

RAD NETWORK: ENVISIONING THE INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION ECONOMY

Gathering Report - 2023



LISTENING TO THE LAND

- Adryan Jones -

WE DEDICATE THE WORK WE ARE DOING TO
THE SEVEN GENERATIONS YET TO BE BORN.



conservation
through
reconciliation
partnership





A Publication of the RAD (Restore, Assert and Defend) Network.
This initiative has been incubated out of the Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership.

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INDIGENOUS LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE



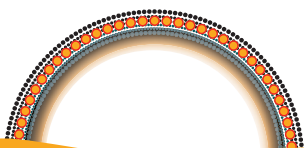
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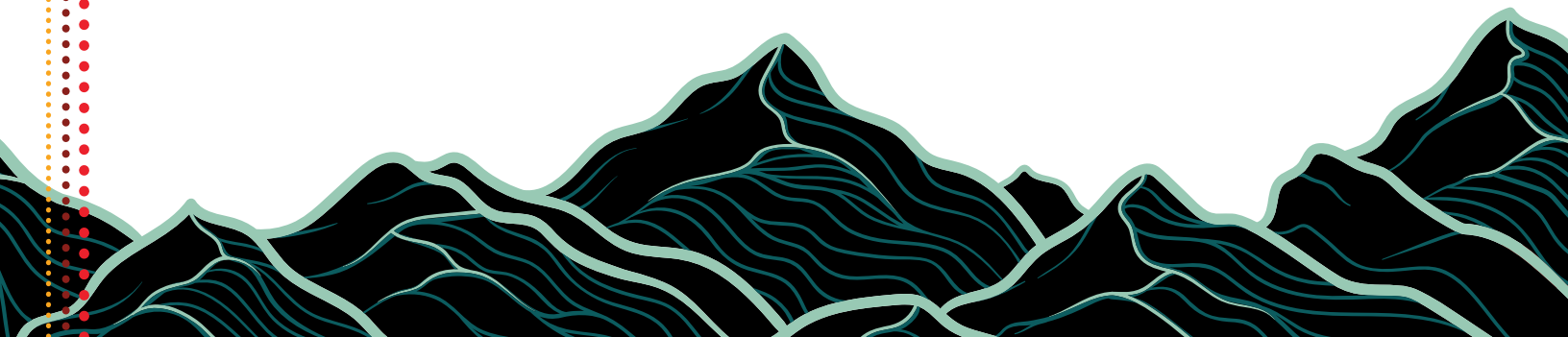
A LETTER FROM RAD LEADERSHIP

Time has passed since we came together in April to create our collective vision. We hope that over the summer months you were able to engage in activities that fulfilled you and feel re-energized for the season ahead. The leadership of the RAD Network have come together to share this message at the time of the Blue Moon: a time of healing, transformation, and rejuvenation. This is also the time of harvesting the bounty that began to grow in the spring. Following autumn will come winter and colder weather before we welcome the arrival of spring once again. Mother Nature will not rush this cycle, as her laws govern the natural world. We also want to acknowledge that she is out of balance, and that there is a need for global healing. This summer has seen unprecedented fires, floods, and extreme weather changes. Members of our RAD Leadership Group themselves have been climate refugees, along with some of you. Our hearts go out to everyone experiencing displacement and loss.

Climate Change is a runaway train, and the urgency to address it might unintentionally recreate the very systems responsible for creating this colonial climate emergency. We know that we must move decisively to protect and restore nature, as at least one-third of the climate solution, and that this journey must be guided by the wisdom, knowledge, and leadership of Indigenous Peoples, who, while representing 5% of the world's population, steward lands and waters with 80% of the remaining global biodiversity.

World leaders advocate for various solutions, including market-based mechanisms such as carbon and biodiversity credits, and other nature-based solutions. Evidence shows that Indigenous-led nature-based solutions projects present the greatest opportunity to reach 30% protection by 2030 and beyond. Protection and restoration of nature is central to a new regenerative economy, and the right of all people to a healthy environment. But at the end of the day, the path and pace forward on Indigenous Territories must be set by Indigenous communities.

