism metrics and policy are shifting with the federal government's intentions, but it is clear that more monetary investment and partnership are required to meet the country's needs.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Offer foundational investment support for indigenous community development
- ▶ Continue to refine tourism policy towards authenticity and benefit to local communities
- ▶ Focus on driving more public-private partnerships

Operators

- ▶ Seek education in available case studies, consumer and scientific research to implement sustainable practices throughout your business

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Leverage existing consumer and scientific research to drive strategies towards sustainability and regeneration
- ▶ Ensure visitor marketing plans are coupled with strategies for sustainable destination management
- ▶ Rethink destination development plans with a focus on values and priorities

Academia

- ▶ Promote accessibility to scientific research, case studies, and information to drive change at governmental and business levels

Resources

- ▶ [Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy](#)
- ▶ [The Greta Effect](#)

TRANSITIONING TOURISM TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

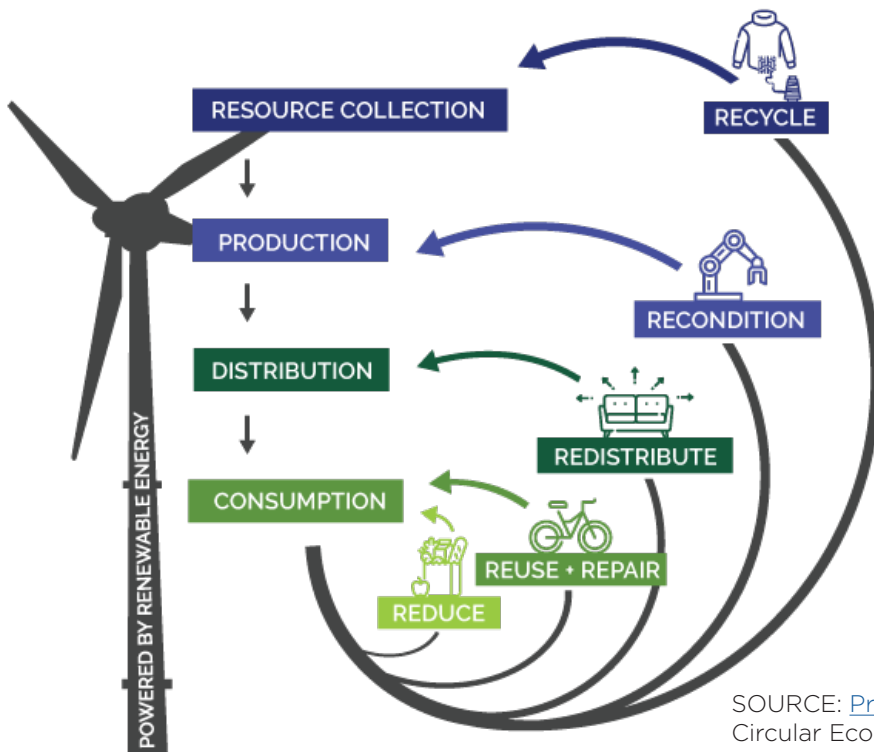
FACILITATOR: Jill Doucette, Founder, Synergy Enterprises

SPEAKERS: Ann Squires Ferguson, CEO & Registered Interior Designer, Western Interior Design Group Ltd.
Lilly Woodbury, Chapter manager, Surfrider Pacific Rim
Jeff Wint, Principal Engineer, Polar Engineering
Jeremy Douglas, VP, Development, Ocean Wise

Jill Doucette began this panel discussion by offering a definition of circularity: designing for continuous resource use and zero waste. At the time of IMPACT 2020, the world was thought to have achieved 9% circularity in global material flows; meaning 91% of our waste will eventually end up in our landfills, ecosystems, or oceans. There remains a 91% gap to close.

While the circular proportion of the global economy may not have grown significantly in the past year, the number of Canadians participating in the conversation around it has. In September 2020, Toronto will be the first North American city to host the World Circular Economy Forum. During this IMPACT session on transitioning tourism, Jeremy Douglas, Vice President of Development at Ocean Wise, aptly suggested that we begin by recognizing that our environment is foundational to our economy, and not vice versa.

Throughout the product lifecycle, from those that design products to anyone who consumes them, there are opportunities to eliminate waste. Waste that is produced can be repurposed into new products, thereby creating more jobs and spurring entrepreneurship in the tourism supply chain. Product design is a critical element of the circular economy, by purchasing products designed for circularity at end of life, recycling is simplified, and products can be easily repaired or reused.



Tourism companies play a huge role in procurement. Our industry can advance the circular economy with deeper consideration for what we purchase, from whom, how it was made, what waste it leaves behind at end-of-life.

SOURCE: [Project Zero](#)
Circular Economy Model

CASE STUDY: Ocean Wise & the Vancouver Aquarium

The Vancouver Aquarium has been actively working to eliminate all single use plastic in their operations. Everything sold in the onsite cafe is compostable, and their haulers were audited to ensure that waste was being properly composted. Ocean Wise worked with international suppliers to minimize packaging, and the preferences expressed by the aquarium have created a ripple effect with these new alternatives extended to other clients. Plastic packaging was removed from the gift shop where visitors can purchase items like wooden puzzles in organic cotton bags, or stuffed toys tagged with twine.



Today's Challenges

Consumer education remains a hurdle for businesses trying to manage waste effectively. The more a business can limit consumer choice to sustainable options, the greater our collective ability to change the supply and demand effect. Businesses should also ensure that staff are adequately trained in the use of any onsite equipment so that they are empowered to troubleshoot maintenance issues, building a “repair-first” culture into facilities maintenance, thereby reducing costs and waste.

Given the novelty of the circular economy, the subject is particularly vulnerable to “greenwashing”. Beware of vendors who use misleading marketing around the sourcing and impact of their materials, and bear in mind that certifications in the space are novel, too.

Circularity is a systems challenge nationally. Canada's waste management infrastructure is fractured, and we don't yet have the resources or cooperation required to dispose of the waste we generate unilaterally, including compostables and recyclables. Government regulation in sectors like aviation also poses challenges in waste limitation and disposal as all international waste from arrivals is currently incinerated.

To embrace the circular economy, tourism companies should first invest time in education and auditing. This due diligence will give you an accurate picture of your waste systems and engage your teams in strategy and execution. In the case of working with large enterprises within your supply chain, exercise patience; it can take time to gain influence. Businesses and consumers of all sizes have a voice in this arena and the power to advocate for change.

CASE STUDY: Surfrider, Pacific Rim

Surfrider brings community, businesses and waste experts together towards their common goal of eliminating waste from beaches. Through their 'Hold Onto Your Butt' campaign, cigarette butts are collected in Tofino and sent to TerraCycle to be recycled into items like surfboards and benches. Surfrider also partnered with Suga to have end of life wetsuits transformed into yoga mats.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Continue to develop policies that enable Canada to shift towards sustainable consumption and production
- ▶ Hold Canada accountable to SDG 12, continuing to establish Canada as a circular economy leader
- ▶ Create funding support mechanisms for new innovations in the local tourism supply chain

Destinations (DMOs) & Operators

- ▶ Look to non-profits in the space for help transitioning your business toward zero waste
- ▶ Become familiar with UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12 and leverage existing indicators in strategy revisions
- ▶ Write a sustainable purchasing strategy that starts with waste reduction, and moves into circularity over time
- ▶ Develop and commit to meaningful waste management criteria for your business
- ▶ Give your community a voice in expressing challenges and opportunities to eliminate waste and recycling facilities in your region
- ▶ Audit your waste streams to identify opportunities for immediate reductions

Media

- ▶ Raise awareness around the circular economy by amplifying media presence of events like Earth Overshoot Day and the World Circular Economy Forum

Resources

- ▶ [Synergy Foundation, Project Zero Waste Audit Tools \(food waste & landfill\)](#)
- ▶ [Circular Economy Educational Resources](#)
- ▶ [Earth overshoot day](#)
- ▶ [UN SDGs 12](#)
- ▶ [TerraCycle](#)
- ▶ [Suga](#)

TOURISM AND MODERNIZING EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

FACILITATOR: **Walt Judas**, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of British Columbia; Co-Chair, Tourism Emergency Management Committee

SPEAKERS: **Amy Thacker**, CEO, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association; Chair, Emergency Coordination and Reputation Subcommittee, Destination BC
Andrew Little, Director, Policy and Indigenous Relations Tourism Branch B.C. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture; Co-Chair, Tourism Emergency Management Committee
Ken Craig, Director, Planning and Risk Reduction, Emergency Management BC

This workshop explored emergency management lessons learned from major crises in BC, and the role tourism can play in mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery.

Emergencies caused by climate change and other factors impact residents and visitors alike yet, tourism and the visitor economy have long been omitted from disaster preparedness systems and planning in BC and across Canada. The response to the wildfires and flooding of 2017/18 demonstrated that tourism operators and associations play an integral role in emergencies including mitigation, communication and reputation management. Following the disasters, Destination BC established a tourism emergency management committee, and is being integrated into the provincial emergency system under the auspices of Emergency Management BC. This has resulted in BC being the first province to officially integrate tourism and visitors into the Emergency Program Act.

Four Pillars of Emergency Preparedness

1. Mitigation: understand the risks and hazards you face
2. Preparedness: create a plan with appropriate resources
3. Response: know your protocols
4. Recovery: build back better with resiliency

Lessons from BC Crises

- ▶ Identify partners and build community relationships before an emergency occurs. In the event of a disaster, it is easier to trust and connect with those whom you already have relationships
- ▶ Have integrated lines of communication with emergency management partners to ensure development and distribution of clear, consistent messaging
- ▶ Ensure your communications are the absolute truth to ensure safety
- ▶ Know your role. It takes a system of integrated players to plan for an emergency
- ▶ Continue learning from each incident and openly share lessons with each other



“We all have individual roles to play, and it is critical that you have the right information at the right time. We quell fear by helping people feel informed and feel like they can make the right decisions for themselves.”

-Amy Thacker, CEO, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association

CASE STUDY: 2017 Cariboo Chilcotin Wildfires

The Cariboo Chilcotin backcountry closed during 2017 wildfire season. The stakeholder relationships that were established prior to the devastating events gave the Cariboo Chilcotin commercial tourism operators an exemption to the closures, while other rural and remote operators could not conduct regular business. This meant more eyes and ears on the ground from a safety perspective to help emergency management partners have accurate information and shorter recovery times.

Where We're Headed

The future of tourism and modern emergency preparedness will see further integration of tourism government officials and emergency management planners. There will be mobilization of tourism assets and resources in response and recovery, and support for destination reputation management. We will also see a focus on integrated systems planning pre- and post-disaster, support for business continuity, ongoing industry research and training, development of industry resource databases, and visitor safety services.

“It takes a coordinated and collective effort to adequately respond and recover, as well as to plan”

- Andrew Little, Director, Policy and Indigenous Relations Tourism Branch, B.C. Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture; Co-Chair, Tourism Emergency Management Committee

Key Workshop Takeaways

- ▶ Clear communication is key. Have a reliable, authorized source of complete and accurate information. Send unified messages tailored for each audience
- ▶ DMOs should annually review multi-stakeholder emergency protocols and share with other organizations
- ▶ Consider the long-term recovery of the destination and its reputation. Use a combination of DMOs, business, media and other influencers, and government to communicate the destination's return to safety
- ▶ Do your research and use language that resonates with consumers in post-disaster marketing.
- ▶ Have decision structures in place around evacuation and notice. Be proactive and test your plans
- ▶ Build a rapid response team of community stakeholders. Ensure there is collective agreement on accurate and honest information before sharing
- ▶ Always consider new things to prepare for, including climate adaptation strategies for disaster risk reduction. Prioritize resource plans simultaneously



Calls to Action

Operators

- ▶ Invest in preparedness training programs and tools
- ▶ Develop crisis communications and coordination plans

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Invest in training resources, crisis communications, and marketing to build back
- ▶ Know who your regional and provincial emergency contacts and how your emergency management system works locally
- ▶ Consider climate risks in your area when planning. Which have the highest probability and impacts? Review existing adaptation strategies for assistance

Media

- ▶ Be prepared with post-disaster marketing strategies for consumers using accurate information and language that resonates

Resources

- ▶ Visit www.gov.bc.ca/PreparedBC and destinationBC.ca for tourism emergency management planning resources

FOOD TOURISM FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

FACILITATOR: Daphne Ewing-Chow, Head of Content, Loop News

SPEAKERS: Trevor Jonas Benson, Vice President, Destination Development, Culinary Tourism Alliance
Bill Swan, Regenerative Tourism & Partnerships Adventure Canada
Paul Natrall, Owner & Operator of Mr. Bannock Food Truck, Board Member of Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations
Sarah Drury, MSc Graduate Student, Plant Studies, University of Guelph
Doreen Sark, on behalf of Charlie Sark, Professor, Indigenous Knowledge and Climate Change, UPEI

Food Tourism accounts for 35% of the global spending on tourism. It has an opportunity to invigorate local, rural economies and preserve intangibly valuable cultural heritage and knowledge by providing visitors with local, sustainable, authentic culinary experiences. However, these positive externalities require a paradigm shift towards regenerative tourism. Panelists argued that this shift is already underway.

Pushed by Doreen Sark to examine how tourism can truly practice the sustainability it espouses, panelists dug deep into how food tourism can be an example for the rest of the industry.

“Sustainability as a concept is flatlining and we need to resuscitate it by moving to regeneration. But I also don’t think tourism is the most carbon intensive industry in the world; I think it is food, [making today’s discussion twice as important.]”

– Bill Swan, Adventure Canada



Examine Your Supply Chains

At the Culinary Tourism Alliance (CTA), Trevor Jonas Benson focuses on building resident pride first and foremost when approaching a new food tourism destination. This not only tackles the rise of resident pushback to tourism; it ensures that the cultural heritage of that destination is valued and protected. The CTA team does this by looking at ‘food ways’. Similar to a supply chain, food ways look at the ‘who, what, when, where, why, and how’ of food - how it’s being produced, who is producing it, and especially, how it is shared and how it is consumed. According to Benson, these last two questions are paramount to getting food tourism right.

