2018 CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS PAPER

A Collaborative National Dialogue On Innovation And The Contribution Of Tourism To Canada’s Sustainable Future.

VICTORIA, BC       JANUARY 21 – 24, 2018
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The IMPACT Conference was born to create space for inspiring and candid conversations about tourism and sustainability in Canada. Attendees from across the nation, including strong Indigenous representation and delegates from Canada’s north, expressed the desire for take-aways, case studies and implementable solutions, which are captured in this paper.

We are at a crossroads in tourism industry development. Tourism is one of Canada’s most successful sectors and we have enormous growth potential. Setting a sustainable trajectory for this growth requires collaboration across Canada to create value, not only economically, but ecologically and culturally.

Frankly, there has never been a better time to sell Canada. Our natural wonders are a beacon to global travellers. Though our landscape is vast, we are not immune to the impacts of overtourism. Destination strategies to reduce the impact of tourism on the environment, while enhancing respect for and preservation of culture offer a bright future in Canadian tourism.

Tourism is a powerful tool for positive change. This is already being done in small pockets of innovation and unique partnerships across Canada, as we witnessed with extraordinary case studies of carbon neutral operators, new Indigenous partnerships, traveller awareness campaigns and conservation research through tourism.

IMPACT 2018 Co-chairs Keith Henry and Dr. Rachel Dodds encouraged honest conversations that would allow us to explore tough and sometimes contradictory issues.

Canadian tourism is still in a position to make true sustainability a reality. The United Nations Nation’s 17 Global Goals for Sustainable Development offer a framework for tackling unwieldy global issues with specific indicators and benchmarks we can strive towards.
In the face of climate change, tourism is one of the most vulnerable economic sectors. Climate adaptation, disaster preparedness and recovery were key conversation themes. After a session on disaster preparedness, the conference delegation was rocked with a real tsunami warning. The next morning, the conversation shifted from being resilient to being pre-silient, ready to respond and adapt to the impacts of a changing climate.

While we understand the importance of mitigating climate change, the term sustainability is broader and can easily become a nebulous catch-all. By exploring the question: “What are we trying to sustain in Canada”, we categorized the responses into four themes: Ecology & Environment, Community & Sense of Place, Culture & Heritage, and the Economy.

First and foremost, we need a vibrant and profitable tourism sector to drive innovation. Year-round strategies to address seasonality and regional dispersion, as an example, can support a balanced experience for residents, year-round employment and operator revenue, and reduce environmental impacts that are associated with peak seasonality.

Tourism can not only contribute to but lead a sustainable future in Canada. There is a growing global demand for authentic tourism experiences. We must aim higher—sustainability is no longer enough and we need restorative tourism. We have many challenges, but we also have a world of opportunity.

Delegates expressed the need for local conversations between operators, local government, First Nations, destinations and academics covering the same topics at a destination level. The IMPACTx concept was created to allow destinations to host local IMPACT sessions and create action plans that will adopt regionally-relevant sustainable tourism solutions.

The conversations and outcomes have been captured in this paper to help us move forward and convert words into action over the years to come. We believe we have a great foundation, but this is just the beginning. IMPACT National 2019 will build on this foundation, exploring new topics and diving deeper into solutions and opportunities to create a sustainable future, through tourism, in Canada.
RECOGNITION

Co-Chairs

Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
Dr. Rachel Dodds, Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University

Co-Founders

Staff & Volunteers

Staff
Adam Frederick
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Rebecca Blachut
Lindsay Doucette
Ali Ruddy
Ana Gomez
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Deanna Young
Karma Brophy
Taryn Stewart

Speakers and Panelists

Thank you to all the speakers and panelists who contributed to the writing of this paper.
Alex Berlyand, Co-Founder, Parkbus
Amy Thacker, CEO, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association
Angela Nagy, CEO, Green Step Solutions Inc.
Ashli Akins, Founder, Mosqoy
Ben Ryan, Chief Commercial Officer, Air North
Blake Rogers, Executive Director, TIA Yukon
Brady Smith, Executive Director, Squamish Lil’wot Cultural Centre
Brett Soberg, CEO, Eagle Wing Whale Watching Tours
Christina Clarke, Executive Director, Songhees Nation
Christine Willow, Partner, Chemistry Consulting Group
Darren Reeder, Executive Director, Banff Lake Louise Hospitality Association
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Frank Antoine, TOTA & Quaaout Lodge
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Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC)
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Kirby BigChild, Rocky Native Friendship Centre
Michelle Molnar, David Suzuki Foundation
Nancy Guyon, Government of Nunavut
Paul Nursey, President & CEO, Tourism Victoria
Robert Sandford, EPCOR Chair, Water & Climate Security, United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment & Health
Rod Taylor, CEO, Legacy Tourism Group
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Suzanne Reeves, Sure Media
Walt Judas, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC)

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Jill Doucette
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Eryn Beddoes

The founders would like to recognize that the 2018 IMPACT conference took place on the traditional, unceded territory of the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.
POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

From municipal to national, our government officials were out in force to share their vision, listen to the industry and continue to address the opportunities and challenges tourism brings.

“Our best years are still to come. It is our job to encourage this growth and welcome more people to our beautiful country. But we must also be responsible in the way that we do it. We must be respectful and do it in a sustainable way.” – HONORABLE BARDISH CHAGGER

Elected Officials

Honorable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and MP, Waterloo

Elizabeth May OC, Leader of the Green Party of Canada and MP, Saanich-Gulf Islands

Yvonne Jones Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs and MP, Labrador

Gord Johns MP, Courtenay-Alberni

Lisa Helps, Mayor, City of Victoria

Unelected Officials

Nancy Guyon & Sebastian Charge, Government of Nunavut

Catherine Foskett, Director of Policy, Tourism Branch, Government of Canada

Andrew Little, Director, Intergovernmental Relations, BC Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture

Crown Corporations & Government Agencies

Honorable Bardish Chagger, Minister of Small Business and Tourism, Leader of the Government in the House of Commons and MP, Waterloo
To kick-off the IMPACT Sustainability Travel & Tourism Conference 2018, delegates were welcomed at a reception at the Parkside Hotel & Spa, which illustrates best practices in sustainability. Guests partook in a culinary grazing feast catered by environmental award-winning Truffles Catering and came together to begin a journey to shape Canada’s future as a global leader in sustainable tourism for generations to come.
The conference kicked off with a tour of Victoria’s Inner Harbour to observe sustainability and policy in action. Attendees set off on Eagle Wing Tours’ ‘Forever Wild’ carbon neutral catamaran to learn from Songhees Nation how they are leveraging their rich history to create a burgeoning tourism business. Lunch was provided by Songhees Events & Catering as the tour stopped at the new Victoria International Marina, which models sustainable and environmental best practices in all facets of their business.

Jacques Sirois, Founder, Victoria Harbour Migratory Bird Sanctuary (MBS), leading a tour from the Forever Wild. We explored part of this narrow tidal channel extending 7 km inland, ending in a small tidal basin with extensive eelgrass beds. www.friendsofvhmbs.org

Visiting the Greater Victoria Harbour Authority’s Fisherman’s Wharf to learn of the many initiatives they have in play to protect and preserve the environment. www.gvha.ca

Environmental stewardship is a core value at Eagle Wing Tours, Canada’s first 100% carbon neutral whale-watching company and members of 1% for the Planet. www.eaglewingtours.com

Councillor Garry Sam of Songhees Nation shared the viewpoint of the Lekwungen People with stories of their past, examples of present successes and plans for the future as it relates to their traditional territories of the Inner and Outer Harbour of Victoria. www.songheesnation.ca

Victoria International Marina is a venture committed to protecting BC’s pristine coastline. On land and water, from design to operations, they are devoted to preserving the harbour and local environment. www.vimarina.ca
CANADA: WHAT ARE WE SUSTAINING?

Facilitator: David F. Goldstein, President & CEO, Destination Canada

Speakers: Elizabeth Becker, Author & Journalist; Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC); Dr. Rachel Dodds, Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University; Paul Nursey, President & CEO, Tourism Victoria.

In our first session, a panel of tourism experts from industry, academia and the Indigenous community each tried to answer the question, “What will be the legacy of a responsible and vibrant tourism industry in Canada?”

We are living in the golden age of tourism in Canada. Here’s why:

1. The travel & tourism sector is one of the most successful in terms of growth
2. There have never been so many tools for marketing as there are now. This makes marketing more efficient
3. There has never been a better time to sell Canada! Our natural wonders are a beacon to global travellers

This is the perfect time to grapple with the concept of a sustainable and responsible tourism industry. Overbooked, Elizabeth Becker’s critical analysis of the impacts of ‘runaway’ tourism, showed us the variety of pathways this industry can take. Employing one of every twelve people in the world, tourism has massively shaped our world economy.

Travel industry practices and their long-term ramifications can be positive, or negative. They can be inclusive of and celebrate local culture, or it can destroy it. They can provide economic rationale for protecting local ecosystems, or they can pave them over.

Canada still has an emerging tourism market. This is our chance to shape it.

“Unlike many other places in the world, Canada – and I suspect British Columbia in particular – is still in a position to make true sustainability possible. But addressing the climate threat will not be truly possible in this province or anywhere until all sectors including tourism become not only sustainable but restorative… there is opportunity in this.” – DAVID GOLDSTEIN

#TOURISMLEGACY
What are we trying to sustain?

Sustainability is an overarching term whose meaning becomes diluted and withdrawn with repeated use. In this context, we needed to dig deeper. What exactly are we trying to sustain, maintain, conserve and protect in the context of tourism? This question is deeply personal. What we are trying to sustain depends on a person’s culture, values, sense of place and unique experiences. To kick off the discussion, our panel lent three perspectives.

**ACADEMIC PERSPECTIVE**  
**– DR. RACHEL DODDS: CANADA IN THE WORLD**
In the global context, Canada is well-positioned to take a leadership role in sustainable tourism. To do so, we need to focus on visitor yield, instead of simply increased visitor numbers, and we need to start planning long term. Our cities act as gateways to extensive, beautiful natural spaces, and we need to manage overcrowding so that our parks continue to feel wild and untouched. We also need to sustain the diversity that makes us unique as a country. In academia, there is a need for academics to work closely with industry to ensure that research is more relevant.

**INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE**  
**– KEITH HENRY - THE FUTURE OF INDIGENOUS TOURISM IN CANADA**
There is a growing global demand for authentic Indigenous tourism experiences. Given this increased demand, it is pertinent to consider how will tourism affect future generations of Indigenous people. If done responsibly, there is a huge opportunity for tourism to bring dormant cultures back to life and become a significant driver for remote communities. We need to be ready with appropriate tourism offerings, policies and programs that are lead by and for Indigenous people.

**INDUSTRY PERSPECTIVE**  
**– PAUL NURSE – THE LEGACY DESTINATIONS**
In destinations like Victoria, the small to medium entrepreneurs are crucial. Victoria is focusing on seasonal strategies to drive business to slower times of the year instead of over-crowding in peak seasons. Another strategy is regional dispersion – to spread out the business and therefore the benefits of tourism.

**GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE**  
**– ELIZABETH BECKER – LEADING THE WAY**
Central to all of these efforts is consensus. The community, the government and industry should come together and agree on the goals of sustainable tourism and then reflect them in regulations, laws and best practices. Over time and with adjustments, tourism will lead them way to healthy Canadian communities, thriving businesses and preserving Canada’s environmental bounty.

“In addition to spectacular natural landscapes, British Columbia and Canada possess remarkably vibrant Indigenous cultures. Few places in the world are as rich in traditional and local knowledge and possess such a deep sense of place. We are very lucky.” – DAVID GOLDSTEIN
Using audience voting technology, the delegation also had a chance to weigh in. Each delegate answered in one word, “What should we be sustaining through a positive and vibrant tourism industry across Canada?”

Here are the results:

![Word Cloud](image)

These results can be summarized into four themes: Ecology & Environment, Community & Sense of Place, Culture & Heritage, and the Economy. The remainder of the IMPACT conference explored these themes in more detail.
REALITY CHECK: STATE OF THE CLIMATE

Facilitator: Jill Doucette, Founder, Synergy Enterprises

Speaker: Robert Sandford, EPCOR Chair, Water & Climate Security, United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment & Health

Robert Sanford’s “State of the Climate and Targets” speech:

Climate change is happening. Atmospheric rivers are most important to watch. Fire season length increases by 10-50 days over much of the boreal region according to Canada stats.

Why aren’t we alarmed by this? Avoiding the reality, climate disruption is happening faster than we know. Climate change is not a hoax and it is already impacting travel and tourism.

Through my conversations in preparation for this conference, I have realized that viewing tourism through a climate change lens is different from viewing climate change through a tourism lens.

The rate and manor in which water moves in hydraulic cycle is accelerating, profound changes relate to how much more water a warmer atmosphere can hold. Increasing water in the atmosphere by two degrees means it will carry as much as 14% more water vapour. Four degrees will carry 28%—and this changes EVERYTHING. Water vapour of this quantity forms atmospheric rivers and corridors of intense wind. This moist air, can carry 10X average daily discharge of St Laurence River, causing flooding in magnitudes never witnessed before.

If your business is linked to snow you may wish to pay attention to this trend.

Because of warming, the ratio of snow to liquid water is changing. We lost 300 glaciers in Rocky Mountain National Parks region alone between 1920 and 2005; 90% are expected to disappear by end of century. Loss of glacial ice is symptom of larger problem. Snowpack and snow cover are declining by 17% every decade.

