

IMPACT

SUSTAINABILITY TRAVEL & TOURISM

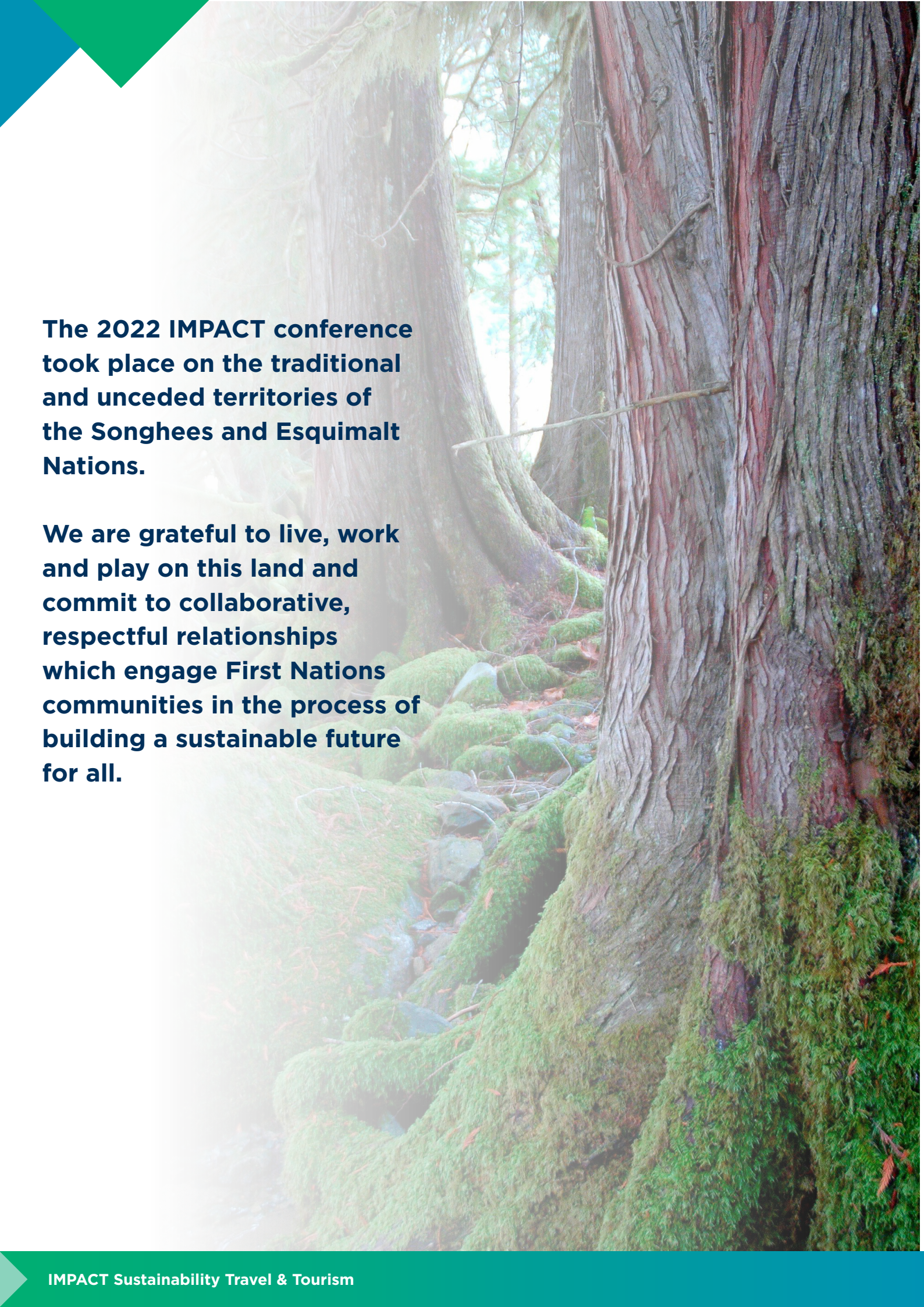
**A COLLABORATIVE NATIONAL DIALOGUE ON
INNOVATION AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF
TOURISM TO CANADA'S SUSTAINABLE FUTURE**

VICTORIA, BC

MAY 8-11, 2022

2022 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS PAPER



A photograph of a forest with large, moss-covered tree trunks and a misty atmosphere. The trees are covered in vibrant green moss, and the ground is also covered in moss. The background is slightly blurred, showing more trees and a soft light filtering through the canopy. The overall scene is serene and natural.