“Businesses have an opportunity to inspire others, in a way that goes beyond marketing or a competitive edge – it’s a philosophy”.

– Bill Swan, Adventure Canada



The panel also highlighted examples of closing supply loops in the food industry, from distilleries using spent grapes from nearby vineyards to entire communities of small-scale food tourism operators that source their ingredients from each other. By practicing sustainability in an economically successful way, food tourism operators are driving the paradigm shift towards regeneration.

“One of the big benefits we have as food tourism is that we’re not always asking for big innovation, we’re just asking to hold up a mirror to the community and highlight what they’re already doing”.

– Trevor Jonas Benson, Culinary Tourism Alliance

CASE STUDY: Walker’s Reserve

Located in Barbados, this former sand quarry has been transformed into a vibrant food forest using permaculture design and regenerative food tourism. Run by Slow Food Barbados, Walker’s Reserve is a living example of what going beyond the status quo of restoration can look like, all while providing local jobs and meaningful experiences for visitors.

www.walkersreserve.com

CASE STUDY: Operation Grow

This Ontario-based hydroponic farm uses a fraction of the land and 70-80% less water than traditional farming methods. They take regenerating community to another level by employing women who have experienced violence and shaping their enterprise around their employees’ needs. The added bonus: Visitors and residents of the area get to enjoy locally grown, delicious produce.

www.operationgrow.ca

Cruising to Local Food with Adventure Canada

Bill Swan and his team at Adventure Canada wanted to change the way food was approached on their expedition cruises. Guided by the idea that locals know best, 2019 saw Adventure Canada complete their first 10-day circumnavigation of Newfoundland with food made entirely from Newfoundland ingredients, and regenerative ingredients whenever possible. Their new approach to food has three pillars:

- ▶ Celebrate food: in Bill's words, this is "tantamount to changing the world; we need to enjoy ourselves to change" – Bill Swan
- ▶ Engage: in purchasing, in building relationships with the producers
- ▶ Educate: primarily, visitors.

Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Value the intangible metrics like knowledge transfer, community stability, and visitor dispersion across time and space. Look at the economic and cultural value of say, Italian Nonnas passing on their stories to the next generation

Operators

- ▶ Know your metrics, so you can report on the changes you're making and give them value
- ▶ Don't be afraid to challenge your clients
- ▶ Examine your "food way" supply chain and shift towards supporting regenerative agriculture

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Use a broader range of metrics that value the shift of tourism beneficiaries away from just tourists and towards the community

Media

- ▶ Support food tourism in your communities. In Canada, provide coverage for events like the Indigenous-led 'Taste of the Nations'

Public

- ▶ Vote with your transactions; align them with your philosophies
- ▶ Investigate your own food chain: where is your food grown? What is its nutrient density? What's the farmer's name?

Resources

- ▶ [UPEI-IKCC Statement on Tourism, Food Tourism and Climate Change](#)

LUNCH & LEARN WITH KEHKESHAN BASU

SPEAKER:

Kehkeshan Basu, Founder President, Green Hope Foundation, United Nations Human Rights Champion

In this powerful lunch-hour session, Kehkeshan Basu illustrated the role apathy plays in inhibiting sustainable development, calling on every member of civil society to exercise their influence and leave no one behind.

Despite numerous cases of unsustainable and exploitative development, consumers continue to demand products that fuel climate change and social injustice. In order to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Basu urged individuals to seek awareness of global sustainability issues and to take individual action - cautioning that the effects of climate change will be indiscriminate.

The largest and most populated cities are in the developing world and have a significant contribution to global carbon emissions. Economic investment is limited, infrastructure is rudimentary, and corporations have a huge role to play in the sustainable development of the developing world. Themes of social sustainability are often overlooked, with focus being paid to environmental and economic concerns. An increased focus on human rights, social equity, inclusivity, and equal opportunity will be required to achieve the targets set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Choices individuals make have an impact on supply and demand, foreign production, political climates, environmental health, and in turn, global human health. Reliance on government policy can be offset by individual action to achieve the sustainable development targets. Basu called for grassroots level action and for individuals to examine their lifestyles, reduce their consumption, and to take care of others.

“Blaming the government and institutions is not going to deliver climate justice. What will deliver climate justice and sustainable development, is when every single member of civil society - children, you, me, everyone else - start taking actions as individuals.”

- Kehkeshan Basu, Founder President, Green Hope Foundation

Apathy must be rectified in order to achieve sustainable development. Canadians consume an unsustainable amount of waste, energy and water. While today's youth are receptive and enthusiastic about protecting the environment, adults can more often be cynical and dismissive. As a society, we all need to educate ourselves on issues of sustainability and accept individual responsibility for the global impacts of our actions.



Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Seek education in global issues in sustainable development
- ▶ Evaluate your lifestyle and make conscious decisions to consume less, and more sustainably
- ▶ Support corporations and governments with ethical and sustainable practices
- ▶ Take the actions you can within your own zone of influence; support your community

Resources

- ▶ [The United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda](#)

AVIATION: THE DECADE AHEAD

FACILITATOR: **Geoff Dickson**, President and Chief Executive Officer, Victoria International Airport

SPEAKERS: **Douglas Shelton**, Global Account Manager, Cathay Pacific Airways
Randy Wright, President, Harbour Air
Wendy Avis, Manager, Environment, Vancouver Airport Authority
Geoffrey Tauvette, Director, Environment and Fuel, WestJet

Within its short history of 100 years, the aviation industry has profoundly impacted how we connect culturally and economically around the globe. Accounting for approximately 2.5% of global carbon emissions, the aviation industry has an important role to play in achieving the emission reduction targets set in the Paris Agreement. Airlines and airports across Canada are taking action to work towards emission reductions.

Panelists brought broad perspective about the role of airports and airlines and the challenges ahead. Geoff Dickson, CEO of Victoria's International Airport, introduced this discussion by suggesting that global travel and climate change are not trade-offs; the industry needs to continue to innovate and invest in making air travel more sustainable.

Enormous investment into research and development is driving efficiencies and while strides are being made, innovation is never free of challenges. A key focus has been fuel alternatives; since 1990, aviation has achieved triple the fuel efficiency as passenger vehicles, and 10 times that of long-distance freight. While hydrogen-based solutions are thought to be in the distant future, we have seen Harbour Air introduce the first battery-powered short-haul flights, and further focus on biojet fuel development. With biojet costing approximately 3.5 times that of conventional fuel, there is still progress to be made in the economic viability of alternatives. Beyond fueling planes, the industry is looking at opportunities to improve ground operations as well, from efficient taxiing aircraft to reducing use of plastics in-flight.

The panel discussed opportunities in communicating stories about sustainable innovations to passengers for behavioural change and promoting sustainable travel practices on part of the individual traveller. Changes in public sentiment towards air travel are pushing aviation to take a more proactive approach in sharing the ways air travel has and can be more sustainable.



There remains debate, however, about what responsibility the passenger or operator should accept, especially as it pertains presently to carbon offsetting. Panelist Geoffrey Tauvette, Director, Environment and Fuel at WestJet, said that industry-wide, he would like to see more coordination between business and consumers to take responsibility for emissions. With the industry often left alone to deal with the challenges of transition (regulation, carbon tax, capital costs), it would be productive to have all stakeholders within the journey connected and speaking the same language.

CASE STUDY: Vancouver Airport Authority

The Vancouver Airport Authority's newly released 2020-2024 Environmental Management Plan focuses on carbon, waste management, water and ecosystem health. The airport's sustainability leadership is exemplified by its current Salmon Safe certification, as well as its goals of becoming the first carbon neutral Canadian airport within 2020, and zero carbon by 2050. Recent successes include site-wide installation of low-flow toilets and the "Oscar" AI-driven, waste-sorting robot, which has the airport's waste diversion up to 82%. The group is currently building Canada's largest geo-exchange system and will continue working with airline partners to drive operational efficiencies.

CASE STUDY: Harbour Air

In December 2019, Victoria-based Harbour Air became the first airline to operate an electric-powered flight. They were also the first airline to become carbon neutral in 2007. With a leadership team clearly committed to sustainability, ideas and suggestions shared by the airline's young workforce are taken seriously and contribute to organizational success. The milestone achieved in 2019 resulted from a clear commitment, value alignment in partnerships, and perseverance.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers & Regulators

- ▶ Work with stakeholders to re-evaluate regulations blocking waste and emissions reduction opportunities

Operators

- ▶ Create cross-industry best practices for passenger vs airline offset responsibility
- ▶ Explore technology partnerships to enable better representation of carbon impacts in purchasing path for average individual consumer
- ▶ Create joint investment partnerships to explore alternative energy opportunities in airports for ground and service vehicles

Media

- ▶ Work with industry to tell and amplify story around efficiency gains and future

Airports

- ▶ Work with airline partners to drive efficiencies in taxiing, ground vehicles and buildings
- ▶ Seek opportunities to optimize the traveler experience and enable more focus on sustainability starting at the departure airport

Passengers

- ▶ Support airlines that have taken steps towards sustainability
- ▶ Support offset programs when available to take responsibility for carbon emissions
- ▶ Travel single-use plastic free to reduce in-flight and airport passenger waste
- ▶ targets, simultaneously empowering passengers to make educated choices

WORKSHOP: SETTING YOUR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

FACILITATOR: Patti Balsillie, Founder, Patti Balsillie Management Consulting Inc.

SPEAKERS: Cedar Swan, CEO, Adventure Canada
Genevieve Leclerc, President & CEO, #Meet4Impact
Kehkeshan Basu, Founder & President, Green Hope Foundation, UN Human Rights Champion

This workshop highlighted inspiring examples of how leading organizations are successfully using the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to strengthen their businesses. Participants then determined the most relevant SDGs for their organization and explored opportunities to integrate them into their business practices, partnerships, and goals.

Ensuring global social progress, economic growth, and environmental protection in the face of climate change is becoming increasingly more difficult. Sustainable development through the SDGs requires all individuals and organizations to become agents for change.

Cedar Swan, CEO, Adventure Canada, shared how her family-owned Arctic expedition company worked with staff to incorporate the SDGs into their operations. The successful adoption of relevant SDGs was accomplished by aligning and extending individual and departmental priorities and goals. Visuals and practical tools help facilitate commitment to the goals for both staff and clients.

Genevieve Leclerc, CEO, #Meet4Impact, discussed how to leverage business events to address sustainability and create value for hosting communities. Genevieve advocated for moving beyond the focus of visitors and using the SDGs as an opportunity to regenerate communities and the environment. Her suggestions: use scorecards to mitigate your footprint, focus your content on SDGs, and ensure your event brings value to the host community.

“Leave behind more, contribute more than anything you've consumed, and make sure that your visitors and your clients are doing the same.”

- Genevieve Leclerc, CEO, #Meet4Impact

Kehkeshan Basu, Founder & President, Green Hope Foundation, provided an international perspective using grassroots level action to implement the SDGs worldwide. At Green Hope, education is used as a transformative tool to empower communities and drive action. Innovation and creativity are key to engagement, especially with youth. They have localized SDGs by identifying area-specific challenges and have developed the tools and resources to implement actions that achieve their SDGs.

SDG Business Implementation Strategy

- ▶ **Understand** how your actions tie with the SDGs
- ▶ **Prioritize** which goals are most important to you
- ▶ **Align** your strategic objectives with the chosen SDGs
- ▶ **Identify** objectives and targets
- ▶ **Track** how your activities contribute to the goals
- ▶ **Report** on your achievements

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



Key Workshop Takeaways

- ▶ Focus on goals that align with local values and are most relevant to your business, community, or region. Don't try to meet all the SDGs
- ▶ Partner with organizations or initiatives that are already working towards the same goals
- ▶ Build collaborative partnerships to offset carbon footprints and promote shared sustainability messages
- ▶ Scale out already existing tools and strategies used by your organization in SDG implementation
- ▶ Use practical tools, visuals, and language to create clarity and enhance staff and client buy-in
- ▶ Use the SDGs to focus on wellbeing as a key metric for development. What is good for locals can be great for visitors
- ▶ All the SDGs are interconnected. Take small everyday actions for a sustainable lifestyle and world



Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Host a workshop in your organization to integrate the SDG's
- ▶ Tell your stories! Email program@impactnational.ca to share your business story with the SDGs and share them on tourism4sdgs.org

Operators

- ▶ When incorporating SDGs into your organization, make sure to connect with locals more meaningfully to align with their priorities and understand what well being means to them
- ▶ Implement SDG training into all new staff onboarding
- ▶ Use the SDG framework to set annual goals for your business to work towards

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Shift from marketing to management by prioritizing community voice and wellbeing.
- ▶ Consider incorporating SDG alignment in your approaches to development

Resources

- ▶ Book: *The Age of Thrivability*, Michelle Holliday, 2016.
- ▶ Ted Talk: [How we can make the world a better place by 2030](#), Michael Green, 2015.
- ▶ [Workshop resources from IMPACT website](#)

STRIKING BALANCE WITH VISITORS & RESIDENTS

FACILITATOR: Leigh Barnes, Chief Customer Officer, Intrepid Travel

SPEAKERS: Greg Oates, Senior Vice President, Innovation, MMGY NextFactor
Leslie Bruce, President and CEO, Banff & Lake Louise Tourism
William Bakker, Chief Strategist & Partner, Destination Think!

This panel discussion explored how destinations can strike the right balance between catering to both visitors and the local community. The session emphasized the importance of having an open dialogue with residents and other stakeholders to understand what they need from tourism while highlighting destination management strategies from around the world.

Tourism can only be sustainable if the needs of both visitors and local communities are prioritized. A recent assessment of a city's readiness for tourism growth by the World Travel and Tourism Council found that the destinations best equipped to develop a sustainable tourism industry are those creating policies that "prioritize the liveability of cities, ensures there are clean air and water, excellent education, affordable housing, good transport connectivity, and access to parks and green spaces for residents."

One aspect of striking the right balance is having discussions around the desired volume and type of tourism. As more and more destinations face challenges related to rapid tourism growth, it is essential for DMOs to engage with residents and other local stakeholders to understand how to create a shared vision for tourism development.