Higher mean annual temperature result in increased wildfire risk. A slower and wavy jetstream causes them to intensify and persist longer. Based on current CO₂ levels alone, scientists predict 75-125% increase in amount of area each year by end of this century.

From a climate perspective, we better get used to putting out wild fires.

Extended drought makes trees more vulnerable to wildfires. In California, 120 million trees died during the recent drought, fuelling horrific fires, and the effect does not end there. Rains fell over places where fire made soil impermeable and brought floods and mud slides. We should expect the same here in BC and should prepare for it and mitigate the risks as much as possible.

Arctic snow cover is decreasing by 22% per decade and Arctic ice is declining at rate of 12% per decade. Now, multiyear ice is disappearing and not as much ice is reforming. This presents two linked concerns: i) the impact of loss of Arctic ice on weather patterns and ii) potential for spontaneous release of methane presently entombed in Arctic ice into the atmosphere.

Due to climate change, we are witnessing a change in the Northern Hemisphere Jetstream pattern. The first sign that something was changing was increased ‘waviness’, bringing Arctic air to lower latitudes than the past, and moving eastward at a slower pace.
Warmer atmospheric temperatures do not automatically translate into warmer weather.

Sea ice loss makes jet streams wavier, leading to more sea ice loss—this creates a positive feedback loop. For reasons such as these, it is imperative that we reduce our greenhouse gas emissions as swiftly as possible. The Arctic is now warming 5-8X faster than the equatorial region which disrupts the entire climate of Northern Hemisphere.

As ocean warms, frozen marine sediments that contain methane are thawing, causing them to rise to the surface in great bubble plumes as large as a kilometer across! These methane releases have the potential to cause a greenhouse effect 200X that of CO$_2$, contributing to 50% to global heating effect.

So, why aren’t we really alarmed?

Scientists do not make rash announcement. They loathe the idea of falling into trap of pareidolia (seeing pattern where none exists). Hence, they are overly cautious in their statements, and announcements become diluted with nervous fear of being challenged.

Ten years is not enough time to distinguish the effects of changes in Arctic system from other random events. Climate disruption is moving faster than science can keep up! We don’t know where the tipping point is, likely we won’t know where tipping point was until we’ve passed it.

Without stable water and climate regimes, sustainability will remain a moving target for us and the rest of the world—and one of the economic sectors most vulnerable to climate change is tourism! This is something you must think about, not sometime in the future but now. The discussion in this conference has shown that Canada is still in a position to make true sustainability a reality, unlike other places in a world. This will not become a reality until all sectors (including tourism) become not only sustainable, but restorative.

Sustainability is not enough, we must be restorative—environmentally and culturally.

We have remarkable indigenous culture. The opportunity still exists for everyone to get into the closest thing to that black canoe toward living with others, in the best place on earth. I urge the tourism sector to keep that in mind going forward.

Society is a lifeboat carrying us all over water toward the future.
INNOVATION EXAMPLE: WASTE TO ENERGY

Speaker: Jody Epp, Manager, Business Development, Assured Renewables

Waste-to-energy systems and biodigesters are a sustainable clean energy solutions that turn waste products into valuable resources.

Imagine being able to breakdown food waste in 24 hours. Now, imagine that the output from that process could go directly into your garden or be burned as biofuel.

The technology has arrived to enable regions to reconfigure their waste management programs to close the loop, avoid the landfill and turn all waste into resources.

Biodigesters

In the tourism and hospitality industry, the management of organic waste from restaurants and resorts is a regular concern. Waste service providers charge a fee to pick up organic waste, which is then either shipped to landfill or at best, processed at the nearest organic waste processing facility, if the municipality has one available.

Rather than shipping organic waste off-site, an effective solution for resorts, hotels, and restaurants of all sizes is on-site processing of organic waste. An organic waste digester such as Eco-Grow or Bio-Nova can process organic waste into a valuable biofuel product. Food waste and organics are fed into the digester which provides optimum conditions for microbes to break down organic materials. What’s left is a dry by-product that can be sold as biomass, burned in a boiler for heat, or simply spread on lawns and gardens as compost. With a biodigester, businesses of all sizes can reduce landfill and transportation emissions, lower waste service charges, and produce a valuable by-product.

Waste to Energy

Until products are redesigned and industries are restructured to produce only materials that are recyclable or compostable, we will be left with trash. Traditionally, unsorted waste and unrecyclable materials have been buried in landfills. As materials decompose, landfills produce methane, contributing to global warming.

A temporary stop-gap solution to the waste problem is gasification. Gasifiers such as the 25 tonne per day unit in Husavik, Iceland, turns municipal waste into thermal energy. Waste is loaded into a chamber where it is heated to produce a synthesis gas, or ‘syngas’, a combination of hydrogen, carbon dioxide, methane and carbon monoxide that can be burned relatively cleanly to produce thermal energy. In this system, syngas from the gasified municipal waste is used in a boiler to heat water in a district heating loop.

Gasifiers such as these reduce the need to truck waste to landfill while also lessening the dependence on fossil fuels for heat and power generation. As such they are an effective solution for large resorts, remote locations and municipalities. The City of Edmonton’s new Waste to Biofuels facility has helped achieve an 80% diversion rate of


waste from landfill³.

_calls to action_

**Policy Makers**
- Municipal: Consider a gasifier in your location to process municipal waste while also producing useful thermal energy.
- Promote the use of on-site biodigesters in your municipality to reduce the strain on the municipal solid waste system.

**Operators**
- If your business produces 125 lbs. of organic waste per day, consider processing onsite using a biodigester to eliminate or reduce organic waste pickups.
- In more remote locations with no organic waste treatment available, consult with other businesses to group-buy a biodigester to process organics.

**Further Research/Reading**
- City of Edmonton: Waste to Biofuels and Chemicals Facility [https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/garbage_waste/biofuels-facility.aspx](https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/garbage_waste/biofuels-facility.aspx)
GLOBAL GOALS FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
Facilitator: Jill Doucette, Founder, Synergy Enterprises
Speaker: Robert Sandford, EPCOR Chair, Water & Climate Security, United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment & Health

This session introduced the 17 Sustainable Development Goals developed by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and explored how this framework can help operators, policy makers, and destinations create a resilient and restorative future in a changing climate.

The climate is changing. Our lives and the lives of the species we depend on are threatened by ocean acidification, raging weather events, glacial sea ice melt and global mean temperature rise. The tourism sector is especially vulnerable to climate disruption. Climatic events such as fires, floods and other extreme weather conditions disrupt flights, damage and close roads, delay ferries, and destabilize local economies.

The tourism industry is responsible for 8% of global carbon emissions.4

Our natural assets, including forests, reefs, and entire communities are being damaged. As mean temperatures rise, more water, moving quickly through the global hydrological cycle creates incredibly dense atmosphere zones. These zones pick up energy and cause powerful hurricanes, rains, floods, and in other areas, heat waves, dust storms and relentless droughts. Some of the worlds areas are now reaching 60 degrees Celsius, which is unlivable for humankind.

In California, drought conditions cause the fire risk to jump “off the charts” under the fire risk formula—carefully calculated based on precipitation and heat. The historic four-year drought had a knock-on affect on California’s tourism industry with hundreds of businesses affected. Inland water recreational outfitters closed as early as June due to fire warnings and lack of water. The drought caused seven major ski resorts in the Lake Tahoe region to close early because of limited snowfall, and now ski resorts are seeking to boost their warm weather attractions to adapt to the changing climate conditions5.

The cost of damage caused by natural disasters in Canada broke records in 2016, at $4.9 billion, due to significant wildfires, floods and ice storms6. According to the Insurance Bureau of Canada, damage costs have been increasing steadily since the 1980s and the IBC are calling on all levels of government to implement expansive climate policies and improve disaster preparedness. This vast amount of funding needed to patch the damage caused by climate change will only increase with delayed action to reduce emissions.

To combat climate change, we need to accelerate action in the tourism sector.

The next decade will be the challenge of the century to course-correct and change our trajectory. As part of their Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the UN has set a goal for 2030 to ‘take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts’.

6 Tania Kohut, “Natural disasters smashed Canada insurance claims record in 2016: it’s only going to get worse”, Global News (January 6, 2017).
Using the SDGs as a framework, the tourism sector can grow and meet the needs of the present, without compromising the needs of future generations.

Climate action leaders within the tourism industry have voluntarily began to measure, reduce and offset emissions. These best practices should be celebrated and recognized, but we must also remember that these voluntary measures do not constitute the majority of the sector.

We need a new sense of time that includes a forward outlook to the generations to come. This requires longer timelines for planning—in addition to 3-year plans, we need 30-year trajectories. The UN Sustainable Development Goals can provide a framework for destinations, operators and local government to set the course for long-term impacts.

Annual themes can be established to tackle one or more goals, allowing for focused action among stakeholders.

Which goals will you advance?

“Goal 4: To leverage education to build awareness about the value of our natural resources in Canada.” – STEPHANIE SIROIS, PARKS CANADA

“Goal 17: To build partnerships to protect old growth forest and sustainably manage young forests.” – ELISABETH HAZELL, SIERRA CLUB BC

“Goal 6: To design with water conservation measures, like cisterns, in new and renovated resort projects.” – JC SCOTT, JC SCOTT ECO DESIGN
**CASE STUDY: International Decade for Action – Water for Sustainable Development**

The United Nations formally announced 2018-2028 as the Decade for Water. With climate change, we can expect major changes in water availability and quality. Within the SDGs, goals 6, 15, 14, 2, 1, 9 and 5 are applicable to water.

In Tofino, BC and the Capital Regional District, BC, Synergy Enterprises conducted a water audit program for hotels with high water use. This program identified 10-20% in water conservation opportunities, with an average payback of 1.5 years. The most common recommendations included shifting to hyper low flow aerators, toilet and showerhead replacements, reduced irrigation using rain sensors and native landscaping, installing cisterns for water capture in summer months (irrigation use), and replacement of water-cooled ice machines with air-cooled ice machines.

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**AN ARGUMENT NOT JUST FOR RESTORATIVE DEVELOPMENT, BUT FOR PRE-SILENCE.**

*By Robert Sandford, EPCOR Chair, Water & Climate Security, United Nations University, Institute for Water, Environment & Health.*

Sustainable development has been defined in many ways, but the most frequently quoted definition is from *Our Common Future*, also known as the Brundtland Report: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.”

Our situation at the moment, however, is that in so substantially altering the fundamental composition of the global atmosphere, we have generated effects and impacts that are cascading throughout all of nature. We keep talking about adaptation in service of resilience; but resilience implies protecting what we have now. We need to be pre-silient; we need to protect what we have certainly, but more than that we need to adapt now for what is to come. To be sustainable, development in the future must not only be environmentally neutral, it must also be both restorative and pre-silient.

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### Calls to Action

**Policy Makers**

- Host a collaborative dialogue with local tourism operators, NGOs and destination marketers to discuss the SDGs and what goals are a priority for your community. Use the goals as your common language for shifting towards a tourism market that is resilient and works to restore natural systems and cultural roots.

- Use the SDG indicators as key metrics in strategic planning, land use, economic development and policy creation.
Operators

- Use the SDGs to establish annual “themes” or “focus areas” to channel your donations, volunteerism and partnerships to advance sustainable tourism.
- In seasonal kick-off meetings, share the 17 goals with your employees and engage them in the process of choosing key focus areas, and the actions that can advance them.
- Embed the SDGs in your Corporate Social Responsibility Report, sustainability page on your website and other content.
- Developing voluntourism products that facilitate conservation and community restoration that advance the goals.

Destinations (DMOs)

- Use the SDGs in annual and long term strategic planning.
- Solicit feedback from membership on the most important SDGs to advance.

Academia

- Utilize the indicators of the SDGs to provide the tourism industry with insight into how their local community or industry is faring with the targets of the goals.
WHO IS THE CANADIAN CONSUMER?

Facilitator: Deirdre Campbell, Managing Director – Canada, Beattie Taran
Speakers: Dr. Rachel Dodds, Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality and Tourism Management, Ryerson University; Suzanne Reeves, Sure Media; Kelly Galaski, Planeterra & G Adventures

The profile of the Canadian consumer is shifting as Millennials displace Baby Boomers and become the next major travel cohort in Canada. The market is not currently targeting the increasing number of travellers who are seeking sustainable experiences and responsible operators. This session explores the gap between what destinations are saying and what visitors want to hear.

The Millennial Traveller

Baby Boomers, the generation that has dominated the travel market for many years, are retiring and entering into years of fixed income. Hot on their heels are Millennials, those born between the early 1980s and the late 1990s. This generation represents the next major cohort of travellers and exhibits stark differences in travel preferences and purchase choices.

While Millennials are made up of several sub-groups with different psychographic values and demographics, Destination Canada has found the following traits apply to most Millennial travelers.

Millennials are hyper-connected travellers who use the internet and social networks more than any other group to plan and share their adventures. The Millennial traveller is likely to prioritize making real connections with people and having authentic experiences that are social, engaging and fun – all things that make for good social media content!
They are also concerned about the impact of climate change on their future and are replacing buying things with having meaningful experiences. They believe they can make a difference in choosing where to travel and what to do.

**Millennials have three drivers for purchase choice:**

1. Fun & Exciting
2. Physical Challenge (Intellectual challenge is good too!)
3. Discovery, Learning & Education

**The Sustainable Traveller**

Canadians travel more domestically than internationally. After all, we have a big country to explore! A research survey conducted in November 2017 gathered information from 1,500 domestic travellers across Canada. Based on past behaviours, the study found that 25% of these travellers were deemed “sustainable.”