The 2022 IMPACT conference took place on the traditional and unceded territories of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

We are grateful to live, work and play on this land and commit to collaborative, respectful relationships which engage First Nations communities in the process of building a sustainable future for all.



“Regenerative tourism is about healing.

It seeks to leave things better than we found them, creating a net-positive impact, and often requires a place-based approach that considers the unique circumstances and ties in host communities.”

Angela Nagy

RECOGNITION

Co-Chairs

Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
Marion Joppe, Distinguished Professor Emerita, University of Guelph, and Past President,
Canada Chapter, Travel and Tourism Research Association

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CLIMATE REALITY CHECK

SPEAKER:

Robert Sandford, Global Water Futures Fellow
UN University Institute for Water, Environment and Health

Robert Sandford shared the sobering reality of our changing climate and offered hope for the future.


As we continue to face floods, wildfires, landslides and heat waves, our survival may very well depend on our capacity to anticipate and respond proactively. As with COVID-19, tourism operators will need to become masterful at planning for and managing more frequent and increasingly disruptive climate events.

Inspiring hope that we can turn things around is the rapid growth in technologies, particularly in the domains of solar and wind power generation, storage batteries and transportation efficiency.

There have also been breakthroughs in the understanding of natural regeneration, harnessing the power of forests, grasslands and wetlands to sequester carbon and advances in natural climatic solutions that include regenerative agriculture. Cities are also stepping up through the coalition “Cities Race to Zero”.

Nature itself offers our greatest hope. The recent scientifically validated discovery of nonhuman sentience and broader intelligence in the natural world offers the strongest potential for transformation in our understanding of the natural world since the last renaissance.

Sandford also noted that Indigenous Peoples have been right all along in insisting that long-term human survival must be predicated by the “familial instinct to protect all our relatives – that is to say, the entire spectrum of nonhuman kin, including rivers, mountains, animals, and the spirits of the land”.