Our mission through the RAD Network is to hold space to restore relations, assert our responsibilities, and defend the land that sustains us all. We will do this by supporting Indigenous leadership, sovereignty, and Nation-building, and by fulfilling our inherent



responsibility as stewards by listening to and respecting Natural Law. The vision that came forward for what this network is here to achieve is one where Indigenous Peoples are empowered to lead the way to shape the future, guided by Natural Law. Central to this is the rekindling of Indigenous-led economies, ones rooted in a tapestry of regenerative practices guided by Spirit and grounded in the principles of abundance, unity, reciprocity, and love for outcomes that honour land, culture, and sovereignty. Together, we wove an ash basket created by Indigenous leaders, youth, Elders, academics, activists, and legal experts from a rich fabric, interlaced with shared values of kinship with all our relations - past and future.

We will continue to support what has been declared through existing Indigenous-led approaches such as Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas and Indigenous Guardians, and we will create new possibilities and models of the regenerative conservation economy. We will share tools and expertise with communities, ENGOS and marketplace partners, and we will influence policy to clear the path of barriers. We will advance global commitments made in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Path to Net Zero, and the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We will help to secure funds for the development of Indigenous-led nature-based solutions projects, aided by philanthropic and private sector allies, to achieve high integrity bioregional scale opportunities that provide social, environmental, and economic returns for all parties.

We invite all our Indigenous communities and families across Turtle Island and beyond to continue to connect and foster relationships and solutions through the RAD Network. We are excited to share this report with you following our gathering together in April 2023, and to continue growing this network through Full Moon gatherings and many other opportunities. Together, we will begin prioritizing actions to craft a path of transformation to continue to build regenerative economies that prioritize life.

Woliwon, wela'lin, miigwetch, masih, niá:wen, ʔeekoo, marsi, hai hai, anushiik, merci, thank you,

RAD Leadership Group



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

RAD NETWORK: ENVISIONING THE INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION ECONOMY

BACKGROUND

Eighty percent of the world's remaining biodiversity is on land managed by Indigenous Peoples, who have been sustainably managing their territories since time immemorial. As colonial-capitalist models continue to fall short in addressing the dual biodiversity-climate crisis, transformative opportunities exist at the intersection of Indigenous resurgence and environmental action.

The Restore, Assert and Defend (RAD) Network aims to support the work of Indigenous Nations and communities to restore relationships and Indigenous knowledge systems, assert rights and responsibilities, and defend lands and waters. Following along the path laid by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE), RAD seeks to connect Indigenous governments and communities to each other, and to financial resources, tools, and expertise to advance Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs) and regenerative Indigenous-led economies.

Emerging from the work streams of the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership, since 2022, the Network has been steadily growing with strategic direction from its Leadership Group.

GATHERING: ENVISIONING PATHWAYS FORWARD

In April 2023, the RAD Network hosted a gathering entitled *Restore, Assert and Defend (RAD) Network: Envisioning the Indigenous-led Conservation Economy*. The gathering was held on the unceded and unsurrendered Territory of the Wolastoqiyik at St. Mary's First Nation, at Sitansisk (also known as Fredericton, New Brunswick). The intent of the gathering was to foster connections, deepen our understanding of the current context of the work, and to co-create a shared vision for the emergent RAD Network.

The local community, Elders, and Fire Keepers offered a very warm welcome to their territory and fostered a gathering rooted in place and enriched by ceremony, cultural teachings, and musical traditions. Our Facilitator Erin Dixon, and Local Convenor Patricia Saulis, led the design of an agenda that prioritized dialogue and interaction among the over 80 individuals who attended. The gathering was further enriched by Terry Young, Wolastoqiyik scholar and Knowledge Carrier from Kingsclear First Nation, who wove a traditional ash basket to reflect the spirit and intentions we collectively wove together.

Participants included Indigenous leaders, Knowledge Carriers, land guardians, Elders, youth, academics, activists, legal experts, and policy advisors, among others.