The sustainable traveller seeks engagement and authenticity. These travellers are more likely to decide to not travel to a destination whose reputation is tarnished by lack of ethics, or where culture and heritage isn’t highlighted or celebrated.

These travellers expect companies and organizations to share their values, without having to ask for these values to be shared. They are likely to be impressed by a business who showcases their social and environmental efforts. One of their major concerns is experiences which seem exploitive.

The data also shows these travellers are willing to pay a premium for a responsible travel experience. These customers “put their money where their mouth is” and are willing to invest in unique, sustainable experiences.

**Both destinations and tour operators should consider the growing market of conscious travellers, and how they are communicating their sustainable destinations and experiences. What we work to promote is what we inevitably create.**
A recent study surveyed 1500 Canadian respondents, 18+, who had travelled at least once in the past year. The Sustainable Traveller was defined as those who had expressed a statistically representative number of the following behaviours:

- Chose tourism companies which proactively protect the environment
- Decided not to travel to destination where local culture in not respected
- Believe tourists have a responsibility to do what they can to protect the environment
- Paid extra for travel products with have lower negative environmental impacts
- Paid extra for environmentally responsible or sustainable tourism
- Decided not to stay at accommodations that were not certified to be sustainable or eco or green-labelled
- Paid more for a tour or accommodation that claimed it was socially responsible and/or eco-friendly
- Preferred not to go on holiday rather than visit a place where tour operators exploit local workers

The findings of the study were:

- 25% were defined as sustainable travellers, 50% average, 25% don’t care
- Canadians travel more domestically than internationally
- Younger people have a greater propensity for sustainable tourism than higher age groups - (18-34): 20% vs (55-65): 16%
- Women make up more than 50% of sustainable Travellers
- Income does not dictate sustainable travel behaviour. The more sustainable travellers earn between $60-80,000 per year
- Travellers with a graduate degree are more likely to be sustainable travellers - the more educated you are the higher the propensity to choose sustainable behaviours
- Those who are more sustainable also travel more often (average of 7 domestic trips and 5 international trips)
- They are also more likely to travel on organized tours 2.6 : 1.7
- 46% travel to see friends/family, 26% city breaks/gateways, 16% all inclusives, 12% other

Sharing Sustainability Values

University of Victoria’s Peter B. Gustavson School of Business conducts an annual survey to determine which were the most trusted brands in Canada. Among the top are WestJet, Fairmont, MEC, Costco and CAA. The differentiator? They did a great job of talking about their values. Sharing sustainability values is often a win-win for destinations, because in addition to building trust, it can attract guests that share their values and bring an appreciation and respect for the local culture.

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7 Dr. Rachel Dodds, Ryerson University; Mark Holmes, Guelph University (November 2017), unpublished preliminary results.
Despite the persuasive reasons to speak to responsible tourism values, destinations and operators often miss the mark when communicating them to travellers. The use of vague, flowery language and confusing labels and certifications can overwhelm visitors. When on-the-ground actions don’t match the professed values, the consumer can be left feeling betrayed. On the other hand, the fear of green-washing leads to green-hushing, and the exemplary players in the industry often say nothing at all.

The words ‘green’, ‘eco-’, and ‘sustainable’ have experienced mis-use; therefore, these words have suffered a decrease in consumer trust. This doesn’t necessarily mean a new vocabulary is needed. Destinations can use these words, but they must define them and give them context. A ‘sustainable hotel’ is only sustainable if it understands its particular impact and has worked to reduce and mitigated it. A brand must do the work to disclose the policies, values and specific efforts behind each buzz word.

A good example of these “proof relations” can be found in Costa Rica at the Cayuga Collection. President Hans Pfister wrote a blog post about giving up $1M in revenue every year by refusing to sell bottled water. Instead, they educated their guests about how to reduce their plastic waste when travelling. This honest and up-front blog about a specific initiative helps build consumer trust.

Operators can also communicate their choices to source and serve local food and beverage options, and hire and train locally. This is a critical part of local and economic sustainability of a regional tourism industry.

In these strategic communications, it is important to engage a broad range of stakeholders to ensure the messages conveyed are authentic and appeal to the offerings of the marketplace. This is especially true in Indigenous tourism.
Google Search Activity

Travellers are increasingly using online tools to search for their next travel adventure making search engine optimization an absolute must for operators and destinations.

The question is, what words should we be using to communicate the sustainable or values aligned travel offerings?

In this session, attendees were asked to imagine they were booking a sustainable travel getaway, and complete their own Google search to find destinations. The table below summarizes the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Search</th>
<th>First Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Responsible Travel”</td>
<td>Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Glacier Trekking”</td>
<td>Iceland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Authentic Cultural Travel”</td>
<td>Tanzania &amp; Costa Rica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Culturally Enriching Experiences”</td>
<td>Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Cultural Traditions”</td>
<td>Greece</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Sustainable Cultural Gastronomy Tours”</td>
<td>Harlem &amp; PEI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Authentic Beach Experience”</td>
<td>Dominican Republic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Off-Grid Ski Lodge”</td>
<td>Algonquin &amp; Rockies</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Calls to Action

Operators

- Make your values and supporting policies available to the public.
- Be bold, do the right thing and stand by it.
- Share your values, initiatives, and story with guests. Include environmental education, codes of conduct, cultural awareness, in standard communications and tours.
- Educate staff about regional environmental and cultural facts and customs, how travellers can reduce their environmental footprint, respect local cultures and customs, and about the business’s own initiatives. They are the stewards of your message.

Media

- Encourage responsible travel behaviour.
- Highlight organizations that are ‘doing it right’.
Destinations (DMOs)

- DMOs help bridge the knowledge gap to help conscious consumers access the information they want regarding sustainable and responsible travel.

- Take control of your destination; conserve what makes the destination special, unique and appealing and communicate the message to the traveller that they must comply with your policies in regards to waste, noise, supporting local businesses, etc.
CASE STUDY: G Adventures

G Adventures is a Canadian adventure travel pioneer offering the widest selection of affordable small group tours, safaris and expeditions to more than 100 countries on all continents.

In the adventure travel market, G Adventures is a widely trusted and respected brand. They are also exemplary in how they speak of their values and communicate their reciprocity with communities.

The company started in 1990 by trekking people to rural Indigenous communities in the Amazon. In 2003, the founder of G Adventures started a philanthropic initiative; a non-profit called Planeterra, to give back to destination communities. Over time the company saw that the potential impact of its growing volume of travellers could best be realized by developing tourism microenterprises in partnership with destination communities. Planeterra now manages over 50 social enterprises in 34 countries, included in over 200 G Adventures itineraries, that benefit women, at-risk youth, and rural and Indigenous communities.

In 2017, G Adventures surveyed 3,700 travellers to determine what terms resonated with them. The majority of respondents associated more with “responsible travel” (57%) vs “sustainable tourism” (39%). Their marketing team used this information to alter their digital content. They also identified that on tours, it was important to the traveller to have “local” experiences, have direct and hands-on interactions, local guides, and opportunities to purchase handicrafts from local artisans.
G Adventures has seen tremendous growth, due to the popularity of the local and authentic experience. They have used this popularity to influence consumer practices. For example, in 2014 with the introduction of a robust animal welfare policy, this involved discontinuing then-popular elephant riding experiences, knowing there would be a need for educating customers as part of this evolution.

“We are doing some things that the customers aren’t necessarily asking for. We have changed our products and then educated the customers about why we did that.” - Kelly Galaski

G Adventures’ values are embedded in policies through G Adventures for Good. Their responsible travel program includes policies and practices around animal welfare, child welfare, supporting local, responsible travel with Indigenous people, and promoting responsible traveller behaviour. To further educate the traveller about responsible travel, G Adventures created an online learning program called “Travel Better” which can be accessed at gadventures.com/travel-better.

Feature Programs

50-in-5 Campaign: $2.5M in funding to Planeterra to establish 50 new community enterprises in five years (by 2020). Planeterra is more than halfway to its goal in 2018. These projects benefitting at-risk women, youth and Indigenous communities can be found at Planeterra.org.

One such example is Bike with Purpose -Kickstarted in partnership with Ocean Academy (a social enterprise high school on Caye Caulker, Belize), Bike with Purpose is a youth-led bike tour included in G Adventures tours for over 2000 travellers annually that provides youth opportunities for tourism training on the island.

A partnership with World Animal Protection to support their Proving Demand Working Group is working to establish demand for elephant-friendly tourism venues. G Adventures and other participant companies provides WAP with data on what’s driving interest in alternative activities, which locations are ideal for travel companies; WAP then takes that information to the elephant venues to try to help them shift towards being elephant-friendly.
FLOOD, FIRE, FROST

Facilitator: Amy Thacker, CEO, Cariboo Chilcotin Coast Tourism Association

Speakers: Dave Butler, Director of Sustainability, CMH; Walt Judas, CEO, Tourism Industry Association of BC (TIABC); Deirdre Campbell, Managing Director – Canada, Beattie Tartan

Is your destination prepared for increasing extreme weather events? Drawing lessons from the recent floods, fires and frosts experienced across Canada, how can destinations prepare for and mitigate risk?

Canada has a reputation as a safe and beautiful destination. Increasing frequency and intensity of extreme weather events puts that reputation at risk.

Heat waves, floods, fires and severe storms are devastating communities and disrupting the tourism industry globally. Impacts are felt in daily operations, seasonal continuity, destination reputation and ultimately the bottom line.
“No destination should assume they will not be affected by the climate change.”
– UN WORLD TOURISM ORG.

To mitigate risk for tour operators, tourism operators and guests, the key is planning and forethought on the part of DMOs, TIAs, operators and government. Creating a plan and building the necessary relationships now, ensures that when a crisis hits, help is close at hand.

“Emergency management is a shared responsibility, involving every level of government, local authorities, businesses and volunteers.” – AMY THACKER

In 2015, Destination British Columbia/TMC formed a sub-committee with the objective of developing a tourism emergency plan (BC’s previous Emergency Management Plan focused on residents and did not include considerations for tourists). As a result, last summer, when BC’s interior was struck with severe forest fires, tourists were rebooked and redirected to other areas, saving their holidays and the region’s reputation.

“Being a sustainable industry means being prepared.” – DAVE BUTLER

STRATEGIC APPROACH TO EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
Reputation management and communication during response & recovery are elements of particular importance to the tourism industry in emergency planning.

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESOURCES
- PreparedBC: Guide for Tourism Operators
- PreparedBC: Emergency Plan for Tourism Operators
- Emergency Info BC
- FireSmart Canada
CASE STUDY: Fire at Circle W Hi Hium Fishing Camp

Located on the outskirts of Clinton, BC, Circle W Hi Hium Fishing Camp has been offering guests a quintessential BC fishing experience for over 100 years.

In July of 2017, for the first time ever, Circle W Hi Hium was forced to evacuate due to an encroaching wildfire. Staff and guests were forced to leave, while the blaze burnt the camp’s two 100-year-old cabins to the ground. Hi Hium lost all business that year, which was the worst wildfire season on record.

Despite the ravages of the fires, the camp is back up and running this season and is looking forward to hosting guests in their remaining fishing cabins.

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Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- Provincial: Include tourism considerations in provincial emergency management plan. Send Emergency Preparedness Ministry to IMPACT 2019 to learn from policy stakeholders.
- Regulate local authorities to consider and include tourism operators and industry in their prevention, planning, response and recovery.
- Enact a disaster financial assistance framework that can be quickly activated as required (based on the agriculture framework).

Operators

- Develop an Emergency Management Plan. Be prepared to change your business model or adjust your product offering.
- Ensure your crisis communications plan is updated and spokespeople are trained.
- Update your contacts with critical resources for when a crisis hits.
- Ensure all senior employees are signed up for Emergency Alerts to their smart phones

Destinations (DMOs)

- Connect with municipal and provincial governments to align emergency management plans.
- Organize Emergency Management Plan development sessions for your businesses and offer issues management and crisis preparedness workshops for stakeholders.
- Develop an emergency management plan for your own organization.
- Ensure your media relations team and key organizational spokespeople are trained in crisis communications.
Further Research/Reading

- City of Kamloops Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- District of Logan Lake: Community Wildfire Protection Plan
- BC Emergency Management System
SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: EXPLORING INDIGENOUS SOLUTIONS

Facilitators: Dené Sinclair, Director of Marketing, ITAC; Keith Henry, CEO, Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada (ITAC); Christina Clarke, Executive Director, Songhees Nation; Florence Dick, Tour Coordinator, Songhees Nation; Frank Antoine, TOTA & Quaaout Lodge; Casey Vanden Huevel, Director of Business Development & Partnerships, ITAC

Contributor: Dr. Sonya Graci, Associate Professor, Ted Rogers School of Hospitality & Tourism Management, Ryerson University

**What does it look like when tourism honours tradition and looks towards the future? Exemplified by many community-led initiatives including those led by Songhees Nation, tourism can be leveraged to redevelop connections with language, heritage and community.**

Building on the Sustainable Indigenous Tourism Symposium: Think Tank on Innovations in Community Based Tourism and Management was held on April 12 and 13, 2017 at Vancouver Island University in Nanaimo, BC. The Think Tank had three main objectives; identify key challenges and issues facing development and competitiveness of Indigenous tourism, share innovations in sustainable Indigenous tourism, identify how to support the stakeholders in Canada and abroad.

At the Think Tank, four talking circles were organized around key opportunity areas: community engagement and leadership, funding, knowledge mobilization/training and education, and cultural/environmental preservation and promotion. Breakout discussions at IMPACT were organized for the same topics with a focus on next steps and how to collaborate to strengthen Indigenous Tourism in Canada.