"You need to open your doors and have these conversations. They're not always easy, but every time we do this, it becomes so much richer. Your strategies become better and instead of a community that works against you, you develop a community of advocates that work with you."

- William Bakker, Chief Strategist & Partner, Destination Think

CASE STUDY: Banff National Park

In anticipation of record levels of visitation in 2017, Banff & Lake Louise Tourism worked closely with Parks Canada and the Town of Banff to develop and implement a marketing and communications plan to educate both visitors and residents on the best ways to enjoy the national park during Canada's 150th anniversary. The three organizations collaborated to encourage the use of public transit and shuttle services within the park, as well as to and from Calgary. As a result, ROAM transit ridership increased by 30% over the previous year and thousands of visitors used the new explorethepark.ca website to plan their trips. By working together and prioritizing both the visitor and resident experience, the three organizations not only achieved their goals but also shifted behaviour and improved the overall Banff National Park experience.

Many destinations around the world are also hosting public engagement sessions and conducting surveys of resident and visitor perceptions of tourism. In New Zealand, 'Mood of the Nation' research commissioned by Tourism Industry Aotearoa and Tourism New Zealand helps to assess resident perceptions of international tourism. The survey is conducted twice annually and according to the latest survey in November 2019, 93% of New Zealanders agree that international tourism is good for New Zealand.

Several Canadian destinations were also mentioned for their efforts to incorporate resident, visitor and stakeholder perspectives into their strategic planning and sustainable destination management strategies. For example, when developing its new Tourism Development Strategy, Yukon Territory engaged over 500 Yukoners through an online survey, through formal submissions, or in-person at one of 55 engagement sessions. In total, they received over 12,000 comments about how to sustainably grow tourism in the territory.

CASE STUDY: Place DNA

Destination Think utilizes a collaborative place-branding approach that seeks to identify and articulate the essence of a place and its people. By digging into a destination's identity and what makes a place the way it is, they can determine its "Place DNA". Once residents and tourism stakeholders can agree on their "Place DNA", they can start addressing key questions like "Who is the right visitor for us?". Understanding this can alleviate the pressure to attract more visitors and focus on attracting those visitors who will stay longer, spend more, seek to understand the place and want to return and protect it for future generations.



Calls to Action

Operators

- ▶ Listen to your customers, your staff, and your local community members

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Genuinely listen to your community. Drop your ego, seek input and collaboration and engage with an open mind
- ▶ Find points of commonality or shared objectives with organizations that may have different points of view
- ▶ Continually ask "How do we make the experience better for visitors and residents alike?"
- ▶ Destination development is not just about engaging the visitor but also working with what's important to the municipality

Resources

- ▶ Destination Think: [What is Place DNA®? Here's your essential reading list](#)
- ▶ Tourism Industry Aotearoa: [Mood of the Nation](#)
- ▶ Government of Yukon: [Sustainable Tourism. Our Path. Our Future](#)



DOSE OF INNOVATION: DAY 1

To inspire and motivate, speakers shared 6-minute lightning talks that highlight existing solutions and best practices.

Why Should You Care About Refrigerants?

SPEAKER: Ian Welle, Principal Engineer, Polar Engineering

Leading scientists from Project Drawdown describe refrigerants as the single greatest contributor to global warming. Ian Welle, an expert in low global warming potential industrial refrigeration systems, addressed the climate impact of refrigerants and coming regulations in Canada.

Refrigerants absorb and release heat, making it possible to chill your food and cool your building. When refrigerants leak, they release carbon dioxide (CO₂) into the atmosphere. Refrigerants have an annual loss rate of 10 percent globally, making it the single largest contributor to global warming.

Regulations are targeting refrigerants with a high Global Warming Potential (GWP). In 2016, 91 countries signed and ratified a legally binding agreement to phase out refrigerants that have a GWP greater than 700. However, California is already planning to regulate refrigerants with GWP's as low as 150. California levels are where we should be aiming and what we should be planning for.

Start early and plan for the long term: The time to start adapting is now. By phasing out refrigerants and future-proofing systems, operators can be better prepared to meet coming regulations, avoid high costs, and have a positive impact on global warming.

Resources:

- ▶ [Drawdown](#): The Most Comprehensive Plan Ever Proposed to Reverse Global Warming, Edited By Paul Hawken

Worth More Alive Than Dead: Places Where Sustainable Travel is Saving the Planet

SPEAKER: Jonny Bierman, Founder & Content Cultivator, Eco Escape Travel

This session illustrated the relationship between sustainable travel, conservation and economic impact. Jonny Bierman, a freelance sustainable writer and content creator, covered four case studies from three continents to illustrate the impact of sustainable travel on environmental protection.

[Yacuma EcoLodge](#), Ecuador: Twenty years ago, a group of young dreamers promised the Indigenous community to create a natural reserve and build an ecolodge on their land. Fast forward to today, the proceeds from the ecolodge have gone towards building a local school for the Indigenous community, supporting sustainable agriculture programs for the local farmers, and the preservation of Indigenous language and culture.



[REI Adventures](#), Rainbow Mountain, Peru: Local Indigenous groups set out to protect Rainbow Mountain from Canadian mining interests by creating a tourism economy centered around this culturally important landmark. In partnership with REI Adventures, they have set up a lodge-to-lodge trek that funds local educational programs and scholarships, employs and empowers women, and provides economic stability and diversity.

[Misool Eco Resort](#), Raja Ampat, Indonesia: A former shark finning camp was turned into a sustainable tourism resort that funds a Ranger Patrol and Marine Protected Area (MPA). The land is leased from the local Indigenous chief, whose people are heavily involved in the Ranger Patrol. This initiative has decreased poaching in the area by 91%, increased biomass by 600%, and sharks by an incredible 300%.

[Maple Leaf Adventures](#), Great Bear Rainforest, Canada: Thanks to Coastal Indigenous activists, environmental groups, and sustainable tourism operators, grizzly bears are now valued more alive than dead and trees are valued more as forests than furniture in our living rooms. By supporting their Indigenous and environmental partners, Maple Leaf Adventures has been part of a group of sustainable tourism operators with over eighteen years of advocacy, resulting in cutting edge land use management plans and a conservation economy.

“The world is watching Canada, and they are looking to us as leaders [in sustainable tourism]. Let’s give them something to look at.”

– Jonny Bierman, Founder & Content Cultivator, Eco Escape Travel



Calls to Action

Operators

- ▶ Create cross-industry best practices for passenger vs airline offset responsibility
- ▶ Explore technology partnerships to enable better representation of carbon impacts in purchasing path for average individual consumer
- ▶ Create joint investment partnerships to explore alternative energy opportunities in airports for ground and service vehicles

Destinations (DMOs)

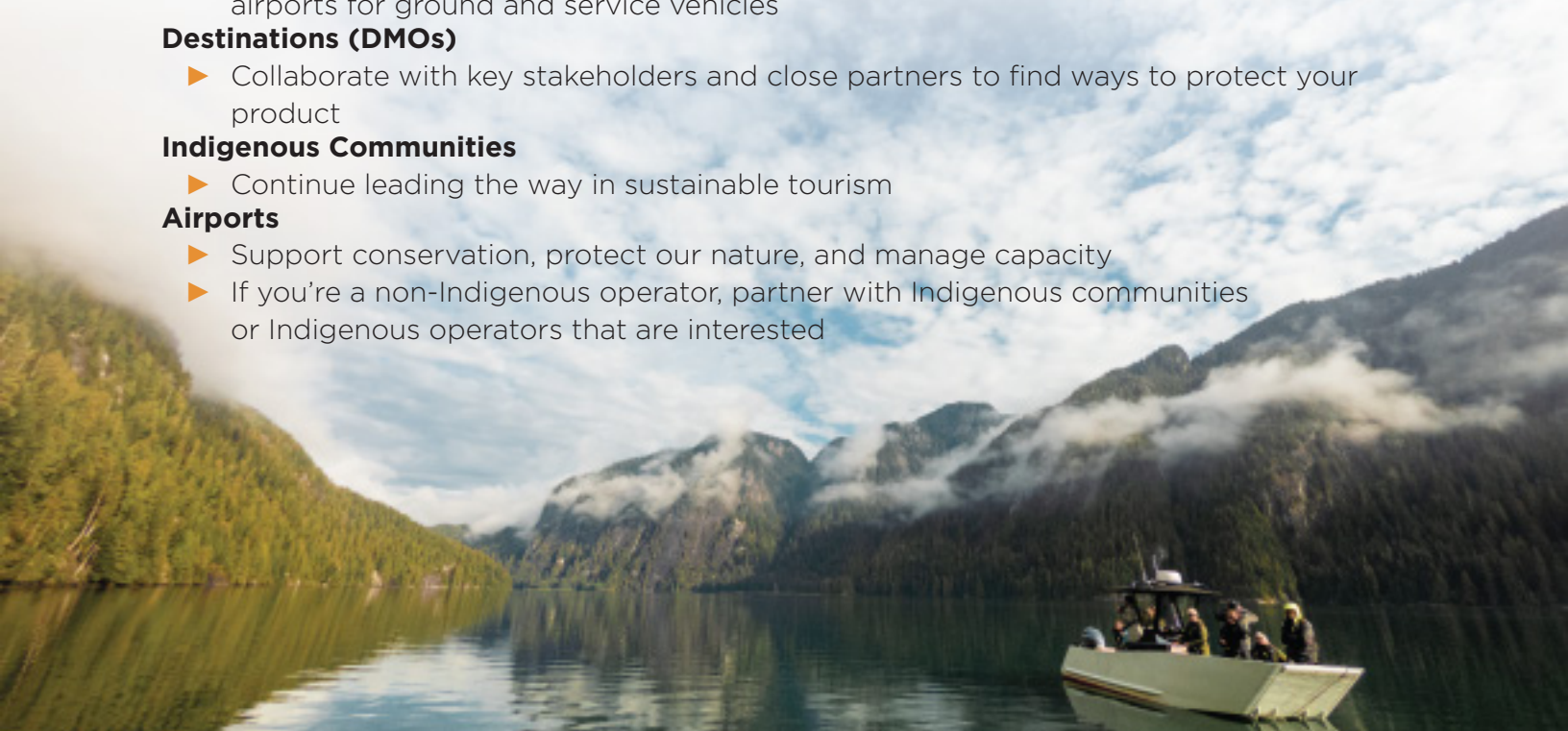
- ▶ Collaborate with key stakeholders and close partners to find ways to protect your product

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Continue leading the way in sustainable tourism

Airports

- ▶ Support conservation, protect our nature, and manage capacity
- ▶ If you’re a non-Indigenous operator, partner with Indigenous communities or Indigenous operators that are interested



THE LANGUAGE WE USE

FACILITATOR: **Greg Oates**, Senior Vice President, Innovation, MMYG NextFactor

SPEAKERS: **Gwendal Castellan**, Manager, Sustainable Destination Development, Vancouver
Teresa Ryder, Director of Business Development, ITAC
Wade Davis, Anthropologist, Ethnobotanist, Author and Photographer

Panellists in this session discussed how the words we use in the context of tourism and sustainability can have a profound impact on our future.

Definitions of sustainability have evolved over time, between people and cultures and therefore differ in their understanding and use, yet we need a common understanding of the language we choose. How can the visitor economy use language more effectively to define meaning, build coalition, and drive action around the pillars of sustainability?

The Word “Overtourism”

We can see how words and language have a huge impact. In 2017 the founder of tourism media company Skift created the word “overtourism” – a word now used daily in our industry conversations. The term gained momentum, from casual mentions in trade magazines to cover stories in The Economist and The Guardian. The creation of this word has brought global attention to a pre-existing but previously undefined problem, allowing the world to find new ways to speak about and address the issue. But is this helping to drive action or making it harder to keep up with the problem?

Aligning our Language

The tourism industry can be more effective in driving action by using language that aligns with local values. 69% of delegates believe that as an industry we should join others in adopting the term “Climate Emergency.” Meaningful engagement between the visitor economy and local community can foster the communication and partnerships needed to build a shared truth behind our words, and ensure they carry meaning and impact. We can effectively align language through sharing stories, collaborating around sustainability initiatives, and generating awareness among visitors and residents of the impact they have beyond the economic benefits.

As tourism borrows from history, culture, and anthropology, so too should our language. Teresa Ryder described the Indigenous use of traditional storytelling with both visitors and industry to demonstrate the symbiotic human-environment relationship, and the value of this relationship to the identity and very survival of the seven generations before and after them.

“Our languages are so much a part of who we are as indigenous people. They tie us to our territories, our land base, our water base, and who we are as part of this place. So when we’re describing how we use our language, we don’t separate ourselves from the beings that we are and the space that we live in”.

-Teresa Ryder, Director of Business Development, ITAC

We can also consciously choose industry terminology that transcends sectors to build bridges for collaborative approaches to sustainable solutions. For example, using the phrase “visitor economy” allows us to capture multiple mobilities and businesses beyond just what is traditionally perceived as “tourism”. Instead we can think about visitor value, and open the conversation to include meetings, events, trade shows, transportation operators, and others involved indirectly in the tourism industry. From here we can develop shared messages and innovative solutions that are scalable and marketable.

CASE STUDY: Partnering on “Climate Emergency”

In January 2019, the Vancouver Council officially declared a climate emergency. Tourism Vancouver as an organization internally adopted the language of “climate emergency” to align with community stakeholders and forge partnerships around building solutions. They now actively work with the City of Vancouver Climate Policy Manager to identify how the tourism industry can be at the forefront of climate solutions.



Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Use accurate language, including “climate emergency” in your communications

Policy Makers

- ▶ Develop policies that support the tourism industry to be a partner at the forefront of sustainability solutions
- ▶ Define the terminology you use within policy to ensure purposeful interpretation and understanding of the meaning behind the language

Operators

- ▶ Leverage the use of history and culture in supporting sustainable business practices, and weave this into the repertoire of what you offer. Hire anthropologists, hire First Nations

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Strategically use and adopt language that reflects local values, and that will foster community relationships in developing solutions for sustainability
- ▶ Review the language and narrative you use in parks, recreation facilities, and other shared spaces
- ▶ Take the time to understand the concept of reconciliation when meeting and partnering with your local Indigenous communities
- ▶ Consider how tourism and the language we used can foster relationships and draw alignment with local social enterprises to both acknowledge and address societal inequities in your community

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Educate community members with the skills and knowledge to actively use tourism as a vehicle for sustainability and cultural preservation. It is important to own your story and tell it in your own way

Resources

- ▶ Resilience: Why Things Bounce Back by Andrew Zolli & Ann Marie Healy (2012)

REALITY CHECK: BIODIVERSITY

SPEAKER: **Wade Davis**, Anthropologist, Ethnobotanist, Author, Photographer & Professor of Anthropology at University of British Columbia

In this soaring talk by renowned anthropologist Wade Davis, biodiversity is examined in its inextricable links to cultural diversity and language — which Davis calls “a flash of the human spirit.” Drawing from his experiences around the world, this passionate defender of diversity left us awed and rightfully unsettled by his stories. Yet, this was paired with the reminder that for every situation in which humans are the agents of destruction, we can also be facilitators of revival.

To be human and alive is to be undeniably tied to each other and our environments. Yet, we have an incredible propensity for the mass destruction of life and furthermore, the ability to forget our destructions. An example of this destruction can be found from 1813, when carrier pigeons made up 40% of the birds in North America, with flocks numbering in the billions that would block out the sun as they flew over an area. As Wade told us, “from the height of those populations to their extinction was a single generation.”

Moving to the American plains and the bison herds that were once the size of Rhode Island, Wade recalled the way in which the American cavalry decimated the bison from “the height of their population to a zoological curiosity” in seven years as explicit policy to cripple the populations of Great Plains cultures. What most disturbing about this is how “effortlessly we removed ourselves from these ecological tragedies.”²



“Today the people of Iowa —good and decent folk — live in a landscape positively claustrophobic in its monotony, and for them the time of the buffalo is as removed from their lives, and as irrelevant to their lives as the fall of Troy. Yet, it happened in the lifetime of their own grandparents. This terrible capacity to forget, this fluidity of memory, is a really frightening human trait.”

– Wade Davis, Anthropologist, University of British Columbia

² Wade Davis, IMPACT 2020

How Cultural Diversity Provides Answers to Biological Diversity

Language is not just a “body of vocabulary and grammar. Language is a flash of the human spirit,” in Wade’s view. Each and “every language is an old growth forest of the mind, a watershed of thought, an ecosystem of social and cultural and spiritual possibilities.” Therefore, each one of these possibilities is a unique answer to that fundamental question: “What does it mean to be human and alive?” Which, as Wade impressed upon us is the key, the path and the golden archway to treading more lightly on the earth to which we are inexorably bound. Therefore, each fortnight, as an elder who is the final fluent speaker of their language “passes away and carries with him or her, into the grave, the last syllables of an ancient tongue,” another answer to this question is lost.

“Other people of the world aren’t failed attempts at being you. They’re not failed attempts at being modern.”

– Wade Davis, Anthropologist, University of British Columbia

Wade boldly concluded “that if human beings are in fact the agents of cultural destruction, we can be the facilitators of cultural survival. Because there really is a fire burning over the earth, taking with it plants and animals, cultures, languages, ancient skills and visionary wisdom and quelling this flame, reinventing the poetry of diversity is surely amongst the most important challenges of our time.”



Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Be a facilitator of cultural survival in whatever capacity you can, and you will in turn protect biological diversity and the lifeblood of humanity

Resources

- ▶ Wade Davis’s TED Talk, [Dreams from Endangered Cultures](#)



ECONOMIC STRATEGIES FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

FACILITATOR: Paul Nursey, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria

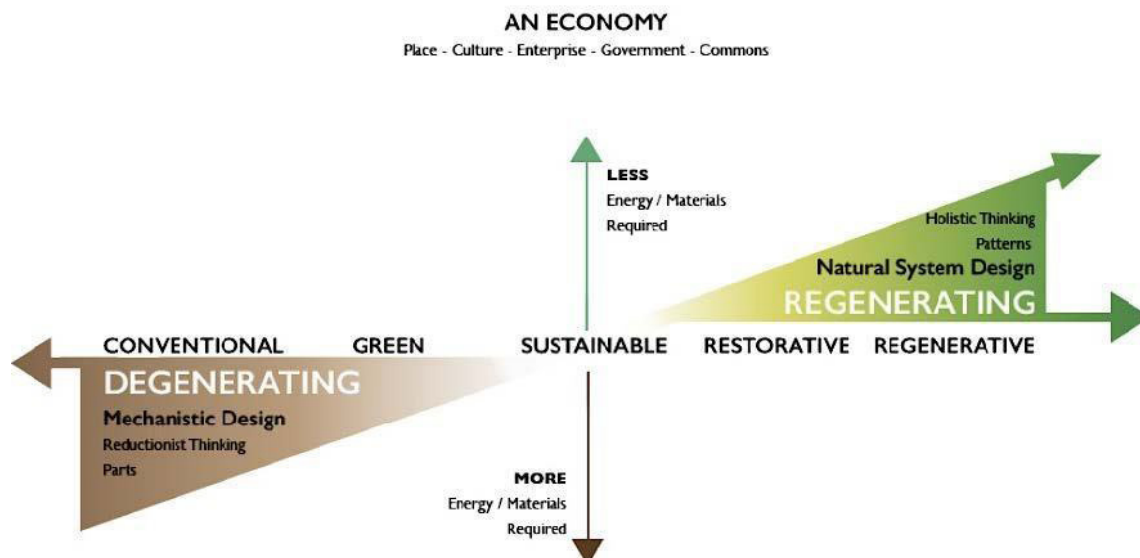
SPEAKERS: Pauline J. Sheldon, Professor Emerita, University of Hawai'i USA
 Oliver Martin, Partner, Twenty31 Consulting Inc.
 Alby Berticevic Nicols, Graduate Student, University of Victoria
 Department of Economics

Striving for exponential growth on our finite planet has led us to a system error. Economic strategies that prioritize meeting the needs of society are beginning to replace our entrenched focus on GDP and financial success.

According to keynote, Pauline Sheldon of the University of Hawai'i, our current economic system, which values financial capital above all else, is destined for the dustbin of history. Our climate has changed literally and figuratively, and the assumptions on which our capitalist economy were founded no longer serve us. For decades, the tourism industry has also subscribed to the belief that growth is success, but we are now seeing alternative measures of prosperity.

Global leaders are adopting principles of Kate Raworth's Doughnut Economics, focusing more and more on the well-being of their destinations, residents, and visitors. We see this in campaigns like the Palau Pledge, Monterey County's Sustainable Moments, Amsterdam's Untourist Movement, and Copenhagen's Localhood strategy. Tourism is about curiosity and learning, human exchange, novel experience, adventure, and fulfillment. The industry is well-positioned to benefit from a transition in values from other forms of capital including social, natural, experiential, spiritual, cultural, and intellectual.

New economies presented by Dr. Sheldon include the sharing economy, circular economy, economy of creativity, the sacred economy, generosity/gift economy and the regenerative economy. In a regenerative economic model, we see balance; tourism is scaled appropriately for both the destination's biodiversity and residents. The destination's definition of success has been redefined; it honours local culture and tradition and has robust circulation of both wealth and knowledge throughout.



Intrepid Travel and Marriott Hotels are two examples of large enterprise organizations with commitments to sustainability, which are using their influence to push for sustainable social, environmental, and economic development in the communities in which they operate. Rooted in our national parks, Canadian tourism and our way of thinking about it has stagnated. With many examples available to learn from, Oliver Martin of Twenty31 Consulting Inc. urged fundamental changes to management in Canadian DMOs.

Tourism as an industry generates an immense amount of employment opportunities while simultaneously struggling to fulfill them. Labour was another conversational focus within this panel discussion, which advocated for more value to be placed on the industry worker. Professor Sheldon explained that today's students want a different type of career; they want to bring their values into their career and use them to rejuvenate outdated organizations. The role of human resources within tourism has reached a critical point; for an industry focused on transformation through travel experience, the employees within it need to be skilled and paid appropriately. Oliver Martin referenced the popular hashtag #tourismmatters and implied that there was a disconnect today between its conversational use and its manifestation in industry practices.

Green New Deal

As is tradition, the next generation is demanding change and rightly so. The Green New Deal, popularized by Ocasio-Cortez and the youth-led Sunrise Movement in the US, is one of the economic solutions being promoted to fix our dated system. It is a movement to develop policies that prioritize people and the environment modeling the knowledge and approach Indigenous communities and activists have championed for centuries. Some priorities include Indigenous sovereignty, green infrastructure and social justice while looking to transition away from fossil fuels, reduce our dependence on plastics all while working to protect what remains of our biodiversity.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Create new metrics for the Canadian tourism economy
- ▶ Involve local community stakeholders in policy decisions
- ▶ Encourage development and innovation within the entrepreneurial sector

Operators & Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Redefine success for your destination or business, with focus on regeneration
- ▶ Support the bridge builders, financially and otherwise, within your teams and communities
- ▶ Seek balance between tourism, biodiversity, and residents
- ▶ Facilitate circulation of wealth and knowledge throughout the destination
- ▶ Ensure all workers are valued and paid fairly for skills and work
- ▶ Factor carbon into costing and pricing of all tourism goods
- ▶ Honour local cultures, traditions, etc.

Resources

- ▶ [Kate Raworth: Exploring Doughnut Economics](#)
- ▶ [This Changes Everything: The Book](#)
- ▶ [Untourist Guide: Amsterdam](#)
- ▶ [Marriott Serve360](#)
- ▶ [Intrepid Travel: Responsible Business](#)
- ▶ [Creating Middle Class Jobs: A Federal Tourism Growth Strategy](#)

MUNICIPAL LEADERSHIP ON CLIMATE ACTION & SOCIAL EQUITY

FACILITATOR: **Beth Potter**, President & CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Ontario (TIAO)

SPEAKERS: **Mayor Lisa Helps**, City of Victoria
Mike Furey, Chief Administrative Officer, Resort Municipality of Whistler
Dennis Thomas-Whonoak, Senior Business Development Manager, Tsleil-Waututh Nation
Allison Ashcroft, Managing Director, Canadian Urban Sustainability Practitioners (CUSP)

Municipalities have become leaders in the transition towards cleaner economies. Leading a socially equitable transition for low-income and marginalized communities means creating ambitious initiatives, policies, and partnerships.

Dennis Thomas-Whonoak, Senior Business Development Manager, Tsleil-Waututh Nation, shared his Nation's inclusive, community-based approach to climate action. The Tsleil-Waututh Nation struck a Climate Change Task Force, produced a The Community Climate Change Resilience and Adaptation Report, and are developing a GHG emissions inventory tracker. The future-focused approach keeps culture at the forefront of planning and actively includes First Nations youth as partners. For optimal success, the Nation will blend traditional knowledge and modern science to inform decision-making.

To tackle carbon emissions and affordability issues, The Municipality of Whistler also uses GHG emissions inventories. In 2018 the Town identified transportation as the largest contributor to emissions at 56%. Additionally, local residents generated 40% of weekend traffic congestion. The Municipality responded by increasing parking rates and reinvesting all revenue back into the transit system. The city now offers free bus transportation on weekends and free transit passes for high school students.

The City of Victoria has developed an innovative approach to climate action by viewing the ocean as a key asset. Through the Blue Economy Development Framework, The City aims to implement an Oceans Future Cluster as part of their innovative economic action plan. This is a sustainable, community-based approach to ocean economics, ensuring marine business and research solutions are regenerative and work towards sustaining both the ocean and the surrounding populations.

CASE STUDY: Equitable Eco-Based Forest Management

The Municipality of Whistler and local Lilloet and Squamish First Nations communities collaboratively manage and protect community forests through BC's Community Forest Program. Recognizing forests are worth more as a tourism attraction than as lumber, they focus on ecosystem-based management practices such as contracting First Nations as harvesters, reducing the annual allowable cut, and avoiding old growth.

Affordability

Panelists unpacked the shared issue of affordable housing. Having safe, secure, accessible housing is a key element in preparing communities against impacts of climate change. Equitable housing policies can help ensure low-income and marginalized communities are not disproportionately affected.

Climate Poverty Mapping Tool

One in five, or 2.8 million Canadian households, are living in “energy poverty”. Visit CUSP’s energypoverty.ca to access the Canada-wide climate poverty mapping tool. Learn how data is being analysed and applied to help shift policies and programs towards poverty alleviation while achieving deep emissions reduction.

To combat issues of affordability and space, The Musqueam, Squamish, and Tsleil-Waututh Nations formed the MST Development Corp. to buy back and develop traditional lands to meet the needs of their growing populations. The mixed-use land investment supports the Nations’ goal to live, work, play, and learn in one setting through affordable housing and economic opportunity for a sustainable future. The project partners with surrounding Municipalities to extend affordable housing rentals to all lower mainland communities.

The City of Victoria’s Regional Housing First program aims to meet the housing needs of all populations and visitors. With the help of federal, provincial, and municipal funding, the City can build low-cost, mixed market rental buildings. Affordability for residents is also addressed through proactive policies and zoning by-laws that curb the negative impacts of the short-term rental economy on high costs, particularly Airbnb.