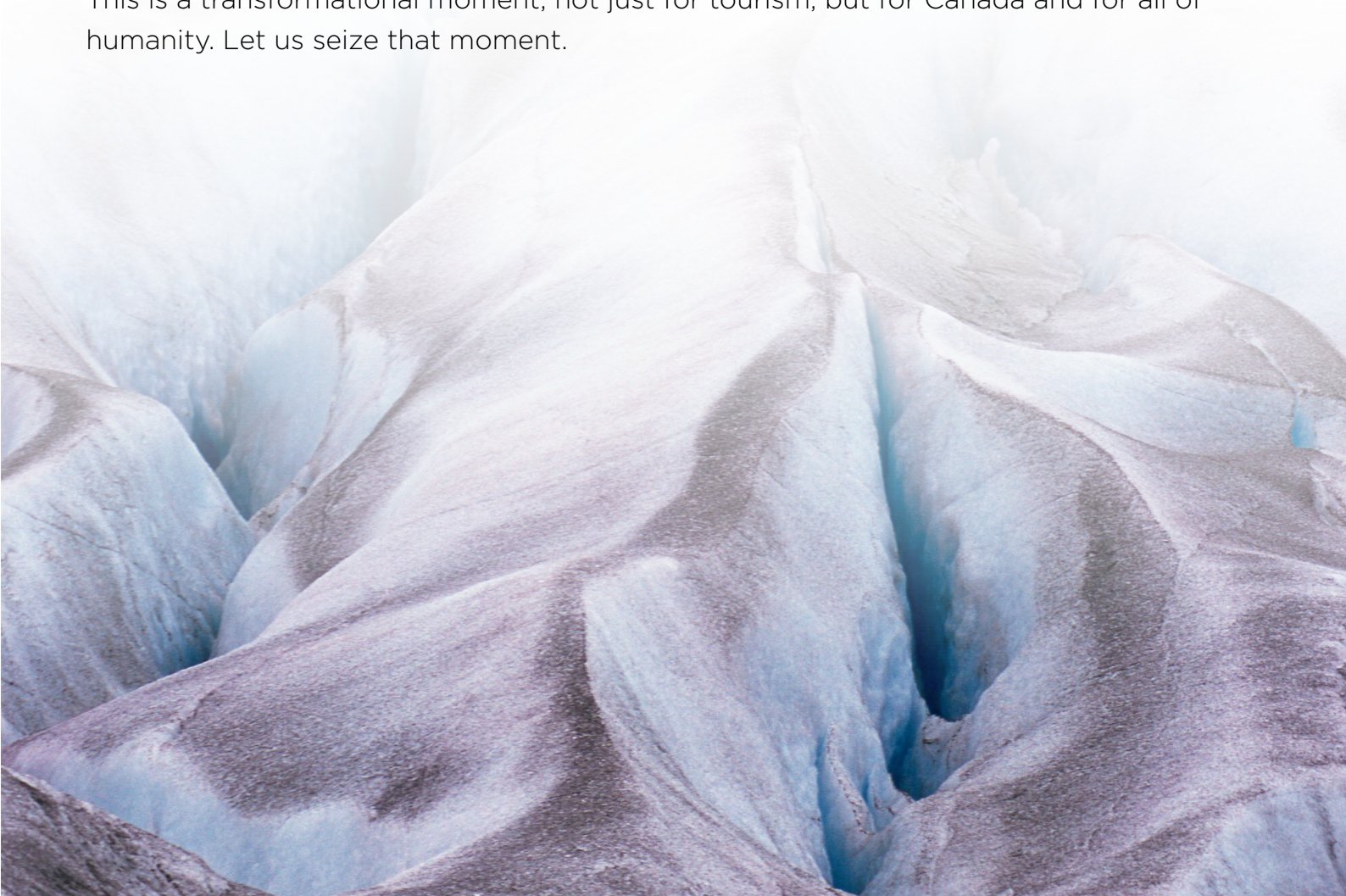


By reconciling with one another and making and finally honoring a treaty with the planet, Canada could be the country people come to witness how they, too, can reconcile with one another and the place they call home.

What we save – in terms of nature and culture – could not only save us, it could help **revive the world**. Following this path could make Canada the premier destination for understanding how **cultures can interact with living systems** to bring our society back in line with the realities of living on a self-contained, naturally self-willed planet.

We are on the cusp of great change and on the way to replacing the mechanistic worldview with one that is life-affirming and based on the recognition of humanity's interconnectedness with the living Earth. We cannot deny, however, that we are currently at a crossroads. We are running out of time, and we need to work together, not just to save tourism, but to make what we can of the sector align with what we need to do to save the world.

This is a transformational moment, not just for tourism, but for Canada and for all of humanity. Let us seize that moment.



CANADIAN TOURISM: THE GREAT RESTART

MODERATOR: Paul Nursey, CEO, Destination Greater Victoria

SPEAKERS: Marsha Walden, CEO, Destination Canada
Beth Potter, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of Canada
Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Katie Briscoe, President, MMGY Global

The 2022 IMPACT conference kicked off with a look at the state of the Canadian tourism industry. Industry leaders and attendees shared reflections on the past two years, unpacked new priorities, and considered Canada's position as a global player in regenerative tourism. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about a greater understanding of the value of tourism to government and communities as an employer and economic driver. It also drew attention to the travel industry not being inherently sustainable.

Tourism can be part of a regenerative future, but there first needs to be a renaissance. It is time to reconsider the type of traveler that destinations are working to attract and shift to focusing on the high-values visitor over the high-value visitor.