**Common Threads**

- There is a need to engage with Indigenous communities and build trust.
- Participants shared a fear of ‘doing the wrong thing’ or offending Indigenous people. This fear keeps people from reaching out to Indigenous communities, but it shouldn’t. If you are considerate and open to learning, you will be treated with equal respect.
- We need to acknowledge the similarities and differences between cultures and accept that different does not mean better or worse, simply, different.

**Break Out Group 1: Community Engagement and Leadership**

How do we ensure community engagement promotes a genuine understanding of community and ecological feasibility? How do we mentor and support Indigenous youth and future leaders in tourism?

This talking circle discussed the need to engage Indigenous communities and people in the earliest stages of planning, so that there is a clear understanding of the long-term vision, costs and benefits. Non-Indigenous stakeholders should be educated about the history of the community before discussions start, and traditional methods of communication (e.g. song and storytelling) should be considered.

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Successful role models are crucial to support Indigenous youth. These may be found within the community or in other Indigenous communities.

To ensure success in the long term, there must be constant re-affirmations of recognition and respect for Indigenous communities.

- **Key take-away:** The system needs to change the perception of Indigenous people from stakeholders to partners!

**Break Out Group 2: Funding**

What are the barriers to funding for Indigenous communities?

This talking circle acknowledged the difficulty Indigenous people face navigating through existing funding sources, and the need to make applications more accessible.

There was also a discussion of alternative funding methods, including partnerships and fundraisers.

- **Key take-away:** There needs to be federal initiative that will recognize the difficulty to navigate through the available funds and offer mentorship.
Break Out Group 3: Knowledge Mobilization/Training and Education

How can we effectively share best practices among stakeholders?

For this talking circle, the first step was to acknowledge the good work that has been done. Also discussed was the role of allies in sharing this knowledge.

- **Key take-away: Collaboration between First Nations is crucial!**

Break Out Group 4: Cultural and Environmental Preservation and Promotion

How do we promote authentic Indigenous cultural experiences and preserve the environment?

This talking circle discussed the effectiveness of simple but meaningful interactions between Indigenous people and visitors as a way to promote authenticity. Discussions also touched on the importance of Indigenous people knowing their own stories, so that they can be true to themselves and to their culture.

- **Key take-away: Be market ready!**

### Calls to Action

**All**

- Engage with Indigenous peoples and communities as partners, not stakeholders.
- Do your research: educate project stakeholders on the community’s history, culture, and relationship to their land before discussions start. Acknowledge and recognize differences between cultures.
- Build trust. Establish trust holders/champions within Indigenous communities.
- Consider traditional methods of communication vs. preferred methods.
- Explore innovative partnerships like IndigenousConnect, a collaboration between the South Island Prosperity Project and the Songhees Innovation Centre – a monthly, face-to-face forum with a goal to engage more First Nations communities in economic development and entrepreneurial endeavours. The objectives of the forum are to build our collective capacity for Indigenous prosperity—whether this means building entrepreneurial or management skills, or the Administrative capacity to start Band-owned businesses or joint ventures. The forums will culminate in a regional conference where we will bring many stakeholders together in a declaration of Indigenous Economic Development.
- Recognition and respect are key to success.

**Policy Makers**

- Implement federal initiative that addresses the challenges Indigenous communities face accessing available funding. Offer mentorship for communities to navigate the complex system, including follow up once funding is received.

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Indigenous Communities

- Continue to create long-term visions for the people.
- Identify role models within the community (e.g. schools).
- Explore alternate and innovative funding models (e.g. partnerships, fundraisers).
- Identify allies, including other communities and nations. How can we work together? Collaboration between First Nations is crucial. Opportunity to learn from challenges and successes. A rising tide floats all boats.
- Acknowledge and celebrate the good work that has already been done!
- Be authentic. Be true to self and culture. Ask yourself who you are as a community/Nation/people, and where did you come from?
- Teach. Show tourists how the land can sustain them as it has in the past. Share your stories.
- Interactions can be simple while still being meaningful.

LESSON FROM THE IMPACT TEAM

Partner with Indigenous tourism industry leadership as early as possible.

The vision for this session was a highlight of successful Indigenous tourism businesses. Our planning window was short. In searching for these organizations to feature, we came across the Think Tank. We decided to build on existing work and made sure to run the proposed session by a few Indigenous individuals. The structure fit well with the conference and was a highlight for many people, but there were a few issues and ways to improve for the future. The structure, language and control of the session were all colonial due to the lack of Indigenous-led programming. The one session that could have showcased leaders of the Indigenous community leading with an Indigenous voice, didn’t. More importantly, the one session that should have been planned in partnership with an Indigenous organization, wasn’t. Learning from this, we will work with the Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada to plan for 2019.
CASE STUDY: Songhees 10-Year Plan

Songhees Nation is a Coast Salish community whose traditional territory includes areas on the southern tip of Vancouver Island, the San Juan and Gulf Islands. Songhees Nation has approximately 630 members, of whom 400 live on the 60-hectare Songhees Reserve, located adjacent to the township of Esquimalt and the Town of View Royal in the Greater Victoria Area. The community is comprised of five main families and several smaller families.

In 2017, Songhees Nation identified the need to create a strategic plan for the next ten years of development in their Nation. The plan, which was developed through deep community consultation, lays out the community’s mission, vision and values.

The 6 priorities:

- Self Government: Strengthening and expanding the Nation’s jurisdiction.
- Language and Culture: Lekwungen language revitalization is critical to the spiritual wellbeing of the people.
- Economic Development: The Nation’s goal is to be financially self-reliant.
- Land Property and Housing: The Nation recognizes the importance of a sustainable land base to support future needs.
- Education, Skills, Employment: The Nation is paving the roads for future leaders!
- Health & Social Development: The Nation is taking steps to ensure their people are mentally, physically, emotionally and spiritually healthy.
The transportation industry is changing. With new, low-emissions innovations at our seaports, airports and in ground transportation fleets, it is becoming easier to get from place to place with minimal environmental impact. The tourism industry can play a pivotal role in reaching Canada’s carbon emissions reduction targets, by focusing on the way we travel and prioritizing low-emissions methods.

Prioritising Low-carbon Transportation

At the United Nations 21st Conference of Parties in 2015, the Paris Agreement was negotiated and later signed by 194 states and the European Union. The central aim of this historic agreement is to limit global warming to 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Climate science models have shown that warming past 2°C will trigger climatic and hydrological positive feedback mechanisms that will perpetuate global warming, possibly to a state of no return.

Canada’s total emissions in 2016 were 704 megatonnes (Mt), with most emissions coming from the oil and gas sector and the transportation sectors, which together accounted for 50% of emissions. Over the past 25 years, the growth of these two sectors has been the main contributor to Canada’s emissions increases, however, with new technologies on the horizon these two sectors have great potential for emissions reduction.

The tourism industry can play a pivotal role in reaching Canada’s carbon emissions targets and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Within Canada’s emissions profile, passenger light and freight trucks have been top contributors to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (1990-2015). Purchasing local goods and services can reduce the emissions from long haul transportation. Tour operators throughout Canada can replace or retrofit older vehicles to increase fuel efficiency and shift to electric, hydrogen or biofuel. As the emissions intensity of Canada’s electricity grid declines, transitioning transport vehicles from fossil fuel to electric can reduce emissions while also improving air quality in our cities.

How Do We Address Air Travel?

In 2016, 3.8 billion passengers took flight - an increase of 7% over the previous year. Currently, aviation is responsible for approximately 2 per cent of CO$_2$e emissions – perhaps unsurprising considering a Boeing 747 aircraft can burn up to 14,000 litres of fuel per hour. In a recently released forecast, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) revealed that passenger numbers are expected to double (to 7.8 billion) by 2036. The challenge to the aviation industry is: how to manage this exponential growth in an environmentally sustainable manner?

In October 2010, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) adopted a new Assembly Resolution on Climate Change, Resolution A37-19, which set goals for international aviation emissions:

- Global annual average fuel efficiency improvement of 2%
- Achieving carbon neutral growth from 2020 onwards.
The latter goal is significant – after 2020 there will be no increase in net carbon emissions from the international aviation industry. Flat-lining the growth in emissions from air travel will require the industry to innovate and private airlines to plan, invest and adapt. While ambitious, this is achievable first through improvements to technology and shifting to alternative fuels, and finally through carbon offsets for any remaining emissions.


2. Shift to alternative fuels – Quantas and jetBlue are already experimenting with biofuels in flights departing LAX. At the time of the conference, there were 12 flights in the air powered by biofuel.

3. Carbon offsets – For any emissions that cannot be reduced at this time, ICAO will require airlines to purchase carbon offsets.

New technological improvements are fast becoming commonplace, and NAV CANADA has played a leadership role in collaborative emissions reductions. In 2015, joint initiatives with airlines, airports and other stakeholders resulted in a savings of over 570 million litres and 1.4 million tonnes of CO₂.
One such initiative is Required Navigation Performance (RNP), recently tested and perfected by Westjet at Kelowna International Airport. RNP is a type of navigation that allows aircraft to fly the most efficient path on their approach and landing. This set path on a continuous smooth decent reduces aircrafts circling the airport and dramatically reduces fuel burn. At Kelowna, WestJet estimates that efficiencies directly attributable to the RNP program resulted in emissions reductions of 4,930 tonnes of CO₂ in 2010.

“The more technically savvy the airport, the more efficient the landings and taxiing can be, and the less fuel consumed by the aircraft.” – BEN RYAN

In 2016, Canadian air carriers improved fuel efficiency by 3.2%. Airlines such as Air North in the Yukon are looking at ways to reduce the impact of air travel. Biodiesel technologies from Boeing and refineries in Seattle are driving the change in low-carbon fuels. Upgrading the aircraft fleet to more efficient fuel-burning engines can reduce emissions. On the ground, airlines like Air North look to airports to provide electric plugins for aircraft, allowing engines to be shut off when docked.

The airline industry has complex market economics when it comes to emission reductions. Moving passengers to larger and newer places would result in reduced emissions per passenger, however, this would limit access to smaller markets, and tourism dispersement is also an important aspect of creating a sustainable destination strategy. In reality, passenger demand is growing rapidly, and airlines are adding capacity in competitive markets. Ultimately, airline sector emissions are influenced by the total number of flights hours in the market. Consumers are demanding more travel and different fare options.

Recent announcements about new Low Cost Carrier (LCCs) options with cheaper fares, and fewer perks, will likely increase passenger demand and result in more total flights and flight hours. At a market level, LCCs could increase aircrafts serving Canada’s market.

Requiring that airlines purchase carbon offsets may be one of the simplest and least risky ways to ensure that airlines factor in the cost of emissions when making capacity decisions.
Ground Transport Operators

While airlines and airports are doing their part to reduce emissions from air travel, tour operators and bus companies are taking a similar trajectory in ground operations. In Victoria, BC, Wilson’s Group of companies services the tourism market with airport shuttle, cruise ship transportation, tours and more. A family business with over 150 vehicles, they are working to convert their older ‘vintage’ double decker buses to electric. Though electric buses have a high capital cost, Wilson’s sees the future of transportation business as being a part of the solution, rather than the problem.

Due to the embedded carbon and environmental lifecycle of new vehicles, electric engine conversions are a great option for tourism transportation vehicles. This requires specific expertise to conduct custom conversions. This is a great opportunity for local mechanical shops, colleges, universities and specialized engineering firms to collaborate to create services for conversions in each community.

Westcoast Sightseeing in Vancouver has committed to converting their fleet to electric by 2020. In London, England, a goal has been set to make the entire road transport system zero emission by 2050. This will be delivered through a phased approach, with central London ‘Zero-Emission Zone’ introduced from 2025.

The Role Of Local Government

Large carriers—such as bus transportation—emit a low carbon footprint per passenger, compared to lower occupancy options such as rental cars or taxis. Local governments in tourism destinations can consider designating large carriers lanes to make bus travel more convenient while reducing congestion.

“More people would use bus systems if they were more efficient” – JOHN WILSON

It is vital for local governments to actively engage with local transportation operators to determine how both organizations can share in the cost, risk, and implementation of infrastructure that will enable a low-carbon local transportation system. Government can look to regulations, incentives and subsidies to support the private sector in efforts to reduce emissions and optimize transportation routes.

More travelers are inquiring about green initiatives in companies. Neighbourhood associations are vying for reduced noise and air pollution. RFPs for transportation services are prioritizing sustainable options—these are all drivers of sustainable tourism transportation systems.

What About Marine Transportation?

Marine vessels exhibit specific challenges in sourcing clean technology options. Reports from operators suggested biodiesel may require extra maintenance, and loss of manufacturer warranty. Marine passenger vessels are limited in space and sensitive to weight additions, making battery storage for the required horsepower difficult. New developments in battery technology could make electric or electric hybrids readily available within the next decade.

The future of marine transportation will include electric and electric-diesel hybrids.

Electric-diesel hybrids could benefit the whale watching industry—allowing the vessels to quietly float along when wildlife is close-by, but engage the diesel-powered horsepower required to move quickly between sightings. While this industry is limited to the best available technology, and capital restraints, whale watching companies are keen to be front-runners in the adoption of more sustainable technologies in marine eco-tourism.
A hybrid may result in small fuel savings (battery power kicking in at lower speeds) and would reduce exhaust that whales may inhale. It would also enhance passenger experience, as the electric power runs quiet. This technology is also met with challenges: the high cost for retrofit results in only incremental fuel savings, and Transport Canada approvals could take many months.