The Whistler Housing Authority boldly prioritizes affordable housing for the community’s workforce as essential to maintaining an inclusive and vibrant community. Rental prices remain well below market value, and through periods of expansion Municipal leaders have historically negotiated building additional employee housing. Low-income workers are therefore not priced out of town, and Whistler preserves an alluring “mountain culture” for visitors and residents alike.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Build climate change adaptation processes into your existing practices
- ▶ Implement policies that support equitable and balance housing markets

Operators

- ▶ Actively work to reduce your carbon footprint
- ▶ Consider how your organization can be more accessible as a product and employer for marginalized and low-income individuals

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Consider how you can help prepare your communities for the acute impacts of climate change, and what your role might be in the long-term, chronic issues facing your communities

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Actively integrate traditional knowledge with modern technology in the development of solutions to mitigate the impact of climate change
- ▶ Involve First Nations youth in all levels of planning

Resources

- ▶ [Victoria 3.0: Pivoting to a Higher-Value Economy 2020-2041](#)

WORKSHOP: CARBON REDUCTION PLANNING

FACILITATOR: **Kayli Anderson**, Managing Partner, Synergy Enterprises

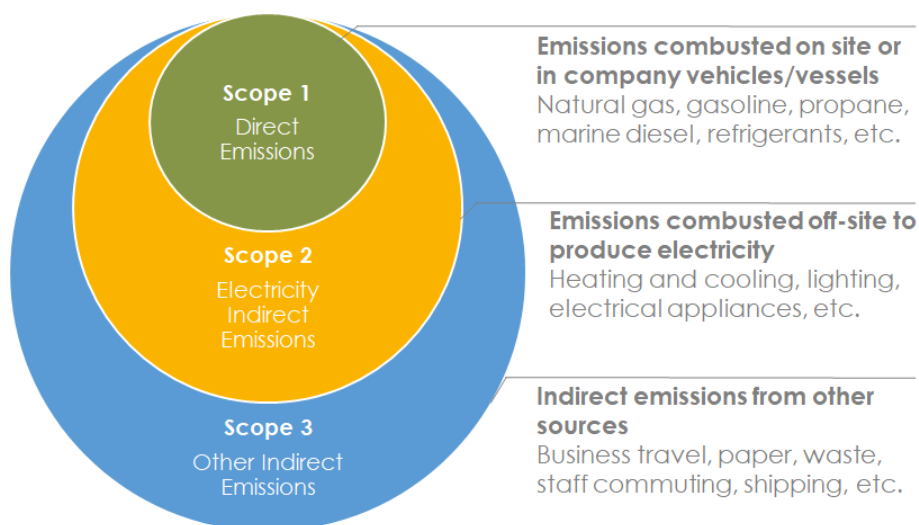
SPEAKERS: **Martin Stitt**, Area Vice President - Western Canada, Marriott Hotels of Canada
Vladimir Kostka, Major Key Accounts Manager, FortisBC Energy

In this workshop, attendees learned how two leading enterprises are reducing their emissions, followed by a collaborative exercise to measure and assess the environmental impact of their own businesses.

In order to assess the carbon impact of their business operations, workshop attendees were guided through a five-step process to measure their carbon footprint and identify strategies for carbon reduction:

1. Identify and measure all direct emissions (Scope 1). This includes emissions from company-owned buildings, vehicles, and any activities that combust fuel on site (e.g. gasoline, diesel, natural gas, refrigerants, propane, etc.).
2. Measure electricity use (Scope 2). This includes emissions combusted off-site to produce electricity used for lighting, equipment, electrical appliances and heating.
3. Identify and measure all indirect emissions (Scope 3). This includes emissions from business travel, staff commuting, paper, waste, water and shipping.
4. List the actions you can take to reduce the carbon footprint of your business.
5. List the methods you can take to educate, empower and engage your staff and promote accountability in your organization.

OUTLINE YOUR SCOPE



CASE STUDY: Marriott Hotels

By the year 2025, Marriott Hotels aims to reduce their global carbon intensity by 30%, using 2016 emissions as a baseline. A few ways in which they're achieving this goal are through reforestation efforts, hotel environmental certification programs, and building upgrades. The hotel group has also built a database, the Marriott Environmental Sustainability Hub, to report quarterly progress to both internal and external stakeholders. Martin Stitt, Area Vice President for Marriott's Western Canada portfolio, stated that hotel owners recognize the business sense in adopting sustainable practices, and that both Marriott guests and associates are energized and engaged through participation in the brand's sustainability programming.

CASE STUDY: FortisBC

FortisBC is a Canadian utility company invested in natural gas, electricity and renewable energy, and the first in North America to set a carbon reduction target. The organization's goal, 30by30, is to reduce customer greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions 30% by 2030. focus its efforts in four areas to get there: renewable natural gas (biogas) and hydrogen development; energy efficiency; global liquefied natural gas (LNG); and zero and low carbon transportation. FortisBC incentivizes customers to help them achieve targets and leverages technological innovations to run and pilot projects towards their goal.



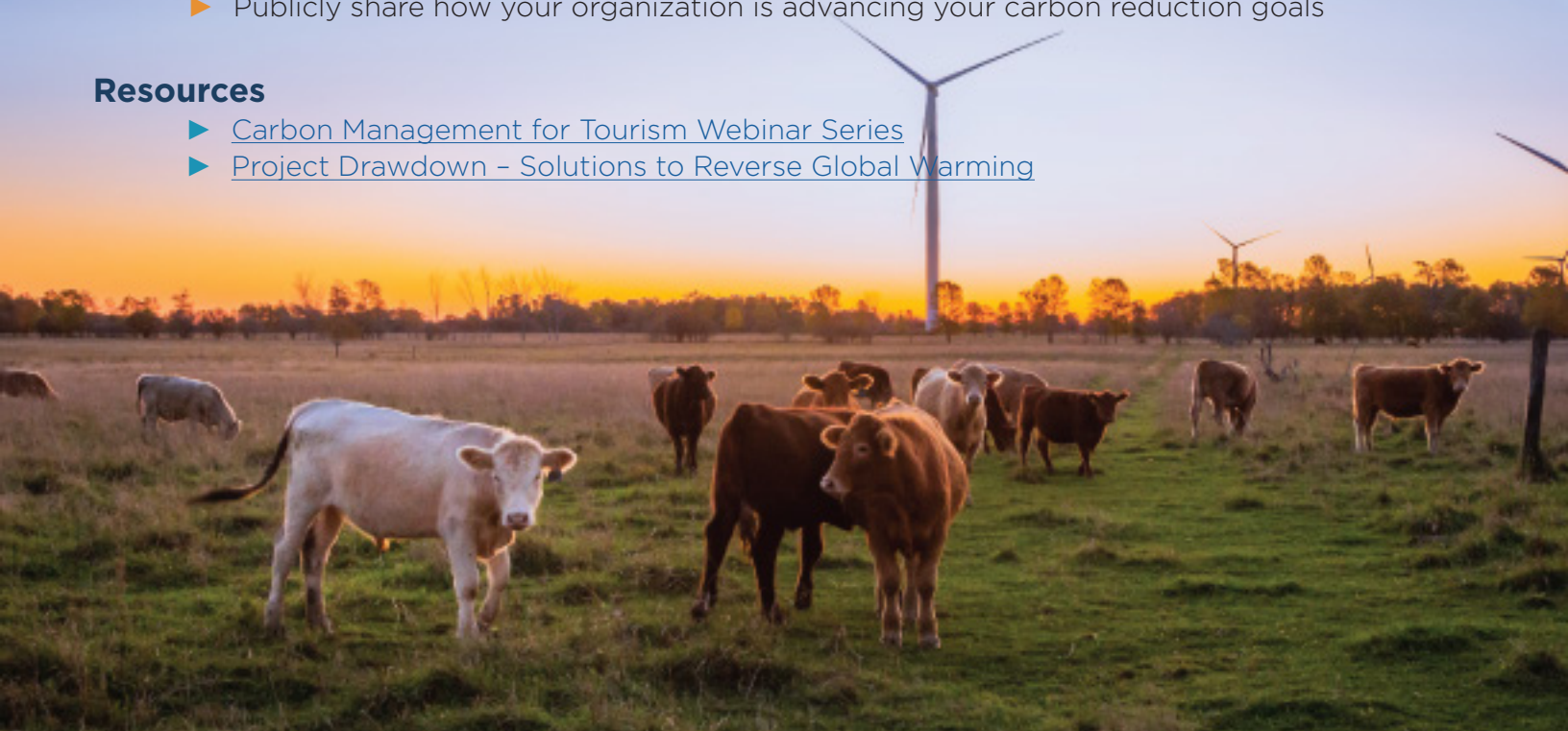
Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Host a carbon reduction workshop within your organization to determine your own carbon impact
- ▶ Develop an action plan and set goals
- ▶ Look to industry leaders and learn from their examples
- ▶ Publicly share how your organization is advancing your carbon reduction goals

Resources

- ▶ [Carbon Management for Tourism Webinar Series](#)
- ▶ [Project Drawdown - Solutions to Reverse Global Warming](#)



WILDLIFE & WILDERNESS: RESTORING BIODIVERSITY THROUGH TOURISM

FACILITATOR: **Kevin Smith**, President & CEO, Maple Leaf Adventures; Wilderness Tourism Association (WTA); Commercial Bear Viewing Association

SPEAKERS: **Sara Dubois**, Chief Scientific Officer, BC SPCA; Adjunct Professor, UBC
Bob Peart, Biologist & Environmental Advocate
Joe Bailey, Principal Owner, North Star Adventures

While our knowledge of wilderness and wildlife is increasing due to technology and remarkable filmmaking, the quality of our personal experiences with nature are declining, due largely to the mismanagement of nature and those same technologies.

This understanding is fueling the rise of ecotourism, which can have profound effects on the nature it depends on. In this session, panelists discussed the impacts of tourism on wildlife and wilderness, do's and don'ts for animal tourism, and specific calls to action for tourism operators, government, and civic society.

Tourism contributes to climate change and ecosystem fragmentation, and consumptive tourism like hunting and fishing can lead to species loss. But tourism also leads to the creation of national parks, educates the public, and provides more humane opportunities for visitors to experience wildlife. As the panel discussed, tourism also has a responsibility to speak out in defense of the gift that is British Columbia's biodiversity.

Across British Columbia, 754 species are listed as extirpated, endangered, or threatened. Fifty years ago British Columbians could hike through extensive old growth forests. Now there are only isolated pockets left.

Beyond speaking out to the government and others within the industry, tourism has the ability to educate clients and help them become strong advocates of nature, so that “the icons of this province—the Spirit bears and the fragile grasslands and the wild lands of the North—continue [to exist].” In a lot of cases, the government has a lead role, but if the government is not going to take that role then it's up to the industry to speak up.

Building on the discussion of government, audience members and panelists discussed the ways in which economics is occasionally the most effective language to use when discussing conservation programs with local, provincial, and federal governments.



"I often refer to Maple Leaf Adventures as a conservation organization with a boat problem. We really are, in our DNA, all about conservation and restoration. But it was [] when we picked up the banner of economics that the government listened."

– Kevin Smith, CEO/Co-Founder, Maple Leaf Adventures

Furthermore, tourism players involved in advocating to the government have found success by creating a coalition of advocacy groups and businesses. As Bob Peart explained, "... so, when you go in, it's not just [one organization], there's a common voice and a common set of interests. That collaborative partnership is really, really strong."

Moving Forward: Policy

Any policy or project needs to be informed by and led by Indigenous peoples and their traditional knowledge. As seen in the protection of the Great Bear Rainforest, this leads to more nuanced, better protected, and more successful conservation efforts. It is also important for existing conservation policies to be enforced.

CASE STUDY: Commercial Bear Viewing Association (CBA)'s Conservation License Fee

The CBA raised over \$100,000 for Grizzly Bear protection and conservation education and research in 2019. They also demonstrated to the government that bear viewing brought in 13x more revenue to the province than the grizzly bear hunt.

Indigenous Protected Areas

These forms of conservancies are managed entirely by Indigenous groups, simultaneously protecting Indigenous culture, wildlife, and wilderness. Have the potential to become sensitively managed ecotourism sites.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Engage in land use planning
- ▶ Build policies that protect nature and its species on local and provincial levels
- ▶ Listen to the environmental concerns of your constituents
- ▶ Seek out and learn from Indigenous groups on the topic

Operators

- ▶ Educate your clients on what not to do abroad in order to protect animals
- ▶ Speak out to the government in defense of nature — in defense of your products
- ▶ Help your clients learn to speak out and become strong advocates for nature

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Speak out to the government in defense of nature along with operators and visitors
- ▶ Seek out and learn from Indigenous groups on the topic

Academia

- ▶ Research the impacts of over tourism on communities and the environment

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Continue to advocate for Indigenous protected areas and Indigenous governance in conservation

Resources

- ▶ Martha: The Last Passenger Pigeon by Greg Benchwick

LUNCH & LEARN WITH JULIE MIDDLETON

SPEAKER: Julie Middleton, Head of Sustainable Practice, The Travel Foundation

In this lunch-hour session, Julie Middleton described how destinations must uncover and account for the hidden costs of tourism, referred to as the “invisible burden”, in order to protect and manage vital destination assets worldwide.

Tourism provides substantial economic benefits to destinations by contributing to GDP, attracting infrastructure investments, and increasing tax revenues. Such benefits, however, do not come without costs. If the costs cannot be articulated, how can we know if tourism is covering the real costs for a destination?

Some examples of costs associated with tourism in destinations include the cost to manage and protect public spaces and natural habitat, rising housing prices for residents, and developing infrastructure beyond resident needs to meet tourism demand. Residents often bear the hidden costs of tourism, leaving the environment, community well-being and public infrastructure to suffer.

When visitor numbers are low, the invisible burden goes largely unnoticed. As tourism grows, however, every new visitor brings unanticipated costs to the destination. Energy demand spikes, water consumption increases, sewage systems are strained, solid waste production explodes and biodiversity is threatened along with cultural heritage. If balance is not maintained and invisible burden escalates, we begin to see failing infrastructure, damage to natural and cultural assets, and resident dissatisfaction with tourism.

“It’s clear that if we don’t start calculating and managing the cost of tourism, we are going to start destroying the very destinations that we love.”