Stories and insights were shared from individuals pursuing initiatives from coast-to-coast-to-coast, from those with well-established IPCAs to those in the early stages of visioning, and from diverse cultural, jurisdictional, geopolitical, and ecological contexts. The dialogue was rich in stories and knowledge, which we strive to reflect more fully and sincerely in the gathering report, podcasts, and digital stories.

LOOKING AHEAD: NETWORK ACTIVITIES & OUTPUTS

Key themes of discussion included community kinship, jurisdiction, markets, policy and advocacy, values, voice and communication, youth engagement, the rights of nature, and discussions around tools that can advance our goals in these areas. The discussions distilled potential actions and outputs for the RAD Network to pursue going forward, some of which are already underway.

KEY THEMES AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS FOR THE RAD NETWORK AS IDENTIFIED BY GATHERING PARTICIPANTS:

RAD VALUES

Centre Indigenous languages in our work and ground all partnerships in reciprocity, aligning with RAD Network values, as collectively defined by the Network. Priority actions include revisiting and updating RAD Network values with collaborative input and co-creating Reciprocity Agreements with partners in alignment with RAD Network values.

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

Analyze and compile funding resources/mechanisms and case studies, and dismantle and reconstruct current tools within Indigenous worldviews and RAD Network values. Priority actions include compiling a list of Indigenous-led nature-based solutions as potential case studies and developing an assessment tool for partnership building.

JURISDICTION

Develop recommendations/resources to support Indigenous Nations and communities seeking to legally assert their jurisdiction and to be prepared to respond to any attempts to takeover that jurisdiction. A priority action is to conduct interviews and record examples of guidelines for stewardship rooted in Indigenous law that takes precedence over Crown law.

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

Mobilize collaborative research/outreach to identify policy barriers to Indigenous-led IPCAs, carbon management, and other conservation initiatives and economies. Identify and act on critical policy windows while working toward larger scale systems change.

KEY THEMES AND POTENTIAL ACTIONS CON'T:

YOUTH

Create a RAD Network youth group and integrate with RAD leadership, providing youth with mentorship and support to lead activities such as youth-led/focused events, exchanges, intergenerational mentorship, and network building with other youth groups, among other priorities identified by youth. Key actions include recruiting leads and participants for the RAD Network youth group and providing mentorship and support for fundraising.

MARKETS

Convene nature-based solutions project developers for a critical dialogue on Indigenous rights and explore the creation of an Indigenous-led clearing house for carbon projects. In addition, explore other markets and valuation mechanisms (e.g., biodiversity, water service credits, etc.).