A common metric to benchmark and compare marine tourism businesses is the total CO₂ per passenger. As companies grow or capture more market share, this intensity metric can ensure that reductions are achieved through optimizing passenger counts, efficient routing and driving practices, engine maintenance, fleet upgrades and driver training.

Similar to airports, seaports must be equipped to handle large vessels that arrive to dock. In many cases, especially at cruise ship terminals the electricity requirements for vessels are substantial, requiring about as much power as a small city block. With this huge energy demand not always available, cruise ships are often required to keep their engines running while docked. Providing shore power at seaport can significantly reduce GHG emissions and local air quality. At the Port of Montreal, the implementation of shore power at the cruise ship terminal in 2017 is expected to reduce GHG emissions by 2,800 tonnes annually.

Is the Consumer Ready to Pay a Premium for a “Greener” Tour?

Operators reported that their customers want a variety of ways to contribute—volunteering, donating, or spreading the message. The more tourism destinations and operators educate travellers, the more the consumer will understand the value of the ‘Sustainability Fee’. A sustainability fee is a surcharge on tour costs which directly funds local environmental initiatives, whether this in offsetting emissions, funding wildlife research, or enhancing marine conservation efforts.

Harbour Air was Canada’s first Carbon Neutral Airline—when you fly Harbour Air, you have no net carbon impact. To offset the per-passenger carbon emissions, a small fee is charged on each flight. This initiative has generated a positive response, generating good media attention and enhancing brand trust. Eagle Wing Whale Watching Tours charges $2.00 per passenger which is collected into the Wild for Whales Fund, supporting important projects directly related to the sustainability of the southern resident killer whales. Jamie’s Whaling in Tofino BC charges a similar $3.00 per passenger, which funds local, non-profit wildlife research, rescue, and educational organizations.

CASE STUDY: Air North

Air North is the largest private sector employer in the Yukon, operating as an airline while also providing transport logistics in the northern provinces. It is locally owned and operated, with a 49% indigenous ownership share. The Yukon government’s commitment carbon neutral by 2020 has set a tone for private sector companies such as Air North. In addition to being an airline, Air North is one of the main groundhandling companies at Vancouver International Airport (YVR), acting as a contractor to other airlines for passenger check-in, baggage handling, and cargo handling services. At YVR, Air North is observing a trend towards airport-mandated changes in groundhandling equipment, whereby newer equipment and electrically-powered equipment is increasingly required.
Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- Similar to ICAO’s goal of carbon neutral growth for international aviation, the Government of Canada should adopt a framework for the domestic aviation sector in Canada.
- Incentivize and/or install a network of vehicle charges that are compatible with and accessible to commercial tourism operators.
- Subsidize business owners/operators to install electrical charging stations.

Operators

- Create a local purchasing policy to reduce long-hauling of goods where possible and give preference to delivery companies with low-carbon operations and fleets.
- Create a vehicle retrofit and replacement plan to phase out inefficient commercial vehicles.
- Calculate and monitor carbon emissions per passenger and total carbon emissions.
- Consider sustainability requirements, including emissions reductions and monitoring, in your RFP process to reflect the values of the changing consumer.

Airlines & Airports

- Invest in Performance based navigation compatibilities to reduce fuel burn and associated emissions with shorter flight paths and descents.
- Familiarize your company with CORSIA and its requirements. Adopt a long-term plan for optimizing performance, reduce emissions and reaching carbon neutrality through offsets. Management training and education is the most important first step.
- Begin collecting data to form a baseline greenhouse gas inventory starting Jan 1, 2019.
- Consider the Airport Carbon Accreditation Program for your airport and set a carbon reduction target.
In Canada’s North, tourism is a tool for education and economic development. Diverse and authentic experiences challenge visitors’ expectations and demonstrate true resilience in the face of climate change.

The North is a magical, mysterious place, essential to Canada’s identity as a wild country. The impacts of changing climate are already adding a layer of complexity to the growing tourism industry.

A recent Tourism Industry Association (TIA) conference in the Yukon attempted to tackle some of the most pressing issues North of 60, from climate change to labour capacity and how to ensure tourism is used to empower and strengthen communities. The conference included a keynote talk from Inuit Leader and Nobel Prize Nominee Shelia Watt Clouthier, a presentation from an experienced sustainable destination expert from Norway, and insights from Yukon indigenous youth in Carcross and Dawson City who have energized their communities and bolstered the Yukon’s tourism industry through the creation of award-winning mountain bike trails (see ‘Single track to Success’ below).

Warmer winters have increased access to previously impenetrable regions like the Northwest Passage, and the North is seeing a significant increase in tourism as a result. This presents both opportunities and challenges. At the core of each is a need for knowledge sharing and education.

A Lesson on Cruise

Elizabeth Becker called cruise ships ‘the least regulated hotels on the planet’, but this is not the case up North.

As Northern waters open, various territorial bodies, management structures, and regulations in Nunavut are in place to ensure responsible and sustainable growth in the territory’s cruise sector. While the cruise sector has seen significant growth since 2010, it is still just a small part of Northern economy.

Cruise passenger numbers rose from 1,398 in 2010 to 4,972 in 2017. 11

One key differentiator in the North is their focus on expedition cruise vessels. These smaller cruises cater to adventurers, environmental advocates and those interested in educational experiences and immersion in Inuit culture. The result is high-quality, low volume, low impact locally owned tourism products.

11 Media Release, Nunavut Cruise Tourism Statistics
New expedition cruise ship construction is expected to grow 35% by 2022.¹²

Prior to the 2016 introduction of the Crystal Serenity, max capacity - 1,070 passengers, the average passengers per voyage in Nunavut was only 142. The largest Royal Caribbean International cruise ships can carry up to 6,870 passengers and are appropriate for Nunavut’s waters. The government continues to push for smaller boats (500 passengers vs. 1,700), emphasizing quality over quantity, and monitoring sea ice to ensure the safety of residents and guests.

Nunavut is the most regulated jurisdiction in the world for cruise ships. Compared to the three online permits required by Greenland, Nunavut requires up to 33 permits from over 20 organizations. Under the land claims agreement, the Nunavut Impact Review Board requires cruise operators to undergo an extensive screening process that includes weighing a particular operator’s voyages as a part of the total voyages in Nunavut per season.

In addition to screening, new marine tourism regulations are being introduced that require minimum notification times, mandated economic benefit reports, codified best practices and which allows for the creation of regulations that limit the number of passengers that can disembark on-shore at any one time.

The Government of Nunavut, Parks Canada and Adventure Canada have partnered to provide a “cruise ship boot camp” training program. Indigenous history is built into tour programming; Inuit guides demonstrate their traditional hunting and trapping techniques.

While it’s not perfect, many communities could benefit from emulating the strategic management of cruise demonstrated by Nunavut.

A Lesson on Polar Bears

“[In Northern Manitoba] we have 3 main seasons; winter (Northern Lights), summer (beluga whales, bears), and autumn (polar bears).” – JENNIFER ASH

How are the polar bears doing? Where are they? Do they have enough food? Is their population growing or declining?

“Without action on climate change, scientists predict we could lose wild polar bears by 2100.”
– POLAR BEARS INTERNATIONAL

Looking at Frontiers North Adventure’s Tundra Buggies, it’s hard to tell which is the mobile broadcast and research centre for Polar Bears International and which is the tour vehicle.

Frontiers North Adventures is a stand-out example of using tourism as a tool to conserve and protect a natural asset and Canadian icon – the polar bear. Tours are used as an opportunity to demonstrate responsible travel in fragile ecosystems and inspire and educate people to be environmental stewards, all while giving people the experience of a lifetime.

Based in Northern Manitoba, Frontiers North has been offering expert-guided wildlife and cultural trips for 30 years. Their mission is to travel responsibly to protect fragile natural habitats, to benefit local communities and to preserve and celebrate the customs and traditions of the places they visit. To help protect polar bears, they have outfitted their Tundra Buggy One with equipment for polar bear scientists from Polar Bears International to collect data and film wildlife. The company also set up a dedicated polar bear cam that allows people to view wildlife from anywhere in the world. The camera had 1.8 million views in 2017 alone!

A Lesson on Community

Dawson City is a vibrant community in the Yukon territory, often referred to as the metropolis of the North (population: 2,200). In 1952, the last steamship traveled up the Yukon river signifying the end of the golden era and the start of a new kind of industry: tourism.

Dawson City residents are experiencing the effects of weather changes. As the permafrost melts, houses are visibly shifting on their foundations. The Yukon River no longer freezes in winter, and a new bridge is required for crossings.

Under the jurisdiction of four governments (municipal, territorial, federal, and a self-governing First Nation), partnerships between stakeholders are important.

Recently, Dawson City and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in First Nation put in a bid to UNESCO for the Tr’ondëk Klondike to become a World Heritage Site. A World Heritage cultural site is chosen to celebrate human ways of life that can be shown via physical landscapes, traditions, stories, buildings, archaeological remains, artistic expressions and more. The Tr’ondëk Klondike is a cultural site that celebrates the long tradition of mining, stretching from the 1880s to the present day, and the co-existence of newcomers and indigenous peoples bound together by this activity.
CASE STUDY: Single Track to Success

In the community of Carcross, 72 km south of Whitehorse, a network of mountain bike trails is attracting international attention and thousands of visitors each summer. This world-class network of trails was built by teens from the Carcross/Tagish first Nation. Over 15 local, indigenous youth were employed to reclaim and construct 35-40 kilometers of trail on Montana Mountain. The work reconnected the youth to the land and provided truly empowering employment. An additional 40-65 km of trails are proposed to be built in the coming years. Carcross Tagish First Nation youth are also sharing their knowledge with indigenous youth in Dawson City to help with the development of trails in this community.

Learn more about this project in the award-winning half-hour documentary called SHIFT.

Calls to Action

All

- Recognize Canada’s Indigenous heritage and culture that has been around for thousands of years. Canada is not a new place, but it is marketed as such (e.g. Canada 150).
- Continue to collaborate and consult with Indigenous peoples. Aim to develop real, authentic cultural experiences with Inuit.

Policy Makers

- Federal: Consider the infrastructure and access constraints of the North, as well as its unique cultures and communities when developing national programs and policies.
- Territorial: Continue to support community agency and self-determination to ensure tourism development empowers and strengthens communities.

Operators

- Support local vendors and build partnerships with organizations that are owned and operated in the North.
- Consider partnerships with research institutes and academia so your tours can support conservation research.

Further Research/ Reading

- [https://explore.org/livecams/polar-bears-international/polar-bear-lodge-cam](https://explore.org/livecams/polar-bears-international/polar-bear-lodge-cam)
- [www.shiftthefilm.info](http://www.shiftthefilm.info)
REALITY CHECK: THE STORIES WE TELL

Speakers: Dené Sinclair, Director of Marketing, ITAC (Ojibwe-Anishinaabe, Peguis First Nation)

Indigenous voices: We have a story to tell.

For centuries now, Indigenous peoples and stories have been talked about by others but have rarely been allowed to lead the story themselves. The world needs to hear stories not just about Indigenous people, but the stories they want to share.

“An elder one told me the only way an Indian would make it on the news is if he or she were one of the 4Ds: drumming, dancing, drunk or dead” – DUNCAN MCCUE, CBC REPORTER

Indigenous representation is particularly important in the tourism industry, where visitor perceptions are influenced by stories about peoples, history, culture and relationships to the land. Performance groups, and the importance of regalia and music in welcoming people to Indigenous communities can not be ignored, but Indigenous life as represented through singular imagery and narratives limits Indigenous peoples from being able to tell a richer, more fulsome story of self, culture and diverse community.

ITAC provides opportunity for Indigenous owned and controlled tourism business to lead as the authentic voice in the tourism industry. In 2017, ITAC launched a video series called “Indigenous Voices”\(^\text{15}\), using first person narratives to tell a diverse and rich story of Indigenous peoples beyond stereotypical imagery, but also connecting Indigenous narratives to stories of place and destinations. The videos explore the power of Indigenous tourism and how it is being embraced by communities across the country.

The Indigenous Voices Video Series was launched as a partnership between ITAC and Destination Canada to share stories of Indigenous people, by Indigenous people, from nations across Canada.

“We are so proud of this video series and our partnership with Destination Canada. We hope to continue the video series this year and continue to tell more stories. Our stories are stories from the land, from the heart and from the people.” –Dené Sinclair

Calls to Action

- Listen, and create space for Indigenous stories to be shared.

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INNOVATION EXAMPLE: MAKING IMPACT CARBON NEUTRAL

Speakers: Dawn Hancock, Manager, Client Engagement, Offsetters; Kayli Anderson, Managing Partner, Synergy Enterprises

IMPACT is Carbon Neutral

IMPACT Founding Partner and leading climate change firm Synergy Enterprises measured the carbon footprint of the 2018 IMPACT conference.

The carbon footprint measured Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions from electricity, water, waste and paper use at the conference venue (the Victoria Conference Centre), as well as delegate travel, hotel stays and organized transport throughout the conference.

To learn more about how to make your own event carbon neutral, see the Annex of this paper.

IMPACT Carbon Footprint

IMPACT Carbon Footprint Analysis

Total Emissions ($CO_2e$)

- **2018**: 22.8 tCO₂e
- **2018**: 0.165 tCO₂e per delegate

Analysis

- Total emissions for the IMPACT - Sustainability, Travel & Tourism conference came to 22.8 tCO₂e, with average emissions per delegate of 0.17 tCO₂e.
- IMPACT’s emissions have been offset by Offsetters, resulting in a carbon neutral event.