– Julie Middleton, Head of Sustainable Practice, The Travel Foundation

CASE STUDY: Isle of Rhodes, Greece

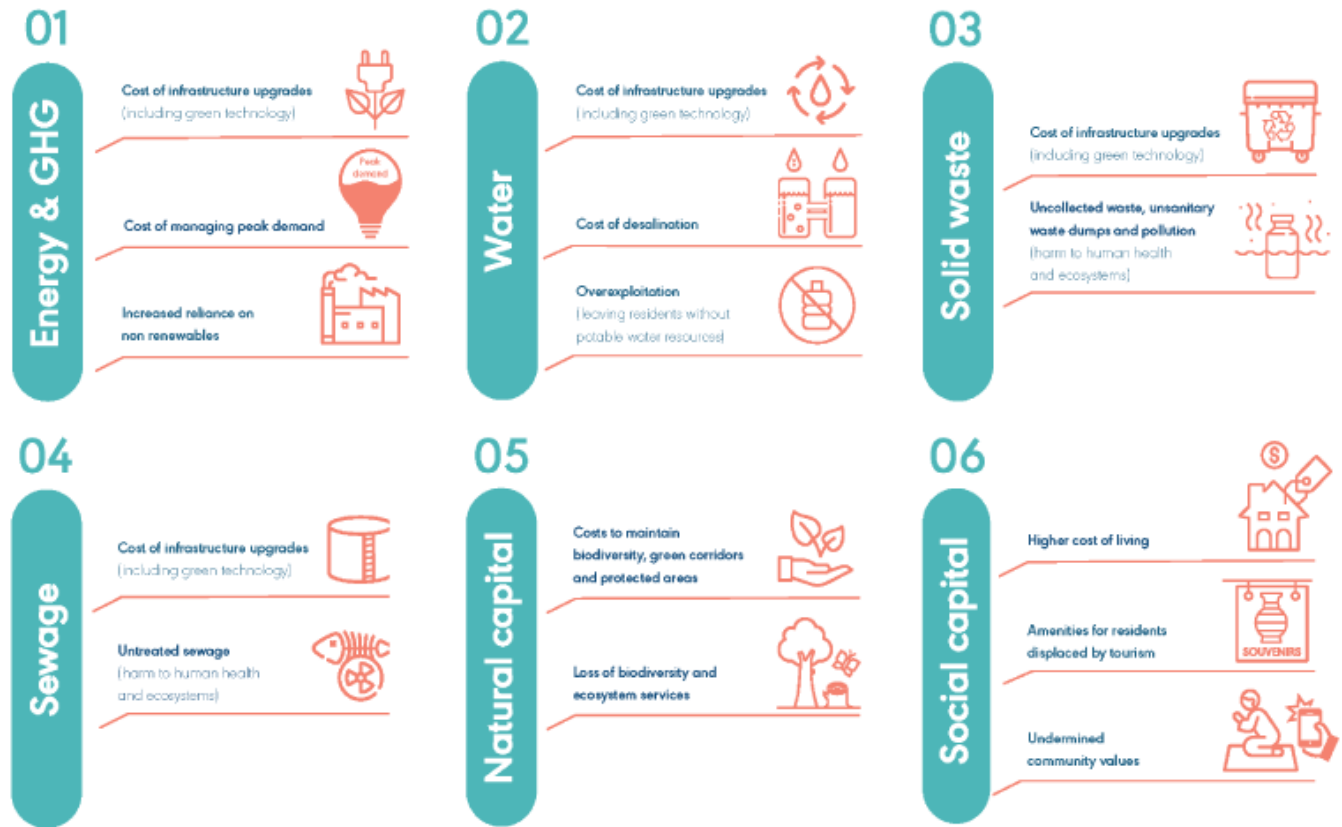
The beautiful Greek island of Rhoades is a real example of where the cost of expanding infrastructure to service tourism is being borne by residents. In the peak summer season, tourism doubles the population of the island and doubles energy demand. Since peak demand drives energy plants past their supply limit during the hot Greek summers, a new diesel-fired power plant in Rhodes was required to reduce energy deficits and supply growing demand. In 2013, this cost Greek residents a total of \$23 million to subsidize the expensive oil-dependent power generation system of Rhodes.

To study this problem further, the Travel Foundation, a UK-based non-profit organization, commissioned research through Cornell University and consulting firm EplerWood International. Drawing upon academic literature, case studies from destinations around the world, expert interviews and media reports, the research team found that the real cause of the invisible burden is a lack of data, lack of skilled staff to analyze the data, lack of financing and lack of innovation.

Unfortunately, there is no simple solution to the invisible burden, which is not aided by the fact that there is no single entity responsible for protecting destination assets. However, it’s not just destination organizations that need to be concerned. The private sector and other tourism stakeholders also need to play a role.

We need new investment platforms, new destination management strategies and new data-driven systems to identify these hidden costs. This can only be achieved by working together collaboratively to make the invisible burden visible.

Examples of the Invisible Burden



Calls to Action

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Adopt a triple bottom line approach when analyzing the costs of tourism in your destination. This means broadening the focus on the financial bottom line to include socio-cultural and environmental impacts
- ▶ Ask the people who live and work in your destination what they want from tourism and what they value about your destination
- ▶ Think about where you can gather data from both tourism and non-tourism stakeholders. Examples of data sources include municipal departments, police, airports, national/provincial parks, cultural and heritage organizations, and universities

Resources

- ▶ [Destinations at Risk: The Invisible Burden of Tourism](#)

RESPONDING TO REGENERATIVE TOURISM: THE FUTURE OF TOURISM EDUCATION

FACILITATOR: **Sydney McCabe**, Senior Marine Biologist / Lead Education Coordinator, Eagle Wing Tours

SPEAKERS: **Joe Baker**, Dean, School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts Centennial College
Dr. Nicole Vaugeois, AVP, Scholarship, Research & Creative Activity, Vancouver Island University
Wade Davis, Anthropologist, Ethnobotanist, Author, & Photographer

This session explored tourism’s current labour challenges as well as education’s role in enabling the industry to address societal sustainability and climate change.

Tourism in Canada has a workforce of 1.8 million, which is larger than finance, agriculture, real estate, and mining combined. With this scale comes challenges, including filling roughly 100,000 jobs, mostly in the food and beverage sector, and retention of workers moving on from the industry after only a few years. These gaps are expected to widen and need to be addressed with competitive wages, benefits, and more career growth opportunities.

Sustainable vs. Regenerative

While the term sustainable tourism represents a less harmful approach founded on an existing business model, regenerative refers to tourism that is not only less harmful, but which reverses the harm previously done. Compared with other industries, the transition to regenerative tourism is in its infancy and because of this, we must continue to drive awareness not only within the industry itself, but in classrooms as well. Language will also play a key role in education to ensure stakeholders aren’t incorrectly perceiving regenerative tourism as a barrier to their existing definitions of success. From this awareness we can begin to build desire and tell the story, share knowledge, equip workers with the abilities to bring it to life, and provide continuous reinforcement.





“We need to redefine our learning communities... the target of education isn't just students in post-secondary programs, it's all of us, all the time.”

- Dr. Nicole Vaugeois, AVP, Scholarship, Research & Creative Activity, Vancouver Island University

The beliefs and values discussed at IMPACT each year need to be translated into skills for educators to equip the next generation of tourism professionals. Educators will need to work towards adjusting the industry's image and perceptions of workplace culture to attract talent. Lastly, as we do with our visitors, we need to welcome a diverse Canadian workforce.

“If we are to respond to regenerative tourism, we need to do it together, combining education & industry.”

- Joe Baker, Dean, School of Hospitality, Tourism & Culinary Arts Centennial College

Calls to Action

All

- ▶ Learn as much as you can about regenerative tourism and talk about it!
- ▶ Don't be afraid of what you don't know yet; embrace discomfort and take a seat at the table

Academia

- ▶ Draw on IMPACT discussions to shape the curriculum for the next generations of tourism students
- ▶ Invest in reputation repair for tourism industry to attract diverse talent and close labour gaps

Industry

- ▶ Identify the skills required to work towards regenerative tourism
- ▶ Welcome and support diversity in the workforce, as we do with our visitors

Resources

- ▶ [Tourism Education Futures Initiative](#)

UNCHARTED WATERS: OPPORTUNITIES FOR CRUISE SUSTAINABILITY

FACILITATOR: **Gregor Craigie**, Host, CBC/Radio-Canada

SPEAKERS: **Russell Benford**, VP Government Relations, Americas Royal Caribbean Cruises, Ltd.
Kelly de Schaun, Executive Director, Galveston Island Park Board of Trustees and Convention and Visitors Bureau
Nicholas Rose, Director, Environmental Programs, Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd.
Ian Robertson, CEO, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority
Geof Rochester, Founder & CEO, GRC Advising

As demand for cruise tourism continues to rise, the industry faces mounting pressure to adopt sustainable practices. Panellists unpacked the opportunities and challenges for elevating sustainability as a primary objective.

Today's Cruise Industry in Numbers

The number of people taking cruises around the world is increasing significantly. The globe saw 28.5 million ocean cruise passengers in 2019, up from 17.8 million in 2009. The cruise industry accounts for over 1.1 million jobs and \$50 billion in wages.

Cruise tourism is one of the fastest growing global subsectors of tourism, but the adoption of clean technology presents many challenges. Alternative fuel and technology adoption is bound by safety regulations, international standards, and a lack of existing technology to become fully 'sustainable' while remaining cost-effective. Cruise lines today are, however, widely adopting and exploring new waste and emission reduction innovations including liquefied natural gas (LNG), exhausted gas cleaning systems (EGCS), advanced water treatment systems, and shore power.

CLIA has set a global target to reach a 40% reduction in cruise emissions by 2030.

Port communities are applying pressure to cruise lines for advanced sustainability measures and emission reductions. The panel discussed the importance of cruise lines playing an active role in host destinations to develop innovative solutions. This means listening and responding to each individual destination's concerns, interacting with the local businesses, and being good corporate partners in finding ways to add value to each community. Relationships and partnerships are key to maximizing

environmental, social, and economic benefits while minimizing negative impacts during the transition. Royal Caribbean Cruise Ltd. spoke to their partnership with a local business operator in Quintana Roo, Mexico, in funding a waste management facility that responsibly discards waste from both the cruise industry and region.



“The only way the cruise ship industry as a global industry is going to understand how we can have a symbiotic relationship and work together is through conversation. And historically those conversations were very much regulated between the port and the cruise line. And now the community – whether that be in the form of the Mayor or the City Council or the Park Board of Trustees in Galveston – is inserting itself into this conversation and I think it’s a very positive development.”

– Kelly de Schaun, Executive Director, Galveston Island Park Board of Trustees and Convention and Visitors Bureau

Cruise operators are also engaging consumers to advance sustainability both on and off the ship. Traveller mindsets and behaviours can be influenced by transformative storytelling on board, and cruise lines are building partnerships with social enterprises globally and locally to align values and drive action. There is more work to be done, and the decade ahead will require collaboration, rapid adoption of new technologies, and a multi-partner approach on and offshore to realise the ambition emission and waste reduction targets.

Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Undertake a destination assessment to uncover opportunities for sustainability approaches. Use the GSTC Destination Criteria framework for best practices
- ▶ Conduct multi-stakeholder economic, social, and environmental assessments for effective planning and risk mitigation
- ▶ Manage visitor flow and distribution of economic benefits by allowing all destination businesses/operators access to selling services to cruise passengers
- ▶ Support clean technology and energy projects in Canadian ports

Operators

- ▶ Extend and disperse economic impacts by empowering and developing partnerships with smaller local businesses that offer unique experiences for cruise passengers.
- ▶ Build clean technology and fuel into future planning, in collaboration with ports, government agencies and industry partners
- ▶ Build onshore relationships for innovative waste management practices that lean into the circular economy

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Empower partnerships between small, local business and cruise lines



WORKSHOP: METRICS FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM

- FACILITATOR:** Kayli Anderson, Managing Partner, Synergy Enterprises
- SPEAKERS:** Angela Nagy, CEO, GreenStep Solutions & Sustainable Tourism 2030
 Alexis Kereluk, Partner, ConnectSeven & Global Destination Sustainability Index
 Miranda Murphy, Special Projects and Accountant, HeliCat Canada
 Brad Harrison, Chair, Adventure Tourism Coalition of BC
 Liz Maze, Manager of Partnerships and Programs, Synergy Foundation

Where do we want to be in 10 years? How are we going to measure those outcomes? These were the key questions explored in this session, which focused on building tourism, and societies at large, that did more than just lessen their harm but actively regenerated the earth and their communities.

As businesses, governments, DMOs, and industries, we’re very good at measuring the economic indicators of tourism. However, as we move to regeneration, we need to be measuring different types of indicators. Angela Nagy, CEO, Green Step Solutions & Sustainable Tourism 2030 provided the workshop with a series of example questions: “How well are we restoring traditional culture? How are we engaging with the community in order to make it a better place? How are we making water cleaner, becoming carbon neutral, turning waste products into something that has just as much or more value than it started with? And on the social side, how are we doing all of that in a way that is equitable and inclusive to everyone?”

HeliCat Canada is measuring regeneration by the amount of money raised for their Wildlife and Environmental Research Fund, which is funded by a voluntary \$5 donation from their operators’ clients.

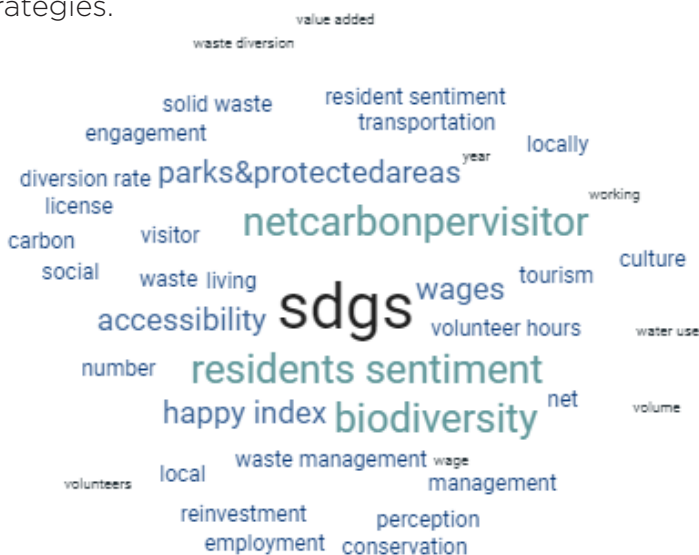
With over 100,000 “skier days” per year, there is a potential to raise \$500,000 by 2021.