WORKSHOP

REGENERATIVE TRAVEL THROUGH RESPONSIBLE PURCHASING

SPEAKERS:

Teresa Ryder, Director of Partnerships

Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

Rebecca Bartlett-Jones, Manager of Business Development

Green Key Global

Assetou Coulibaly, Project Manager, Accent Inns

This workshop explored responsible purchasing practices through a variety of lenses. Teresa Ryder, Director of Partnerships at the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada, shared regenerative economy frameworks and their alignment with Indigenous principles.

Rebecca Bartlett-Jones outlined how Green Key Global's Eco-Rating Program is evolving to embrace a more holistic approach to sustainability based on the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), starting with a new Code of Conduct and questionnaire for screening vendors.

Assetou Coulibaly, Project Manager at Accent Inns, shared lessons in leadership and change management after successfully getting all nine properties under three brands Biosphere Committed.

The short presentations were followed by an activity where attendees selected a sustainability framework (UN SDGs, 7 Generations, B Corp, Circular Economy, Triple Bottom Line, etc.) to help them re-imagine the purchasing practices of a hotel with a goal of being a regenerative business. Areas of consideration included human resources, catering and events, operations and reservations and sales.

CALL TO ACTION

Take an inventory of spending and identify the opportunities aligned with regenerative values. Select a framework such as the SDGs to help develop a responsible purchasing policy.

FUNDAMENTALS OF DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

FACILITATOR: **Greg DeShields**, Tourism Diversity Matters

This workshop defined diversity, equity and inclusion and discussed how inclusive language is about treating people with respect and dignity and increasing awareness. Greg also explained the business case for DEI and how companies with more inclusive business cultures and policies see more innovation and attract top talent.

Key resources included an unconscious bias quiz, diversity and inclusion insights from McKinsey & Company and DEI best practices to focus on in 2022. Tourism professionals can also pursue certification through the Institute for Diversity Certification, the Society for Diversity or the National Diversity Council.



LUNCH & LEARN

SPEAKER: **Muna Haddad**, Founder, BARAKA

Muna Haddad led delegates through a journey of her personal evolution as an Arab woman and her work to develop the Jordan Trail and rural community tourism in Jordan.

A key question Muna asked the audience was “Who gets to tell the story of a place? Who gets to decide what the product is?”

Far too often, travel writers, influencers and international tour operators craft the story and develop an itinerary based on what they deem to be the most captivating experiences for international visitors. As a case study, Muna shared the story of the village of Um Qais in the northwestern corner of Jordan. She worked with local families to develop bed and breakfasts that offer a unique experience of Jordan’s village life.



Credit: Muna Haddad, IMPACT 2022

The main takeaways from Muna’s presentation were that the story of the people and the place needs to come first, and that the ultimate goal is to build capacity and transfer ownership of the tourism product to the local community.

WADE DAVIS AND MIKE BRUISED HEAD

Canada's sense of place is born of the intersection of Indigenous heritage and colonialism. The words and names we use to describe ourselves and our land is the result of hundreds of years of history that was re-written when settlers arrived and worked to erase the knowledge and culture of the people who were already here.

Mike Bruised Head shared stories of his connections with the mountains in his homeland and how the resurfacing of Blackfoot place names is driving his work in tourism.

Wade Davis spoke of the nature of the sacred and the inextricable links between culture, place and language.

The burning question that was left at the end of this session was why are some of Canada's most important landmarks named after historical figures who never set foot on this land?



DESTINATION MASTER PLANNING

PANELISTS:

David Miller, C40 Cities

Mayor Lisa Helps, City of Victoria

Cathy Ritter, Better Destinations/MMGY NextFactor

David Peacock, Future Tourism Group/Simpleview

This panel featured current and former mayors along with tourism planners to demonstrate how destination master planning can help cities drive positive outcomes through inclusive strategies focused on regenerative infrastructure and community benefits.

Destination master planning connects the visitor economy, economic development and community well-being. The goal is to identify opportunities to enhance both the visitor and resident experience and positions a place as desirable to live, work and visit. A strong destination master plan will extend the benefits of the visitor economy throughout the community.