Scope 1

- Bars of Oil: 72
- Cars per Year: 6.1
- Hotels per Year: 0.01
- Total tCO₂e: 22.8
Total carbon emissions came to 22.8 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (tCO₂e), with average emissions per delegate of 0.17 tCO₂e. At 91.4%, travel is by far the greatest contributor to the overall footprint, totalling 20.9 tCO₂e. Secondary to this is accommodation at 1.7 tCO₂e, or 7.5% of the total. This is followed by electricity at 0.5% of the total, or 0.12 tCO₂e.

Efforts to minimize emissions at IMPACT included: choosing carbon neutral and centralized (walkable) hotel partners, low or net-zero emission transportation partners, 100% Post-Consumer Recycled paper and conscious efforts to minimize waste (swag bags were upcycled and contained only local beer samples).

**Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carbon Footprint:</th>
<th>Greenhouse gases:</th>
<th>Carbon Offsets:</th>
<th>Carbon Neutral:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>An inventory of the amount of greenhouse gas emissions resulting from human activities expressed in equivalent tonnes of carbon dioxide (tCO₂e). This may include natural gas, vehicle fuel, electricity, waste, paper, travel and more.</td>
<td>(GHGs): Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, contributing to the greenhouse effect. The most common GHG is carbon dioxide (CO₂), but lesser-known gases such as methane (CH₄) and nitrous oxide (N₂O) are also included.</td>
<td>Investments in projects that reduce, prevent or sequester GHG emissions. They must be validated and verified to credible standards by 3rd parties to ensure they are: real; permanent; and additional—meaning reductions would not have occurred without offsets. 1 offset = 1 tCO₂e</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
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**IMPACT’s Offset Project**

Supporting carbon offset projects not only counterbalances emissions but accelerates the world’s transition to a sustainable economy.

**LOCATION: QUADRA ISLAND**

Type of Offset: Improved Forest Management / Avoided Deforestation
Standard: BC Forest Carbon Offset Protocol
Ecological & Cultural Benefits:
Joins two BC Parks
Creates a safe corridor for wildlife to move between the two parks
Protects 418 hectares of forest land
Preserves 10 Indigenous historical sites
REALITY CHECK: THE VALUE OF NATURAL ASSETS

Speakers: Michelle Molnar, David Suzuki Foundation

For a long time, nature has been economically invisible. The Municipal Natural Assets Initiative is working to make markets recognize the vital services and benefits provided by functioning ecosystems.

In our developed nation, economic arguments are used to justify policy and programming decisions, from the widest ranging federal initiative to the day to day activities of the smallest local governments. The idea is that a functioning, healthy economy results in a better quality of life for us all.

Nature also provides well-documented benefits to our quality of life. Time spent in nature makes us happier, healthier, more focused and less stressed. It increases empathy, creativity and immunity. It reduces anxiety, high blood pressure and the risk of heart attacks.13

The benefits of natural ecosystems go beyond the personal. For example, wetlands provide natural floodwater storage, reduce downstream flooding and recharge groundwater. They increase our resilience to climate change by storing carbon and creating carbon banks. A community with a healthy, functioning wetland experiences benefits to the community’s bottom line, with reduced need for flood infrastructure and insurance.

Unfortunately, classical economics doesn’t recognize the vital services nature provides and as a result, economic decisions often lead to the degradation of our ecosystems and a loss of natural space.

The Municipal Natural Assets Initiative (MNAI) aims to bridge this gap by providing “scientific, economic, and municipal expertise to support and guide local governments in identifying, valuing and accounting for natural assets in their financial planning and asset management programs, and developing leading-edge, sustainable, and climate resilient infrastructure.”14 The initiative uses a six-step process to identify, plan, and implement an asset management plan.

1. Develop an asset management policy, bylaw, or financial statement directing the municipality to consider natural assets.
2. Identify key natural assets and the services they provide.
3. Determine the condition of natural assets in your community and do an initial valuation.
4. Determine which assets are highest priority through a basic risk identification analysis.
5. Determine what scenarios you want to understand.
6. Start managing your natural assets.

Calls to Action

Policy Makers

- Consider incorporating the Municipal Natural Assets Model and adopt a natural assets management policy.

Operators

- Make a business case to your local council on how accounting for nature is good for your community’s brand. People want to visit places with intact functioning ecosystems, so it’s essential these remain cared for (and accounted for) for generations to come.

Further Research/ Reading

- MNAI Technical Documents http://mnai.ca/key-documents/
FRAMEWORKS FOR SUSTAINABLE DESTINATIONS AND OPERATIONS

Facilitator: Glenn Jampol, Chair, Global Ecotourism Network
Speakers: Jill Doucette, Founder, Synergy Enterprises; Gwendal Castellan, Tourism Vancouver; Angela Nagy, CEO, Green Step Solutions Inc.; Frank Antoine, TOTA & Quaaout Lodge

Exploring tourism frameworks and standards that promote holistic growth and turn lofty goals into action.

Greenwashing & Greenhushing

“It takes 20 years to build a reputation and 5 min. to ruin it” – WARREN BUFFET

Greenwashing is the act of overstating and/or making broad unfounded claims to be “sustainable”, “green”, or “natural.” It has diminished consumer trust in these words and the brands that use them. In this sector, actions speak louder than words. Third-party accreditation is becoming increasable important to validate claims and increase consumer confidence.

Conversely, greenhushing is the act of muting your sustainability dialogue and limiting the publication of efforts and results. Greenhushing often occurs out of fear of greenwashing or because businesses don’t want to diminish their values-based efforts by turning them into a marketing campaign. One study found that “businesses only communicate 30% of all the sustainability actions practiced… downplaying complex issues and normalizing sustainability to reduce customer guilt.”

To change business-as-usual, we need to showcase efforts in a transparent manner. This raises the bar, challenges peer businesses and increases the consumer’s expectations of the marketplace as a whole.

Within tourism, there is a vast network of certifications and standards that can support, enhance and showcase sustainability efforts.

Certification as a Tool

Synergy Enterprises estimates there are between 200-350 available certifications for tourism operators. Certifications can be generic, or specific to a region, industry and business type (golf courses, hotels, boating, restaurants, suppliers), or impact area (ecology, energy, climate, waste, ethical purchasing).

Third-party validation can add value to your business by providing metrics, recommendations for improvement and credibility. For a certification to deliver a strong cost-benefit, it should be affordable and include personal assistance, a thorough operations review and a great branding package.

Within any sustainability framework, it is vital to educate staff, so they can be the ambassadors of your social and environmental mission. When guests hear about these initiatives from staff, it holds more credibility than if a customer were to read about it on the company website.

Vancouver, BC has a goal to be the greenest city in the world by 2020. Tourism Vancouver is working to support that vision by encouraging tourism businesses to share their sustainability certifications on their website. Tourism Vancouver’s team chose to promote eight different certifications by offering to include the logos in the member listing under a designated ‘Sustainable Certifications’ tab. Certifications include: Oceanwise, Green Key, Green Tourism Canada, Green Meetings, B Corp, Buy Social Canada, Climate Smart and the Rick Hansen Foundation Accessibility program. More certifications may be added if they address a specific need and meet the requirements of robust third-party verification or accreditation from international standards organizations such as iSeal alliance, GSTC, etc.

Similarly, Costa Rica and Australia are two countries known for their sustainable tourism, due to country-wide brands and affordable, ubiquitous certification systems. To compare countries around the world, the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) created the Adventure Tourism Development Index (ATDI), a ranking of each country’s adventure tourism potential based on principles of sustainable adventure tourism.

A WORD OF CAUTION

Certification programs aren’t necessarily a useful tool for everyone, and in some cases foment resistance or frustration. Certification without viable and demonstratable benefits can often be costly and cumbersome. In some cases, it is better to spend the time and financial investment on a custom sustainability initiative or program that meets your unique needs. Either way, it is important to share the story of your journey authentically and with transparency throughout your marketing, media and onsite programs.

Choosing the Right Certification

The right certification has the following characteristics:

- **Values Aligned** - What values are we trying to promote? Environmental stewardship? Social Responsibility? Customer Experience? Some certifications cover only environmental activities, while others, like B Corp, cover workers, governance, community, environment and customers.

- **Target Demographic** - Who are you trying to reach? Is the certification marketing to consumers or businesses? Is it for local, national or international consumers?

- **Focus on Improvement** – How will it help you strengthen your organization and/or achieve your goals?

- **Verified & Transparent** – How stringent is the approval process? Do you have to provide proof for your answers? Is there a site visit? Is your score shared?

- **Cost & Value** – Do you have the time and resources to commit? Will it continue to be affordable year after year?
VANCOUVER ISLAND GREEN BUSINESS CERTIFICATION

www.vigbc.ca - checklists available free online

The region wanted a certification that represented their destination, local environmental issues, and local business community, so Synergy Sustainability Institute looked to example cities like Portland, Maryland, and San Francisco who had their own green certification programing, to develop the Vancouver Island Green Business Certification (VIGBC). VIGBC certifies restaurant, office, retail and spa and salon businesses as silver, gold or green. Businesses can also be ‘Surfrider Approved’ for their efforts to reduce single use plastics. About 120 businesses are already participating in this certification in just a few years, with 1000+ new actions implemented to reduce water, energy use, emissions and waste.

Result: Sysco Foods responded to the shift in demand from restaurants for compostable products, making them available to all businesses.

THOMPSON OKANAGAN TOURISM ASSOCIATION (TOTA) – BIOSPHERE CERTIFICATION

To ensure tourism is developed responsibly, TOTA adopted the biosphere certification. The process aided in determining the main goals, mechanisms and partnerships required to protect natural ecosystems. It engaged stakeholders from across the region to a common goal. This framework allows TOTA to track progress and communicate their objectives for a sustainable destination.

ADVENTURE TRAVEL TRADE ASSOCIATION (ATTA) – ATDI INDEX

Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) produces the ATDI Index, which ranks the adventure tourism potential of countries around the world based on principles of sustainable adventure tourism. Factors include sustainable development, entrepreneurship, image and marketing, safety, cultural resources, infrastructure, natural resources, adventure activity resources, health and humanitarian initiatives. The rankings are used by destinations, businesses and governments as a tool for strategic planning. It outlines sustainable development objectives, provides the system to identify where countries can focus their energy, and creates a road map for how to get there.

Calls to Action

Destinations (DMOs)

- Consider introducing or adopting a singular a free/low-cost certification program for operators (see: Costa Rica) or pre-vet frameworks and certifications and for your members.
- Survey members to determine how many have certifications, and the value/changes in operations they have realized as a result.
- Determine if a certification is right for your destination. Check out the GSTC website for a list of destination sustainability certifications that have been recognized and accredited by GSTC. Certifications discussed
at IMPACT include: Biosphere, EarthCheck, and Green Destination.

**Operators**

- Educate staff about sustainability values, past efforts, and future efforts in the business. Remember they will take this with them to their next employer- and they may become champions for more responsible tourism.
- Choose a certification that matches your values, sector and key sustainability opportunities.
- Collaborate with other certified organizations to advocate for changes from suppliers or local government to hurdle-jump your sustainability challenges.
- Tell your sustainability story to express your initiatives and raise the bar in the industry.
- Consider how some certifications might support others. For example, having a certified GHG emissions inventory will create excellent documentation for a more holistic certification.
- Look for certifications that include Indigenous knowledge and contributions
To address the critical labour shortage in tourism in Canada and build a dynamic, inclusive and resilient workforce, we need to focus on boosting productivity, diversifying the workforce, and transforming education & training.

There is a general shortage of labour Canada-wide. In the tourism industry this shortage is compounded by accelerated demand for products and services. Recently short-staffed hotels in Whistler have shut down entire floors, and other businesses such as North 48, a restaurant in Victoria, closed permanently due to lack of qualified employees. High cost of living and lack of housing options (lost to vacation rentals) are oft quoted as the key challenge for hiring and retaining staff in popular destinations such as Tofino, BC. Labour shortages tend to have a greater impact on small to medium businesses, who don’t have dedicated HR departments working on hiring.

It is estimated that by 2035, there will be 240,000 unfulfilled jobs in tourism alone.17

Adding to the labour shortage is the mismatch between the skills needed to create quality tourism operations and the skills of the current labour market. This includes workers who are underqualified, overqualified, underutilized or using obsolete skills. The result is inferior service, crippling the ability to compete with other countries and destinations.

The Canadian Tourism industry’s competitiveness and growth is dependent on its ability to attract and retain qualified workers. Failing to do this has the potential to result in 27.4 billion in lost revenues by 203518.

18 BC Tourism Labour Shortage Economic Impact Study”, GO2HR. https://www.go2hr.ca/research (May 7, 2018)
Skill Survey

The skills in highest-demand identified during this session included:

- Work ethic
- Technical skills
- Relationship building
- Bookkeeping
- Critical thinking
- Intercultural intelligence
- Strategic planning
- Eco-efficiency
- Stress management

The recruitment and labour challenges most often cited during the session included:

- Workers lack work ethic
- Applicants lack knowledge of tourism sector
- Workers struggle to work together

What Are the Solutions?