The metrics generated by the workshop were grouped into four main categories: community, culture, economy, and ecology. Many of the metrics blurred the boundaries of the categories, driving home the interconnectedness of regenerative tourism strategies.

Proposed Metrics

Community:

- ▶ Any economic development, specifically in tourism, that generates community wellbeing. (Based on New Zealand’s policies) - Genevieve Leclerc, Meet4Impact
- ▶ % of tourism revenue funneled into infrastructure development and community services
- ▶ % of community members who self identify as experiencing loneliness (how well are we building community?)



Culture:

- ▶ % of staff buy-in to the goal of regeneration
- ▶ # of local walking trails and human-powered transport options
- ▶ % of employees that are Indigenous, local, female
- ▶ Satisfaction of residents with the tourism industry: % of residents that perceive tourism to align with local values and culture

Economy:

- ▶ # of SMEs per capita
- ▶ % of businesses with eco certifications and/or sustainability audits
- ▶ % of products and food being imported for tourism
- ▶ % of tourism staff trained in regeneration, in professional development
- ▶ % of tourism staff making a living wage for the area (example: Whistler housing shortages)

Ecology:

- ▶ % of local habitats that are sequestering carbon
- ▶ % of energy from decentralized, renewable sources
- ▶ Measuring carrying capacity, and whether we are staying within it
- ▶ % of buildings with urban agriculture on the roof (esp. tourism buildings)
- ▶ % of total land mass in Parks and Protected Areas
- ▶ % of land managed by Indigenous communities

CASE STUDY: UN Observatory Framework

The UN Observatory Framework recommends 11 areas for destinations to focus on and provides targets that are both qualitative and quantitative. This framework is a good starting point for creating regenerative metrics, and was recently adopted by the Thompson Okanagan Tourism Association and Travel Yukon.



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Align policy with regenerative metrics that are generated by your communities
- ▶ Recognize tourism in OCPs (Official Community Plans) and incentivize tourism operators to contribute to the community

Operators

- ▶ Track your own practices, and the practices of your suppliers
- ▶ Ensure staff buy-in and the development of their personal responsibility to “getting it right”

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Track the regenerative practices of your operators. Create benchmarks and strategies for operators, possibly a rating system for how regenerative operators are

Academia

- ▶ Partner with industry to generate reports on regeneration in tourism to identify how metrics are being met and where new metrics are needed

Resources

- ▶ Happy City by Charles Montgomery
- ▶ [Socialprogress.org](https://socialprogress.org/) - Set of 54 Indicators to understand social progress
- ▶ [Global Destination Sustainability Index](#) - a program for destinations to improve environmental and social sustainability

DOSE OF INNOVATION: DAY 2

To inspire and motivate, speakers shared 6-minute lightning talks that highlight existing solutions and best practices.

The Nulla Project

SPEAKERS: **Caroline Thibault & Nancy Prevost-Maurice**, Co-Founders of The Nulla Project

Did you know 50% of the garbage in major Canadian cities are single-use cups? Caroline Thibault and Nancy Prevost-Maurice, graduates of Synergy Foundation's Project Zero Incubator Program, aimed to address this issue by creating a reusable and returnable cup sharing program in Victoria. Cognizant that even the best intentioned can forget their reusable mug at home, the [Nulla Project](#) offers consumers a green and convenient alternative to single-use cups. By paying a \$5 refundable deposit at participating businesses, consumers can borrow a reusable Nulla cup, to-go or to stay, which can then be returned for a refund or traded for a clean one.



Aboriginal Ecotourism Training Program

SPEAKERS: **Logan Wilson, Luke Mack, Rachelle McKay, Maxine Dragon-Gillette & others**, Vancouver Island University Students



In partnership between Vancouver Island University, Heiltsuk Tribal Council and North Island College, the [Aboriginal Ecotourism Training Program](#) is designed to offer students certified and applicable skills for employment within British Columbia's Aboriginal Tourism sector. The learning experience combines classroom learning and experiential programming, which is often tied to community health and well-being. The program offers students an opportunity to share ownership for their learning and the success of their peers. By the end of the program, students learn to be ecotourism champions, are empowered to be a voice for their nations and lands and return to their communities to inspire others.

Thompson Okanagan

SPEAKER: **Frank Antoine**, Co-Founder of Moccasin Trails

Winners of the 2019 World Travel Award for Responsible Tourism for both North America and the world, Thompson Okanagan is focused on developing their destination in a way that benefits its social, economic, cultural and environmental assets. Their 'Seven Generations Pledge' campaign beautifully exemplifies their innovative approach to sustainable and regenerative tourism development.

Thompson Okanagan - [Seven Generations Pledge](#)



INDIGENOUS TOURISM ASSOCIATION OF CANADA: MANAGING DEMAND AND GROWTH

FACILITATOR: Keith Henry, President & CEO, ITAC

SPEAKERS: Teresa Ryder, Director of Business Development, ITAC
Brady Smith, Chief Strategy Officer, ITAC
Sebastien Desnoyers-Picard, Director of Marketing, ITAC
Suzanne Reeves, Marketing Advisor, ITAC

The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC) shared their perspectives, ideas, and future challenges for supporting the sustainable expansion of the Indigenous tourism industry in the face of rapidly growing demand.

Indigenous tourism in Canada has grown over 23% in the last 3 years with 1 in 3 visitors interested in an authentic Indigenous experience. ITAC currently faces the challenge of helping their members meet demand while responsibly preparing operators and communities for the influx of visitors. The four strategic pillars of the Five-Year Plan guide their approach: development, marketing, leadership, and partnership. Specific targets include:

- ▶ Total Indigenous Tourism Revenues in Annual Canadian GDP: **increase of \$800 million to \$2.2 billion**
- ▶ Total Indigenous Tourism Jobs: **increase to 49,383**
- ▶ Total Export-Ready Indigenous Tourism Experiences: **increase to 200**

To meet their aspirational numbers, ITAC will use their network of programs and partnerships to help address the issues entrepreneurs and communities face as they work to develop their experiences. This includes assessment tools to get projects off the ground, training opportunities and micro-grants to support growth and high-quality media resources to promote market-ready experiences.

ITAC currently supports the growth and development of over 1875 businesses across the country, from the moment an experience is dreamed up through to delivery. While tourism is seen by many communities and entrepreneurs as an industry that can sustainably provide for their future, there is a sense of urgency to prepare businesses for growth. Not meeting visitor expectations could damage the industry's reputation, just as it is taking off.

There are concerted efforts to build market awareness, develop marketing collateral and build culinary experiences. Building on a strong domestic market, ITAC's aims to increase international awareness of Indigenous tourism through a multi-media approach in five languages. National partners like Destination Canada have been key for reaching markets and showcasing indigenous tourism experiences worldwide.

Establishing itself as an industry leader, ITAC continues to build member support, secure organizational presence in national and international arenas, and promote industry advocacy and awareness to establish a positive reputation. However, ITAC has acknowledged they are not prepared for the growth of the sector by 2024, and seek supportive public and private partnerships, as they know they cannot do it alone. Success is incumbent upon collaboration to collectively develop a sustainable Indigenous tourism sector and strengthen indigenous voices.

Canada's International Indigenous Tourism Conference (IITC) is the largest Indigenous tourism conference in the world.

ITAC Partnership with WestJet

In 2019 ITAC entered into a strategic partnership with WestJet as a mutual investment to help grow the Indigenous tourism sector across Canada. The multi-year commitment will provide endless opportunities through collaboration on indigenous tourism business export readiness; supporting youth attendance at International Indigenous Tourism Conference; and co-creation of marketing campaigns to deliver storytelling content on WestJet inflight entertainment and magazines, domestically and internationally.

CASE STUDY: Indigenous Culinary Tourism

The Indigenous Culinary of Associated Nations (ICAN) is helping connect people to place through food and storytelling. Their strategy will harness the entrepreneurial spirit of indigenous peoples and leverage support for the 1 in 3 youth who aspire to become chefs. To further drive interest and engagement at a national level, ITAC will participate in various culinary conferences and events, including 8 Taste of the Nations Events. This will include community outreach and mentoring for Indigenous people in the 8 host destinations.

Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Provide funding support for training in Indigenous communities

Operators

- ▶ Work with Indigenous businesses. Listen to and integrate their voice for true collaboration

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Build connections with local Indigenous community representatives to better understand how to acknowledge indigenous people, history, and culture in your destination

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Apply for micro-grant funding and get involved in programs offered by ITAC to help identify and address gaps for sustainable Indigenous tourism industry development

Media

- ▶ Develop positive media coverage for Indigenous tourism experiences that strengthen the reputation and awareness of the industry



TRAVELER SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

SPEAKER: Greg Klassen, Principal, Twenty31

Greg Klassen calls for a shift in the tourism mindset, both from a destination perspective and a traveler perspective. This shift will mean moving from tourism consumption to contribution, back into the destinations and the people in those destinations.

A tourism mindset shift presents opportunities to bring in and engage a new set of values-based, higher yield influential travelers. This shift will come from identifying the purpose and vision behind every tourism project, whether that's a DMO or a small-scale operator. Furthermore, developing a social contract between destinations and visitors that bind both parties to those shared values will be essential.

Twenty31's Findings

- ▶ 9/10 Gen Zers, who have \$150 billion in global spending power, believe that companies have a responsibility to social and environmental issues.
- ▶ 1 in 4 US visitors intentionally book trips with environmentally friendly hotels and tour companies.
- ▶ Travelers who make purchases based on social concerns spend 39% more.

Traveler Social Responsibility

The task of the responsible traveler is to learn, understand and contribute to the communities they visit. According to Klassen, there are two key types of consumers pertinent to traveler social responsibility: advocates and aspirationalists. Aspirational consumers are more about buying into brands than joining fights. They want a lifestyle impact from their brands, rather than a policy impact. Advocates are already converted; it's the 39% of people that are on-the-fence aspirationalists that we need to recruit.

Destination Social Responsibility

Destinations, and the operators that populate them, need to examine their core purpose as an organization. Beyond bringing in more visitors or selling more of your destination, why are you in business? From there, DMOs and operators need to critically examine how they are communicating that message to both visitors and residents. Furthermore, there is a need for the creation of tangible goals and metrics to ensure that purpose is fulfilled. Destinations can't expect traveler social responsibility if they aren't delivering on their responsibilities.



“We need to start thinking of our DMOs more like corporations that have management control and leadership ability to make [the necessary] changes.”

- Greg Klassen, Principal, Twenty31

CASE STUDY: Patagonia

Patagonia places their core purpose (“We’re in business to save our home planet”) front and center, giving buyers the opportunity to align their values with the brand by buying their products. Since making this purpose the center of their operations, they have seen 50-100% more profitability out of the commitment that has nothing to do with the product.

CASE STUDY: Intrepid Travel

People want to say that they’ve travelled with Intrepid because it says something about their own values. Intrepid is entirely values based, from regeneration to climate to social issues, their openness is beneficial both to their causes and their success as a business.

Palau Pledge

The tiny island of Palau is one of many destinations that require visitors to take a pledge to responsible travel. Palau’s Pledge outlines both social and environmental concerns, as well as being enshrined into legislature. When visitors enter the country, their passports are stamped with the pledge, which also outlines that breaches of the pledge will result in fines.

“The next century will mark the emergency of tourism destinations as a fashion accessory. The choice of holiday destination will help define the identity of the traveler and, in an increasingly homogenous world, set them apart from the hordes of other tourists”

- United Nations World Tourism Organization



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Enshrine destination pledges into policy, with tangible consequences for travelers

Operators

- ▶ Meet travelers halfway in sustainability and social responsibility
- ▶ Attract a new set of values-based, higher yield influential travelers

Destinations (DMOs)

- ▶ Shift mindset and behaviour to a values-based, managerial and leadership position in your destination
- ▶ Develop a social contract with visitors to sustain your destinations for the future

Travelers

- ▶ Commit to tread lightly on your host environments and cultures
- ▶ Ask your hosts to meet halfway to ensure the destination is also accountable to communities, the environment, employees and industry

Resources

- ▶ Article: “Saluting While the Ship Sinks: The Necessity for a Tourism Paradigm Change” by Larry Dwyer

ACCESSIBILITY & TECHNOLOGY

FACILITATOR: **Geoff Pegg**, Director, Sustainability & Environment, TELUS

SPEAKERS: **Amar Latif**, Founder & Director, Traveleyes
Tanelle Bolt, Accessibility Consultant & Advocate for Inclusion

This closing session explored the impacts of technology in accessibility innovations, as well as opportunities for tourism to broaden experiences for individuals with disabilities.

The two entrepreneurs who spoke in this session have achieved success largely due to their belief that the impacts from their abilities are stronger than the limitations of their disabilities. Their stories informed us that throughout our society, individuals with impairments are told by others that they cannot partake in various activities, whether travelling independently or participating in a sport. The dialogue demonstrated the opportunity within tourism to take a leadership role in creating travel opportunities that enable the participation of those with disabilities. By fostering this participation, tourism can tap into a lucrative market, while empowering individuals to do more and continue to expand their comfort zone.

While accommodating accessible tourism can create an immense financial opportunity for tourism organizations, other speakers at the conference have urged the industry to shift its focus on monetary wealth to other forms, like social and experiential. Tanelle Bolt highlighted the return on experience to be gained from shifting thinking from money to impact by creating a novel experience for all visitors, not just those who are able-bodied.

“If you want something that doesn’t exist, you either do without, or you build it yourself.”

- Amar Latif, Founder & Director, Traveleyes

Technology, if created responsibly, can and will continue to positively impact accessibility. Both speakers attested to its role in enabling their business. Patents on technology are a current barrier, however, and are making the adoption of accessibility practices cost prohibitive. Traveleyes’ systems and processes are fully accessible for all travelers, including their website. Businesses should be designing new products to be accessible, rather than applying best practices after the fact. However while acknowledging the importance of technology, the speakers also discussed how it is important to change people’s preconceptions and mindsets about accessibility in general.

“Globally, it is estimated that there are over 1 billion persons with disabilities, as well as more than 2 billion people, such as spouses, children and caregivers of persons with disabilities, representing almost a third of the world’s population, are directly affected by disability.”

- Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations



CASE STUDY: Traveleyes

Founded in 2004, Traveleyes is the world's first commercial tour operator, providing group travel for blind and partially sighted travelers. Their website includes audio brochures and is completely accessible. Sighted travelers join tours with up to a 50% discount and offer guidance and sight descriptions to blind travelers. This helps them feel a sense of comradery with their travel companions and may not have otherwise felt comfortable travelling independently. Itineraries are thoughtfully built to provide travelers with a meaningful, multi-sensory experience, which range from active holidays to school trips and charitable challenges.

"I'd love to go on a tour with Amar; we'll have a blind person leading me in a wheelchair and see how we go."

- Tanelle Bolt

"I don't see a problem, Tanelle."

- Amar Latif



Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- ▶ Support businesses with the desire to carry out accessibility audits
- ▶ Create best practices for organizations to incorporate accessibility into each aspect of their business
- ▶ Make resources available for vulnerable communities facing higher rates of disability

Destinations (DMOs) & Operators

- ▶ Be open to what kinds of needs people have and ask questions to ensure you understand the individual's unique accessibility needs
- ▶ Design products to be universally accessible and foster experiences for disabled travelers
- ▶ Perform an accessibility audit in your business and build a plan of action
- ▶ Update your website and booking tools to be accessible to those with hearing and visual impairments
- ▶ Promote experiences in the environments appropriate for your target demographics, i.e. within institutions like the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)

Indigenous Communities

- ▶ Support The British Columbia Aboriginal Network on Disability Society (BCANDS), gathering information and resources to help Indigenous communities with accessibility concerns

Media

- ▶ Shine a light on the current state of accessibility
- ▶ Find champions who are succeeding in including accessibility into all aspects of their business model and broadcast their story to the public

Resources

- ▶ Bonjour Quebec: [Tourism and Disabled Travellers](#)
- ▶ [Rad Recreation Adapted Society](#)
- ▶ [Traveleyes](#)
- ▶ [Web Accessibility Initiative](#)

UNITE - COMMIT - ACT

At IMPACT, we come together to **UNITE** our industry around the belief that travel is a force for good. We **COMMIT** to tackling the challenges and investing in the opportunities travel brings to our communities. We leave prepared to **ACT** and implement solutions as we help build towards a regenerative future.

In this full-participation session, attendees share their top lessons learned and commitments for 2020

Delegate 'Aha Moments':

All of the ways that tourism can contribute to wellbeing - health, education, happiness, innovation, community, restoration of damaged ecosystems - **There is no tourism on a dead planet** - The long shadow of colonialism can still permeate travel and tourism marketing, there is hard work still to be done to decolonize - **Sustainability is no longer enough, we have to think of regenerative tourism** - A difficult "Aha moment" was the repeated phrase that "we are preaching to the choir" - how do we scale this up so it is imperative and not just a cool USP? - **Its not all about the urgent needs of today; think seven generations before and seven to come** - Worth more alive than dead - **We can't wait for government. Together we must be the change** - There is a strong business case for sustainable tourism Public transportation would benefit citizens and travellers - **Doing no harm is not enough Regenerative & Restorative tourism integral to future experience & visitation development** - Donut economy vs just triple bottom line - return on experience vs Investment (think beyond the bottom line) - **Everything Wade Davis said** - DMOs should build their organization's vision on what they can do to achieve the vision for the destination - **Learning that biodegradable doesn't always mean best, and biodegradable isn't the solution, breaking down into small microscopic pieces. Refuse, reduce, reuse** - **Advocate for the value of tourism beyond the economics- measure and report on the social, cultural and environmental contribution and positive impact** - Our "High value" visitor needs to be considered beyond the economics - **That sustainable, regenerative (revitalize) tourism proves that we as indigenous people methods and practices have and will continue to work** - The concept of taking "hospitality" out of Hospitality - Stop encouraging guests to leave their social and environmental responsibility at the door when they vacation with us, accept our role in educating guests to take more accountability - **Carbon doesn't care where it is emitted** - We need a declaration for tourists to sign upon arrival: to protect our environment and society while they are visiting our backyard - **Having Indigenous partners from our communities at the table is an obligation, not a choice** - Resident sentiment as a KPI - **Build in accessibility from the beginning, not as an after-thought** - Tourism can be an agent of change for the good of the community - **Capitalism needs to be entirely redesigned for a better world** - Host disruptive conversations - **Carbon neutrality is now the baseline and expected (amongst this crowd). Carbon NEGATIVE is now the leading space to be in** - We can't have a healthy travel sector if we don't have a healthy planet - **Conciliation needs to happen, not reconciliation!** - Need to enhance relationship/dialogue between academy, community and industry...we are in it together! - **The transformative power of *learning in place* - when learning in place, people have an emotive response, and when they have an emotive response, THEY CARE - we can't shy away from creating educational experiences for every visitor** - "Sustainability" is no longer a catch phrase, it's a societal consciousness we are and must adopt

Delegate commitments for 2020:

Lisa Christensen, Tourism, Govt of Yukon. Professional goal: establish visible ways for visitors to contribute to community-identified causes (renewable energy, conservation, accessibility initiatives). Personal goal: approach local retailers about reducing plastic packaging (inspired by oceanwise's graphic shared with suppliers in China). - **Cecelia Dick Hy'chka to everyone that is here was my first time here and I would live to commit myself to come next year and safe travels home.** - Bring this conversation to board meetings on a consistent basis as we head towards embarking on our next 5 yr strategic plan - Craig, Tourism Abbotsford. - **Tourism Cafe Canada. Advance the conversation with colleagues across Canada on the broader lens of accessible tourism for experience development then bring this learning into our training and destination development work to inspire others.** - In current my position as a front desk representative at Kwalilas Hotel and a community member Of the north island I will inform tourists to be mindful and walk gently of the environment that visits and as well to inform them to donate to environmental originations for the cost and as well British Columbia. Logan Wilson. - **Jessica with Tourism Cares for Victoria - we're committing to learning more about indigenous tourism by joining ITAC and making sure there's a strong indigenous community presence at our event here next June.** - More learning. More sharing. More discussion. Elise Williamson. - **Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms: 1. Bring specific examples of how the metrics in the invisible burden of tourism can be applied in every community workshop I am working in. 2. Host a local community conversation in my community about what kind of pledge they might create, to share with visitors, for future generations. 3. Make every workshop/training/experience we create zero waste and carbon neutral.** - Lisa R - HI Canada - Our Mission - To build a community of conscious travellers who share a greater understanding of people, places and cultures. I commit to keep the conversation moving forward that specifically includes partnering and engaging our indigenous peoples of Canada and creating educational materials for our international guests regarding responsible travel throughout our country. - **My commitment is to have a working San Juan Islands pledge that is signable on our website. www.visitsanjuans.com/pledge Also, to bring at least one member with me to next year's conference -Amy N. San Juan Islands Visitors Bureau.** - Jackie Olson, Klondike Visitor Association- do a carbon footprint of our organization to strategize reduction to carbon neutral I will continue to have the discussion of sustainable or now regenerative mind set in all aspects of our lives. - **Maria Fortunato for Hamilton Halton Brant Regional Tourism Organization: commit to #1. educating industry broadening working together efforts. #2. Develop Visitor Social Responsibility Protocol #3 broaden the education with Ontario Tourism industry colleagues & partners.** - Caroline from Brisbane. I'm a hiker and I commit to begin supporting and getting involved with trail building and maintenance. - **Melissa - Edmonton economic development - this year we hosted our first ever carbon neutral event. My goals is to do everything I can to host more carbon neutral or carbon negative events in our city with The long term goal that every event in our city can be a carbon neutral one. We commit to build a funding mechanism to help planners offset the footprint of their event by offering a rebate program. Sustainability is a 2-way street.** - Committing to shift our current sustainable action plan and business model to one with regeneration as one of our core pillars. Julia C.- Huntingdon Manor Hotel & Pendray Inn and Tea House - **Beth Potter from TIAO: To further the discussion and education on regenerative tourism in Ontario. To change the language we use in policy discussions with government. To continue to work closely with our indigenous partners.**

CARBON NEUTRALITY 101

Carbon Neutrality is achieved when a business, organization or event neutralizes their carbon footprint by investing in verified carbon offset projects that mitigate the same amount of carbon.

There are three steps to creating a Carbon Neutral event: Measure, Reduce, then Offset.

1. Measure

Start by measuring your event's carbon footprint so you understand the source of your emissions and the greatest areas of impact. A carbon footprint must include emissions from all fossil fuels such as natural gas, heating oil, propane and vehicle fuels (Scope 1 – Direct emissions), and electricity (Scope 2 – Indirect emissions). It may also include emissions from waste, paper, travel and more (Scope 3 – Indirect emissions from other sources).

How To & Resources

Use an online tool to estimate your impact.

- ▶ [CARBONZERO](#)
- ▶ [Resurgence Carbon Dioxide Calculator](#)
- ▶ [Offsetters](#) (flight & car emissions only)
- ▶ [Green Key Hotel Carbon Calculation Tool](#)

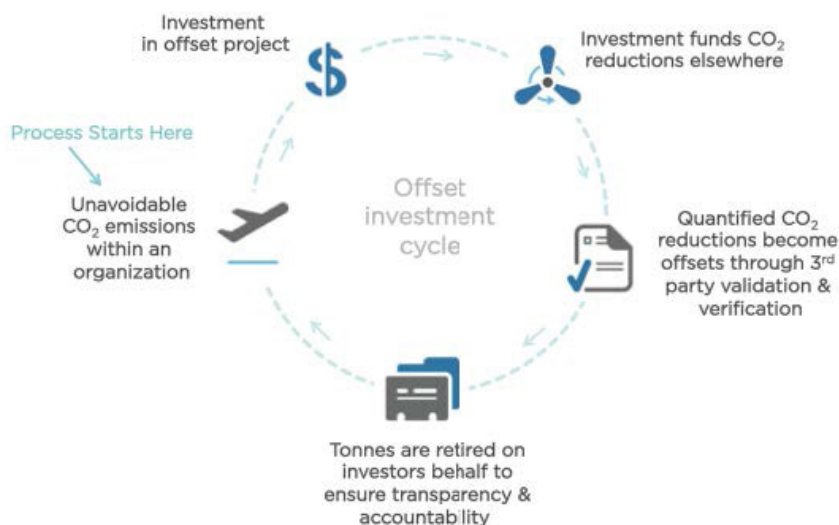
OR

Hire a 3rd party professional to measure and report the carbon footprint of your event. Although you can purchase offsets based on the online calculators, to be able to claim that your event is carbon neutral you need an external review by a credible third-party to ensure that emissions were calculated correctly and that you've purchased the appropriate number of offsets.

- ▶ [Synergy Enterprises](#)
- ▶ [Offsetters](#)

2. Reduce

Once you understand the carbon footprint of your event—and before you purchase offsets—you should work to reduce your emissions. Consider the cost of offsetting your total carbon footprint. Could those funds be invested internally to reduce your emissions at source? Purchasing carbon offsets should only happen once all financially feasible GHG reductions have been achieved.



How To & Resources

- ▶ Partner with other businesses and organizations that are carbon neutral or promote sustainability as a top corporate value; e.g., look for B Corp Certified businesses.
- ▶ Understand the impact of accommodation choices. [Hotel Footprinting](#) provides an interactive tool with a benchmarking function that shows the carbon and energy footprint data for specific geographies and a footprinting function that allows you to calculate the carbon footprint of a hotel stay.
- ▶ Develop a procurement policy focused on minimizing emissions and environmental impacts from products and food; e.g., 100% PCR paper products; certified products (i.e., Fairtrade, FSC, Rainforest Alliance, Best Aquaculture Practices).
- ▶ Minimize transportation requirements during the event by keeping venues and accommodations within walking distance; or ensure there are adequate low-carbon transportation options (including coaches) and inform delegates of them.
- ▶ Promote and practice energy conservation during the event; e.g., turn off lights and electronics when not in use, use natural ventilation to reduce air conditioning demand.
- ▶ Minimize waste during the event. For example, use e-mail or an online-board, or a conference app to post information and schedules instead of printing, reuse attendee badges, provide water and glasses (no bottled water or disposable coffee cups).
- ▶ Maximize waste diversion by providing collection for multiple streams. If the local waste provider has limited opportunities, consider a private waste management company or [TerraCycle's zero waste boxes](#).

3. Offset

The final step to make your event carbon neutral is to choose and purchase a portfolio of carbon offsets.

Carbon offsets must meet certain criteria to be considered legitimate. They must be additional, meaning they would not have happened without the investment of the offset (this ensures your funds are making a difference). They must also have a permanent impact and can't result in increased emissions elsewhere. Finally, offsets must be retired once purchased, to ensure the purchasers can take credit for the emissions reduction, and to avoid double-counting.

Internationally recognized verification standards such as [VCS](#) and the [Gold Standard](#) exist to ensure offset projects on the market achieve the criteria above. Offsets must be validated and verified by third-party auditors (like KPMG and Stantec) to ensure that they meet all of the requirements of the standards.

How To & Resources

- ▶ [Offsetters](#): As Canada's leading provider of sustainability and carbon-management solutions, Offsetters helps organizations and individuals understand, reduce, and offset their environmental impacts—including: natural gas, electricity, travel, paper, etc.—in a cost-effective way.
- ▶ [Bullfrog Power](#): Provides green energy solutions for homes and businesses across Canada. By purchasing green electricity, green natural gas, or green fuel, Bullfrog ensures an equivalent unit of energy used in your operations is injected into energy grids in a sustainable form. Green electricity is generated through pollution-free, renewable sources; natural gas is produced through climate-friendly methods; and green fuel is created from used cooking oils from restaurants. Bullfrog Power publishes a directory to search for companies that are using green power.
- ▶ [TripZero](#): This online tool allows travelers to individually offset the impact of their travel.
- ▶ [Less](#): Helps people and organizations mitigate travel-related emissions through the purchasing of high-quality offsets in Canada and around the world.

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