Demonstrating these principles in action, case studies included Lake Tahoe and a micro-transit pilot project that reduced traffic congestion and turned into a local amenity, along with Victoria's journey to improve cycling infrastructure, benefitting both residents and visitors.

Ultimately, destination master planning needs to understand the interconnectedness of benefits for residents and benefits for visitors and strike a balance between the two. Mayor Lisa Helps summed it up well: "The underlying key must be deep community relationships. It's called leadership, not status-quoship."



WORKSHOP

PATHWAYS TO DECARBONIZING TOURISM

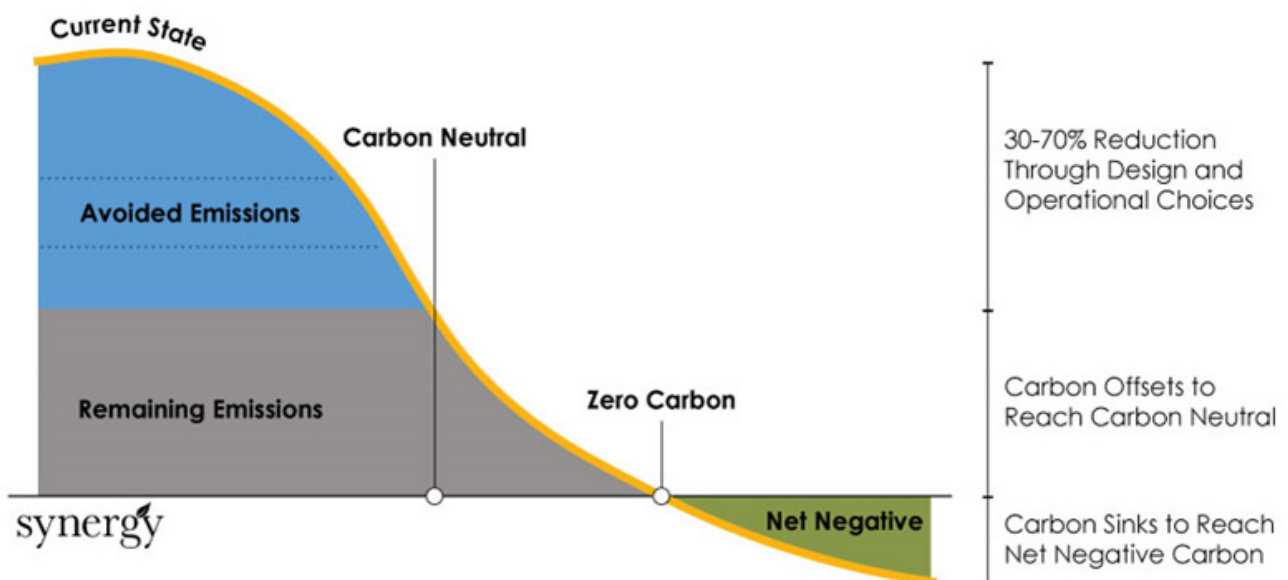
FACILITATORS: **Mikey Sadowski**, Intrepid Travel
Jill Doucette, Synergy Enterprises

This workshop was jointly facilitated by Mikey Sadowski, General Manager of Global PR & Communications at Intrepid and Jill Doucette, Founder & CEO at Synergy Enterprises.

Key frameworks guiding decarbonization in the global tourism industry include Science-Based Targets and the Glasgow Declaration. Organizations in this workshop mapped their Scope 1, 2 and 3 emission sources and identified key opportunities for greenhouse gas emissions reductions over the short, medium and long term.

While tourism operators and hotels focused on vehicles, heat sources and renewable energy, Destination Management Organizations focused on how to best support the transition to a low-carbon tourism economy and provide more resources for their stakeholders.

The key lesson in this workshop was the importance of advancing GHG literacy among tourism stakeholders and employees. Understanding emission sources and areas of opportunity for decarbonization will become a core competency for businesses and organizations in tourism in the remainder of this decade.