Annually, Tourism HR Canada brings together 60 tourism stakeholders from across Canada (businesses, governments, associations, educators) to discuss prevailing labour market issues. In 2017, they identified five things that need to be done:

- Improved investments by governments and employers
  - Investments need to go beyond infrastructure and marketing
  - Funds towards workforce planning, detailed studies, improved coordination

- Boost productivity
  - Increased incentives and smart funding to enable employers to invest in skills training and skills development, and improved human capital practices

- Further diversify the tourism workforce
  - Increase participation rate of under-represented groups, in particular Indigenous peoples, refugees, immigrants

- Increase immigration and improve mobility
  - Favourable immigration policies which support the talent supply required by tourism; increased flexibility and improved efficiency

- Transform education and training programs
  - Programs better fit to employment needs, more responsive to demand
  - Focus on demand-based skills programs, e.g. product development, intercultural intelligence
MYTH BUSTING

Myth: The Tourism Industry hires foreign workers before Canadians.
Fact: Only 1% of tourism labour is made up of foreign workers. It is often more costly to hire and sponsor a foreign worker than hire an unemployed Canadian.

Myth: Low wages are responsible for the labour shortage in Canadian tourism.
Fact: The myth that tourism does not pay well is not supported by the data\textsuperscript{19}. There are many well-paying jobs in tourism.

Further Research/Reading

- Impacts of housing affordability
- Benefits and challenges of seasonal employment

TOURISM AS A TOOL FOR CONSERVING NATURAL AND CULTURAL ASSETS

Facilitator: Rod Taylor, CEO, Tourism Legacy Group

Speakers: Élisabeth Lacoursière, Director of Outreach and Marketing, Parks Canada; Glenn Jampol, President, Finca Rosa Blanca; Alex Berlyand, Co-founder, Parkbus; Brady Smith, Executive Director, Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre.

Using tourism for environmental and social good can create a strong economic return, acting as a catalyst to protect and strengthen both natural and cultural assets.

Tourism is a key economic development strategy for many Canadian regions. When managed responsibly, tourism has the power to drive profit while protecting and enhancing natural landscapes and communities. When left unchecked, however, it can lead to the destruction of the very things that excite people to visit.

So how do you balance fiscal responsibility with a positive social and environmental return?

“Financial sustainability is an important prerequisite for sustainable conservation. If our businesses become insolvent, our ability to do good deeds in terms of conservation, education and social enterprise quickly becomes impossible.” – Rod Taylor

The key is to create a quality product that has the essential values of equity, environmentalism, conservation, and integrity woven into its very fabric. Here are four examples of organizations doing just that.

CASE STUDY: Parks Canada – The symbiotic relationship of tourism and conservation

Majestic polar bears on the tundra, lush rainforests, orcas along rugged coastlines, pristine mountains and lakes; visitors flock to Canada to experience the outdoors. With over 200 parks and national historic sites, Parks Canada protects 450,000 km of natural and cultural space – an area that is nearly the size of the entire Yukon territory! Parks Canada the oldest national park organization in the world and have been stewards of some of Canada’s most iconic places for more than 100 years.

Visitation numbers were amazing during Canada 150. Parks Canada has seen an increase by 11%, and it was important to strike the right balance between inviting visitors to these special places to live unforgettable experiences while ensuring that obligations are met to protect and restore ecological and commemorative integrity.

“Nature is definitely good for people, but people can also be good for nature.” - Élisabeth Lacoursière

Parks Canada is committed to protecting natural and cultural heritage by showcasing and celebrating what makes it unique. In 2017, Parks Canada distributed over 8 million free Parks passes. Despite the forgone admission fees, the social media buzz the initiative generated made it a resounding success for an organization with a miniscule marketing budget. A Parks Canada pass hanging from the rear-view mirror embodies Canadian pride.

People will protect what they love, which is why Parks Canada strives to create connections between humans and our wild places.
CASE STUDY: Costa Rica, the nation of Eco-Tourism

In 1948, Costa Rica did away with their army, shifting funding to education and culture. Literacy rates went from 60% to 98% and the country became a safer, more inviting destination. In the late 1970s, Costa Rica converted 25% of its land to national parks, and green coverage now makes up over 50% of the country. Costa Rica recognized that their country’s warm people, culture, and biodiversity were the biggest draw for visitors and continues to invest in maintaining and preserving their diverse environments.

Finca Rosa Blanca Coffee Plantation Resort is shining example of sustainable agro-eco-tourism in Costa Rica. The picturesque ecolodge and organic coffee plantation set in the rolling hills outside of Santa Bárbara de Heredia, Costa Rica and owned by Glenn Jampol. Jampol believes the resort’s efforts to create positive social and environmental impacts are one of the keys to providing a high-quality experience for their guests.

“A good place to live is a good place to visit.” – Glen Jampol (as heard from Judy Kepher-Gona)

Over the last 25 years they have planted more than 7,000 native trees on their property and invested in becoming carbon neutral. All resort employees are local to the region, and work closely with their barrio to implement solutions for recycling, water quality, and health. They also seek, support and purchase products from their community’s senior citizens and artisans and have been financially supporting the Children’s Food Bank for 20 years.

In October 2015, the hotel was named “The Best Small Hotel is Central America” and one of the “Top Ten Best Small Hotels in the World” by Condé Nast Traveler readers.
CASE STUDY: Parkbus – Canada’s bus to the great outdoors

Parkbus is a non-profit initiative focused on improving access to the outdoors by establishing a regularly scheduled bus service between cities and provincial and national parks across the country. For Alex Berlyand, one of the co-founders of Parkbus, his company is about more than simply transportation. It’s about connecting people to nature and sharing his love of Canada’s incredible and unique natural places.

“It is our job as tour operators to provide information about responsible park use and educate the public on how to protect and preserve our parks.” – Alex Berlyand

Since 2010, Parkbus has transported and introduced over 15,000 people to the parks system, encouraging a healthier lifestyle and reducing the carbon footprint of single occupancy vehicle travel to these natural environments. Parkbus now offers service to over 30 different parks from 6 cities across Canada.

As we learned in the IMPACT session, From Place to Place, busses have one of the lowest emissions per passenger of any transportation method – bonus!

#parkbusgotmehere
CASE STUDY: Skwxwú7mesh Lil’wat7úl Cultural Centre (SLCC)

The first thing Brady Smith, the Executive Director of the Squamish Lil’wat Cultural Centre (SLCC), did when he got onstage was thank the people of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Lil’wat7úl Lil’wat7ul (Lil’wat) nations for their permission to share these words from their community. Respect for Indigenous ownership and voices is a clear value of the SLCC, which was built by the Nations as a cultural centre to house and showcase their art, history and culture. The vision is to share cultural knowledge to inspire understanding and respects amongst all people.

Located on 1.76 hectares (4.35 acre) of forested land between Whistler and Blackcomb mountains in the Upper Village of Whistler, British Columbia, this stunning 30,400 square foot facility is designed in the forms of a Squamish Longhouse and Lil’wat Istken (earthen dwelling with fire pit). The unique space houses several galleries, curated exhibits, a Great Hall, a round hall, theatre, outdoor patio and interpretive trails, a Longhouse, gift shop, and a café with full in-house event and catering services. Since 2008, the Squamish and Lil’wat people have welcomed and hosted over 500,000 visitors here for tours, performances, workshops, celebrations and events, sharing their living cultures with the world and sparking a revival of ancient cultural traditions.

Our ability to welcome people onto the shared unceded traditional territories of the Squamish and Lil’wat people brings a tremendous pride to the Nations; once forbidden to speak language, and share culture through oral histories, we now celebrate the ability to do so. Tourism helps create this social change in order to create dialogue and understanding between all people. – BRADY SMITH

The SLCC operates under three pillars: People, Land/Operations, and Funding.

1. People: Indigenous voices are represented and First Nations are employed first.
2. Land/Operations: Because the SLCC is not on reserve land, and few First Nation people live in Whistler, the SLCC provides transportation for all staff to and from the centre. This is done despite the high cost.
3. Funding: the funding for the centre comes from both nations, as well as social enterprising activities such as hosting weddings, ceremonies, and providing catering services.

The SLCC measures its success by the fact that they can sustain a fulltime indigenous work force, including indigenous youth, and reach roughly 60,000 visitors per year.

INTERNATIONAL CASE STUDY: BHUTAN

Bhutan is best known for their guiding philosophy and drive for Gross National Happiness is attracting attention from the tourism industry for their focus on “high value, low impact” approach to tourism. In addition to a one-time Visa fee, each visitor is charged a minimum $65 per day Sustainable Development Fee (SDF) that reinvested into community to provide free education, free healthcare, poverty alleviation and infrastructure improvements. Surcharges of $40 for single individuals and $30 per person for groups of two demonstrate a preference for groups. The result is a conscious and respectful demographic of explorers who are aptly aware of the positive impacts of tourism as designed by the government of Bhutan.
In the emerging sustainable tourism industry, hybrid organizations and powerful partnerships have the potential to advance sustainability and create shared value.

“We all bring something to the table and when we combine our forces, it's amazing what we can do.” – CHRISTINA CLARKE

Hybrid Organizations: Shifting the Business Model

Non-profit organizations and for-profit businesses typically exist as separate and even competing entities: non-profits have a social or environmental mission while the sole purpose of business is to create a financial return. But the line between these two models is blurring as non-profits harness the power of social enterprise as a force for change and as businesses move towards a triple bottom line.

The sustainable tourism industry is increasingly ripe with examples of mission-driven organizations that blend these organizational structures in non-traditional fashion.

Where do you fall on the scale? Where do you want to be?

We heard from several businesses and non-profits who are exploring new business models on the hybrid spectrum. Mosqoy is a grassroots non-profit organization with a vision to mitigate the adverse effects of unsustainable
tourism and development in the Peruvian Andes. Their three programs, T’ikary, Q’ente and Mink’a, focus on empowering Quechua youth, revitalizing the traditional Quechua textile weaving industry, and educating travelers about responsible tourism through a knowledge exchange program. To support their efforts, each program operates a social enterprise component, which generates revenues in a way that aligns with their mission. Q’ente Textile Program operates Mosqoy Peruvian Textiles, a fair-trade textile business; T’ikary Youth Program operates a homestay experience for students; and Mink’a Knowledge Exchange Program operates the Mosqoy Field School.

Whereas Mosqoy used the power of social enterprise to support its non-profit mission, the Planeterra Foundation was a non-profit that grew out of a values-based tourism business, G Adventures. Planeterra operates at the intersection of the travel market, community need and impact opportunity, improving people’s lives by creating and supporting social enterprises that bring underserved communities into the tourism value chain. G Adventures operates in 100 countries around the world and Planeterra operates in 30 of those countries.

Along the same lines, Brett Soberg sees his company, Eagle Wing Whale Watching Tours, as not only a tourism business but a conservation venture. His carbon neutral expeditions charge guests a $2 wildlife fee, which is donated to conservation efforts through 1% For the Planet. The wildlife fee sparked conversation among guests, with many asking what more they could do. In late 2016, Eagle Wing launched a non-profit, the “Wild 4 Whales Foundation”, which focuses on advocacy, education, science and conservation for southern resident killer whales.

Powerful Partnerships: Creating Shared Value

Powerful partnerships that benefit all stakeholders can come in many different variations.

“Every partnership is a step forward, a footprint for our people, so thank you. Hay’sxw’qa.”
– FLORENCE DICK

Songhees Nation, a Lekwungen-speaking Coast Salish community of approximately 630 members, has been particularly successful in developing partnerships with government, educational institutions and businesses that increase the Nation’s economic vitality while maintaining control and autonomy of their business ventures. These businesses are strengthening the Nation and the local tourism community by creating jobs, skills training, and educational opportunities.

“I am very proud of all our partners. They didn’t come in with their own agendas, they sought to understand what we needed. They are willing to listen and form a true partnership.”
– FLORENCE DICK

First Nation & Non-Profit

Skwin’ang’eth Se’las Development Company (Helping Hands) is a partnership between Songhees Nation, Greater Victoria Harbour Authority (GVHA) and Esquimalt Nation for incubating Indigenous business and developing capacity. This successful relationship led to another partnership between Songhees and GVHA, and a space was created in the iconic Steamship Terminal to showcase Lekwungen culture and history with exhibits, a gallery and canoe tours in the Inner Harbour, the heart of Lekwungen Traditional Territory.

First Nation & Academia

Songhees partnered with Camosun College on the Aboriginal Culinary Arts, Hospitality and Tourism Management Program. The program is administered by Songhees, delivered by Camosun, and supported by government funding. The program is offered at the Songhees Wellness Centre, where students study in a classroom and practice their skills in an industrial kitchen. Graduates will have opportunities with Songhees Tourism and Hospitality ventures or create new businesses.
First Nation & Business

Songhees Seafood & Steam was founded after a conversation between Chief Ron Sam and Clipper Founder and Chair, Merideth Tall. They shared the desire to increase exposure to Songhees culture with really, really good food. The food truck offers a modern take on traditional food and allows visitors to experience an important piece of local culture and community.

In 2017, Songhees partnered with Eagle Wing Tours to launch a series of cultural tours in the Salish Sea. Songhees community members join tours to share stories and knowledge about the vibrant Indigenous history of this region rarely heard outside the Songhees community.

“We recognized there was room for improvement in this industry. We reached out to Songhees Nation, out of desire to do more, and to learn from them. We saw an opportunity for First Nations to leverage tourism to educate visitors and inspire youth to work in the industry. Partnerships are everything—they have inspired us to change how we conduct our tours. The opportunities are huge for preservation of culture by including First Nation narration and storytelling.” - BRETT SOBERG

In Alberta, the Rocky Mountain House Friendship Centre has had great success partnering with DMOs in the region to share the cultural stories of the three Indigenous communities that surround the small town. 122 non-profit Native Friendship Centres exist across Canada to provide health, education and cultural services to urban Inuit, Métis and First Nations people. Kirby BigChild, Executive Director of the Friendship Centre at Rocky Mountain House, believes these organizations are uniquely poised to collaborate with DMOs and tourism operators to advance sustainable Indigenous tourism.