ANCIENT ECOSYSTEMS AND THE VALUE OF BIODIVERSITY

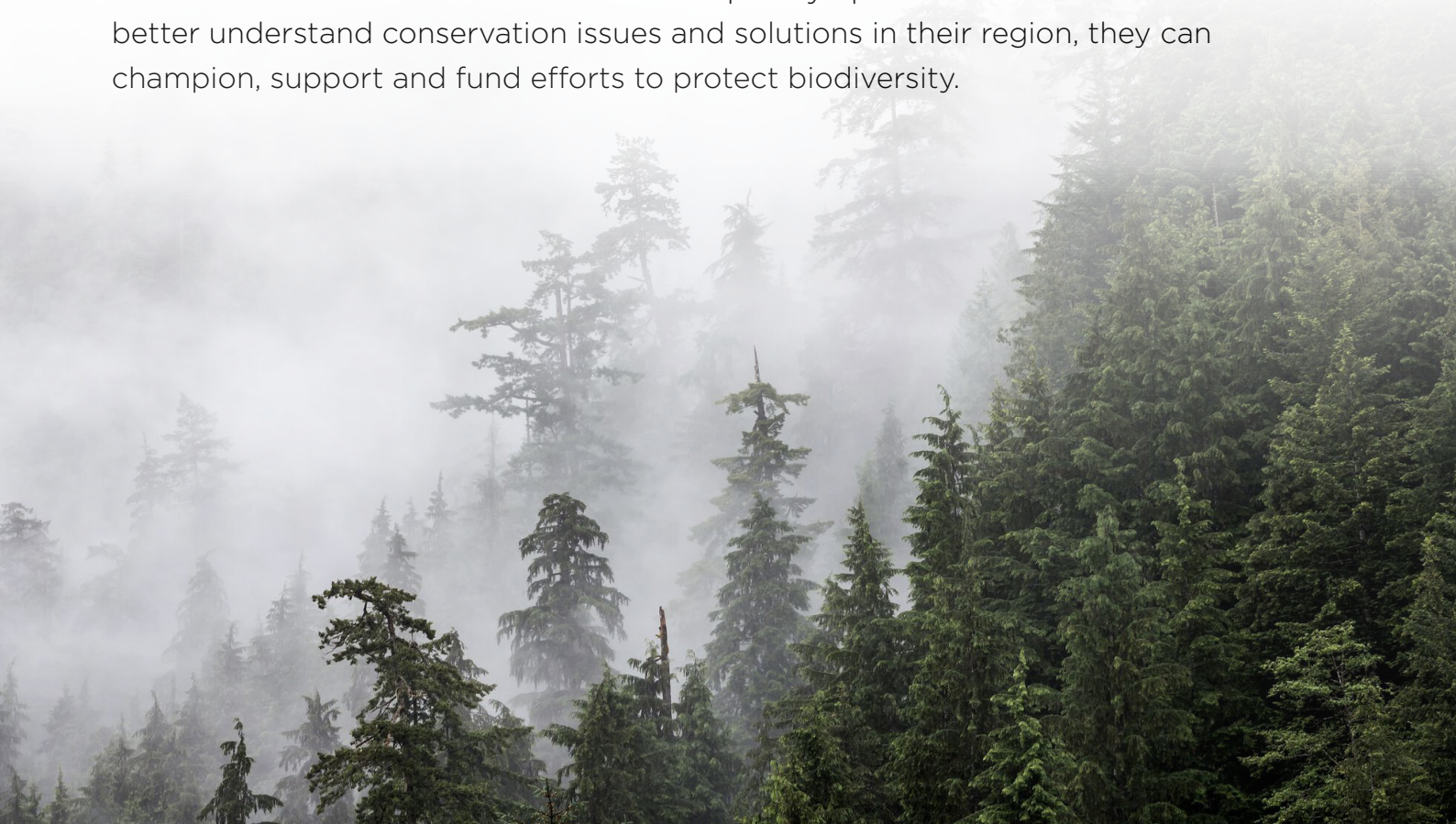
REALITY CHECK: Dr. Harvey Locke

PANELISTS: Dr. Jennifer Clark, Cascadia Seaweed
Julian Hockin Grant, Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Park Allies Liaison
Dr. Valeria Vergara, Raincoast Conservation Foundation

Dr. Harvey Locke, recognized global leader in conservation, opened the session with a reality check on the rate of biodiversity decline and introduced the Nature Positive concept.