Business & Government

Tundra North Tours, an Inuvialuit tourism company located in Inuvik, Northwest Territories, has a strategic partnership with ITAC and Destination Canada to promote sustainable tourism in Canada’s North. They have also created affiliate tours and student exchanges with other operators that share their mission.

The company takes their partners out on tours to film, and then gets access to their footage to use in promotional material. The cross promotion, relationship building and mutual benefit that results from these partnerships has resulted in this being a key part of Tundra North’s business model.

Whether you are a crown corporation, a for-profit, non-profit or something in between, your organization can explore hybrid business models to use the power of tourism and social enterprise as a force for positive change.

Your values and unique business model will open doors for new partnerships, across sectors and regions, bringing together unlikely synergies that create shared value and the change we need to see.
Calls to Action

Policy Makers
- Provincial: Revisit incorporation legislation to allow for hybrid and values-based business models and social enterprises (e.g. B Corp legislation in BC).

Destinations (DMOs)
- Facilitate partnerships between First Nations, academia, non-profits and operators.

Operators
- Start with revisiting your business model, constitution and values. Then explore your venture opportunities—how can you create revenue, jobs, and make a difference?
- Connect with local Native Friendship Centres to explore opportunities for partnership.

Academia
- Seek industry partners to create skills training opportunities in sustainable tourism
THE GATHERING – HYŠ’QA GWNS ÁNÉ TEʔČƏL I? NEWʔILEN ə? CE SQEPƏɬ

Venue - Victoria Harbour Airport Terminal

Tuesday, January 22, 2018

The gathering at Harbour Air, Canada’s First Carbon Neutral Airline, offered tastings of west coast cuisine and beverages from local restaurants and First Nations.

Floating in the waters of Victoria’s Inner Harbour, the innovative Victoria Harbour Airport Terminal has a green roof planted with low-water succulent sedum plants and honeybee hives!

The evening was designed for sharing our hopes and ideas for the future as we feasted on local cuisine prepared and served by Truffles Catering, Songhees Catering & Events and Pizzeria Prima Strada, businesses who all strive to be leaders in sustainable best practices in the hospitality industry. Locally produced libations were provided by Unsworth Vineyards, Tod Creek Craft Ciders, Wayward Distilleries and Hoyne Brewing Company, with help from Hire a Somm.
OVERBOOKED - WHEN MORE ISN’T BETTER: UNDERSTANDING CAPACITY AND ADDRESSING SEASONALITY AND TOURISM DISBURSEMENT.

Facilitator: Greg Klassen, Partner, Twenty31 Consulting

Speakers: Elizabeth Becker, Journalist & Author of Overbooked; Paul Nursey, President & CEO, Tourism Victoria; Darren Reeder, Executive Director, Banff & Lake Louise Hospitality Association

Destinations are increasingly experiencing overtourism, with heavy influxes of visitors causing negative environmental, economic and sociocultural effects. How can we balance the needs and wants of residents vs. the experiences and desires of paying visitors?

On January 23rd, 2018 the second day of the IMPACT conference, Cape Town announced it would, within months, run out of water. With a population of 3.75 million and over 5 million annual visitors, it raises the question: “Is it responsible to be in the business of tourism if they barely have enough water for their citizens?”

Around the world, popular destinations are experiencing the effects of unsustainable tourism. Infrastructure is strained, natural and cultural assets are at risk, residents are increasingly becoming alienated from their local cultures and communities overwrought with tourists, and the quality of the experience for the traveller are being compromised. Destinations are being “loved to death”. What can be done by the tourism industry to curb the phenomenon of overtourism?

The Problem We Face

While many Canadian destinations are years away from ‘too much,’ all can benefit from prioritizing more sustainable and responsible tourism.

Banff, Alberta has restricted the development of their community, but visitors come whether they have a bed to sleep in or not. Many visitors day-trip to enjoy the parks, resulting in overcrowding of the already full parks and road ways. In the Northern Bruce Peninsula in Ontario, a popular summer vacation spot, the community recognised that they simply have too many people, and too many tour busses and have begun a strategy for managing growth.

These symptoms of overtourism not only make the destination less attractive to visitors, they drive a wedge between the community and the tourism industry. Most dramatically in Europe, overtourism is bringing rise to mass demonstrations from locals, fed up with rising rent prices, overcrowding and the loss of local supply.

In New Zealand, recent success in expanding the tourism industry has 40% of residents concerned about tourism growth. In Victoria BC, where the summer cruise ships bring thousands of visitors downtown every day, a survey of residents showed that just 11% are opposed to tourism. What are some strategies to prevent this number from rising, and to avoid the pitfalls of unchecked tourism growth?

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Managing Overtourism: Quality over Quantity

When cities, governments and industry work together on a cooperative strategy, quality tourism is the result. The Iguazu Falls, on the border of Brazil and Argentina, are the most spectacular falls you’ve never heard of. Equal in size to about six Niagara Falls, they make up the largest waterfall system in the world. Near to the falls is Parques das Aves, a conservation park committed to protecting the birds of the Atlantic rainforest. Here, the park focuses on conservation and protection first, and profits second. The park uses tourism to showcase nine birds at critical risk of extinction, turning visitors into advocates.

Elizabeth Becker’s favourite example of quality tourism is Bordeaux, France. Once a destination with a “reputation of a boring, faded beauty, it’s former glory hidden behind grimy buildings and abandoned warehouses,” Bordeaux was transformed. The city focused on “planning for the people who lived there”. Bordeaux focused on pedestrian areas, reducing the need for vehicles. The city was named the best city in France for preserving biodiversity, and they are celebrated for their green spaces and waste recycling programs. The rejuvenation was a success and in 2008, Bordeaux was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Hard pressed to find a critic of tourism in the community, it was clear that the coordinated strategy between the city, region and national government had worked.

“It wasn’t about selling more wine, it was about improving lifestyle.” – Elizabeth Becker

Quality visitors are often misconstrued as those who spend the most money. This definition puts destinations at risk of pandering and excluding low and middle-class travellers. It is integral we consider how visitors treat the destination and precisely where they spend their dollars.

A quality visitor:

• Respects the destination and its residents
• Spends multiple nights
• Visit attractions and goes on tours
• Supports local restaurants and shops

In Victoria, as well as other parts of coastal North America, a hot button issue is cruise ships. Travelling from city to city, cruise ships have been cited ‘least regulated hotels on the planet’ with limited rules on water and sewer, especially far off the coasts. For destinations considering cruise ships, it is crucial to conduct an independent study first. Review the effects of air and water pollution in detail and compare against the revenue generated. Cities can work proactively with cruise lines and plan to provide appropriate shore power and access to waste management programs. This will reduce emissions and improve the facilities cruise lines need to improve their environmental performance.

BANFF, ALBERTA

Growth in Banff has been restricted for over 17 years. The footprint of the community is maxed out. Visitation is down 18% from the highs experienced in the 90s, but the destination is only getting better.

- 97% is protected nature
- Reduction in land leased to tourism operators
- 73 new scientific projects have been initiated or completed over the past 4 years,
- 42% increase in ecological monitoring
- 69% increase in annual investment in Banff national Park reserve Conservation program,

_calls to Action_

Policy Makers

- Support research to establish carrying capacity of destinations.
- Collaborate with destinations on strategies to address overtourism and develop infrastructure to support emissions and waste reduction.

Operators

- Develop products and services that celebrate and enhance local culture and biodiversity
- Help visitors become advocates—including education in tours and offerings.

Destinations (DMOs)

- Develop a strategy to manage growth in a way that improves the local cultural, economic and environmental assets.
- Work with major operators on strategies to reduce emissions, congestion and overtourism.
- Develop disbursement strategies and off-season products that promote agritourism.

Further Research/Reading

- Further research is needed to understand tourism impacts. Here are some suggested metrics to explore:
  - Carrying capacity of destinations
  - Average total $ spend per visitor
  - Average length of stay
  - Likelihood of resident to recommend their destination
CASE STUDY: Palau Pledge

Palau is the first country in the world to create a marine sanctuary that envelops their entire nation. Each and every visitor has this legal pledge stamped in their passport to promise to preserve and protect the fragile land, cultural and marine environment of this tiny nation which must be signed before they can enter the country. Not abiding by the pledge risks fines of up to a million dollars.

“Children of Palau,
I take this pledge, as your guest, to preserve and protect your beautiful and unique island home.

“I vow to tread lightly, act kindly and explore mindfully.
I shall not take what is not given.
I shall not harm what does not harm me.

“The only footprints I shall leave are those that will wash away.”
CONFERENCE OUTCOMES

Facilitator: Greg Klassen, Partner, Twenty31 Consulting

On the last day of the conference, delegates gathered to reflect on the conference and discuss future industry actions.

This conference was held to address the desire for broader and deeper discussions about sustainable tourism in Canada. The stories we heard were vivid, and the conversations created a layered tapestry of opportunities for our nation. As a destination for global travelers who crave authentic, local experiences, Canada is in a unique position to lead the world in sustainable tourism.

It’s not just about building a sustainable tourism industry — it’s about tourism being our greatest economic asset in the quest to build a sustainable future in Canada. Tourism can be not only sustainable, but restorative to our culture and environment. It is an industry in which those elements are also true assets.

This conference was met with both support and hesitation from the industry. Organizers were challenged to show this was not a special interest group, but a movement that can help bolster a growing tourism economy.

The reality is, sustainability and business performance are inextricably linked. The brand lift to a business or destination is measurable and proven—as shown in examples throughout this paper. Markets around the world are demanding sustainability in Canada’s tourism products. A bolder shift towards sustainability in tourism is one of our greatest opportunities to show leadership as a nation and sector.

IMPACT x

The journey of IMPACT has just begun. IMPACTx sessions are being self-organized throughout the nation. These local dialogues are creating space for municipalities, DMOs, operators and other stakeholders to plan their tourism future.

Our whole industry needs to have deeper and broader discussions. These start right at home, on our communities. IMPACTx sessions can be hosted by anyone, anywhere. The IMPACTx toolkit is available at www.tourismlegacy.ca. Apply now to host your own dialogue and join us for the annual IMPACT National Conference to learn, share, shape and grow sustainable tourism Canada.
TOP “AHA MOMENTS” FROM ATTENDEES

• IMPACT gained unprecedented political engagement with multiple levels of government, opposition, and First Nations in not just “tourism” but in sustainable tourism. Can we hold onto this momentum and is this a pivot point?

• Green hushing: Are we being too modest, perhaps too “Canadian” by keeping our successes and momentum in sustainable tourism too quiet? Keeping our best secrets too quiet? Our international messaging has room to be bolder.

• The evening following our disaster preparedness session, the IMPACT delegation was tested with a tsunami warning. Only one person evacuated. We have a lot of work to do.

• We need to expand our vocabulary beyond volume numbers. We need a more balanced scorecard for destinations that includes metrics such as dispersion, seasonality, environmental sustainability, cultural integrity, and more.

• It is no longer about simply “sustainable tourism”; we need to aim to be restorative, to harness the power of tourism to repair damages done in the past.

• Try not to be so overwhelmed with issues that it forces you into inactivity, because it all starts with small actions.

• We do not need to wait for policy to change. Industry must continue to get ahead of the curve. Policy will keep up with the momentum of business.

• We learned from the Palau Pledge that the traveler can also be held accountable and empowered to travel responsibly. They will relish the values that speak to them, but the destination must set the tone.

• Tourism is a powerful catalyst for societal good. Local and authentic is the #1 trend in travel and tourism. We can use this to create products and experience that support sustainable communities.

• We CAN “save the world, one destination at a time”
Measuring What Matters – Next Steps

IMPACT 2019 will dig deeper into environmental and social metrics that can enhance conventional success indicators such as visitation and arrivals. There is an opportunity to create direct alignment with the indicators within the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Agencies, research institutions and academic institutions can help guide the development of destination metrics that measure what matters. The creation of a balanced scorecard will be vital in restorative tourism destinations.

Some potential metrics discussed include:

- Energy use intensity metrics
- Water consumption
- Waste creation
- First Nations tourism products and services
- Length of stays
- Travel dispersion
- Local economic impact
- Carrying capacity
- Cultural and environmental educational experiences
- Ecological protected space
ANNEX – 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.

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 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 (www.carbonzero.ca)
  - Resurgence Carbon Dioxide Calculator (www.resurgence.org/resources/carbon-calculator.html)
  - Offsetters – flight & car emissions only (www.offsetters.ca/education/calculators/flight-emissions-calculator)
  - Green Key Hotel Carbon Calculation Tool (www.greenkey.global/online-hcmi/)

  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 (www.synergyenterprises.ca)
  - Offsetters (www.offsetters.ca)
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.

• Hotel Footprinting: Provides an interactive tool which allows you to search the range of carbon emissions and energy usage among hotels around the world. A benchmarking function shows the carbon and energy footprint data for specific geographies; a footprinting function allows you to calculate the carbon footprint of a hotel stay. (www.hotelfootprints.org)

• 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 Aquiculture Practices).

• Minimize transportation requirements during the event by keeping venues and accommodations within walking distance; or ensure there are adequate public transportation options 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; e.g., 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. (www.zerowasteboxes.terracycle.ca)

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. (www.offsetters.ca)

- 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. (www.bullfrogpower.com)

- TripZero: This online tool allows travelers to individually offset the impact of their travel. (www.tripzero.com)

- Less: Helps people and organizations mitigate travel-related emissions through the purchasing of high-quality offsets in Canada and around the world. (www.less.ca)
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