A panel discussion featuring three leading scientists and activists in the fields of whale research, seaweed cultivation and Indigenous-led conservation helped deepen our understanding of the interconnected web of biodiversity, climate action and community resilience.

The key lesson from this session was that, as an industry, we need to create more points of intersection and collaboration between conservation science, community-led initiatives and tourism. These areas frequently operate in silos. If tourism leaders better understand conservation issues and solutions in their region, they can champion, support and fund efforts to protect biodiversity.



WORKSHOP

SHOULDERING THE INVISIBLE BURDEN WITH THE TRAVEL FOUNDATION

FACILITATOR: **Jeremy Sampson**, CEO, The Travel Foundation

Tourism impacts communities in ways that are not fully understood and measured. These include both invisible burdens and invisible benefits. Examples of invisible burdens include increased energy use and water consumption, increased climate risks and increases in the cost of living. There can also be invisible benefits in tourism communities such as civic pride, amenities, infrastructure, protected areas and inward investments.

With a focus on destination transformation, Jeremy Sampson shared how destinations are developing resilience frameworks to promote an inclusive recovery strategy. Using the lenses of climate and equity, delegates learned why collaboration is key to shouldering the invisible burden.

During the workshop, attendees were asked to think about the invisible and visible burdens in their destination, brainstorm new indicators needed and identify new data sources, relationships and funding sources to address those issues.

The key takeaway from this workshop was that destinations need to better understand both the positive and negative impacts tourism can create. Impacts should be addressed in destination master plans with consideration of potential partnerships and KPIs for monitoring progress.

CASE STUDIES FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM

MODERATOR: **Angela Nagy**, CEO, GreenStep Solutions

PANELISTS: **Muna Haddad**, Founder, BARAKA
Harmony Hunter, Manager, Tourism Development, Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association
Mikey Sadowski, GM, Global PR & Communications, Intrepid Travel

This session highlighted examples of regenerative tourism in action from around the globe. Angela Nagy of GreenStep Solutions opened the session with the definition of regenerative tourism and shared how it is a fundamental shift in how we view the world and our approach to tourism.

Muna Haddad spoke about her work with community-based tourism projects in Jordan. By investing in experience development and micro-businesses in the village of Um Qais, Baraka was able to create jobs, empower women and rejuvenate local farming.

Harmony Hunter presented on the Travel Guidelines developed by the Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association. These guidelines seek to educate visitors and tourism operators on Yukon First Nations' culture and values and lay the foundation for respectful relationships with Yukon First Nations communities and lands. The guidelines were developed using the "Share, Care and Respect" approach and consultations with Knowledge Keepers and the broader community.

Mikey Sadowski shared how Intrepid Travel is prioritizing intersectional sustainability and showcased the interconnectedness within their decarbonization approach as a global tour operator. Intrepid is working to advance climate justice through their commitment to science-based targets, social justice through empowering women as part of their climate plan, and racial justice by keeping DEI and decolonization central to decarbonization.

Regenerative tourism looks different in different communities but the overall aim is to create the conditions for life to thrive, from developing employment opportunities where people can make a living wage and grow their skills to restoring ecosystems to support biodiversity and carbon sequestration. It is also about creating cross-cultural understanding and respect for Indigenous Peoples through truth and reconciliation.

CLEAN TECH PECHA KUCHA

Pecha Kucha means “chit chat” in Japanese. This creative outlet began as nighttime get-togethers in Tokyo in 2003. Inspired by this format, IMPACT’s Pecha Kucha session featured seven speakers with a focus on clean tech solutions.

Vladimir Kostka - FortisBC Renewable Natural Gas

John Gunter - Frontiers North Adventures featuring their electric tundra buggy

Jennifer Leslie - VI Reusables Container Program for take-out food services

Sean Bourquin - First Light Technologies featuring solar lighting options for tourism

Gurmesh Sidhu - Moment Energy featuring battery energy storage systems from recycled car batteries

Nathan Curry - Terragon Environmental Technologies featuring system-level sustainable community design

Teresa Ehman - Air Canada’s approach to sustainability and advancing sustainable aviation fuels

DECOLONIZING TOURISM

MODERATOR: **Teresa Ryder**, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

PANELISTS: **Frank Antoine**, Bonaparte First Nation & Moccasin Trails
Cecilia Point, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada
Shae Bird, Indigenous Tourism Alberta
Holly Courchene, Indigenous Tourism Manitoba

Experiencing Indigenous tourism firsthand is an important way for non-Indigenous Canadians to connect to the lands, traditions, and ways of being of Indigenous Peoples. Canadians and tourism professionals are eager to better understand the impacts Canada's colonial past still has on Indigenous people today and work towards reconciliation and healing. Tourism is a catalyst for awareness building and a vital tool for decolonizing the tourism industry.

Led by the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC), this session featured some of our country's storytellers and focused on what it means to decolonize a colonial system and how Indigenous tourism is reconciliation in action. The panelists shared meaningful insights on areas where collaboration and reconciliation are starting but cautioned that there is much more to be done, and this journey is only beginning. Indigenous tourism was growing rapidly prior to 2020 however the COVID-19 pandemic disproportionately impacted Indigenous tourism, and it will take a concerted effort and support for operators to bring it back.

Now more than ever, we need to work together and focus on empowering Indigenous youth and operators, while communities also continue to heal from the past.



VISION FOR REGENERATIVE TOURISM

MODERATOR: **Walt Judas**, Tourism Industry Association of BC

PANELISTS: **Cecilia Dick & Karma Brophy**, Songhees Nation
Troy Robinson & Bridget Orsetti, Spirit Bear Lodge
Genevieve Huneault, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada

This session explored how shifting the Canadian tourism industry to a regenerative model will require radical collaboration.

To begin, each panelist was asked “What does regenerative travel mean to you?”. Responses ranged from lifting each other up, partnerships, protection of culture, land and wildlife to meaningful opportunities for Indigenous people, especially youth.

Genevieve reminded us that a regenerative approach is the Indigenous way of life. It draws inspiration from interconnected, living systems and seeks balance vs. continual growth. The goal is to create the conditions for life to thrive; restoring and replenishing vs. depleting.

The Songhees Nation has been actively using tourism as a tool to reclaim and share their culture. They view regenerative tourism as an opportunity to facilitate reconciliation with one another and the planet. Systems thinking and the empowerment of youth are key levers in this transformation.



DOSES OF INNOVATION

SPEAKERS:

Maureen Gordon, Maple Leaf Adventures

Cecelia Dick, Songhees Nation

Nadine Pinto, The Travel Corporation

This year's Doses of Innovation were truly inspiring and covered different aspects of people, planet and prosperity.

Maureen Gordon shared the story of the Marine Debris Removal Initiative. In fall 2020 and spring 2021, the Small Ship Tour Operators Association of BC collaborated with five First Nations and the Government of BC to remove 340 tonnes (750,000 pounds) of marine debris from 1000 km of coastline. This initiative was truly a bright spot that saved businesses and protected jobs during the COVID-19 pandemic. It also demonstrated the power of collaboration and trust to restore and regenerate ecosystems.

Cecelia Dick walked us through her Nation's journey to develop a Memorandum of Reconciliation with tourism stakeholders, representing unique partnerships that will honor the lands and traditions of the Songhees Nation.

Nadine Pinto highlighted how The Travel Corporation used the UN Sustainable Development Goals and associated targets to develop Make Travel Matter Experiences and create measurable, impactful programs across 40 unique travel brands.