DECLARATION

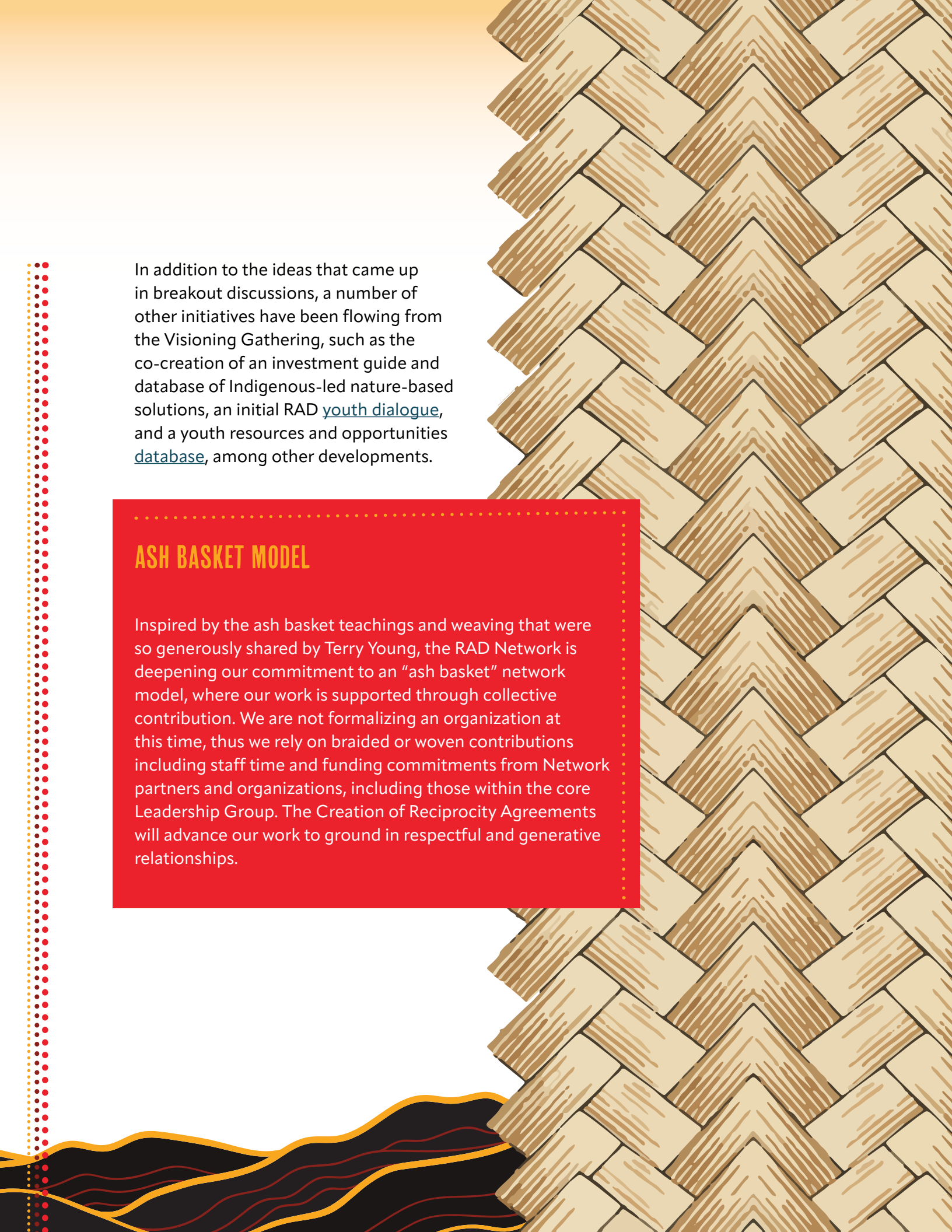
Convene a roundtable and consider co-developing a declaration on the rights of nature, grounded in Natural Law and Indigenous laws, values, and knowledge systems. In addition, explore opportunities for collective action around the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery.

COMMUNITY KINSHIP

Support alliance building between Nations/Communities to collaboratively assess conservation finance opportunities; advocate for flexible, decolonized funding models; and incorporate fun, music, ceremony, culture, storytelling, art, language, and intergenerational learning within our work. Key outputs may include a community manual or guide to conservation finance, community engagement protocols, and stories shared via the RAD website, newsletters, and partner platforms.

VOICE AND COMMUNICATION

Broadly amplify youth voices, centre Indigenous languages, and foster Ethical Space. Priority actions include developing alternative, accessible ways to receive feedback on RAD Network activities (e.g., anonymously), as well as compiling and reframing key phrasing commonly used in the fields in which we work (e.g., reconceptualize "conservation finance").



In addition to the ideas that came up in breakout discussions, a number of other initiatives have been flowing from the Visioning Gathering, such as the co-creation of an investment guide and database of Indigenous-led nature-based solutions, an initial RAD [youth dialogue](#), and a youth resources and opportunities [database](#), among other developments.

ASH BASKET MODEL

Inspired by the ash basket teachings and weaving that were so generously shared by Terry Young, the RAD Network is deepening our commitment to an “ash basket” network model, where our work is supported through collective contribution. We are not formalizing an organization at this time, thus we rely on braided or woven contributions including staff time and funding commitments from Network partners and organizations, including those within the core Leadership Group. The Creation of Reciprocity Agreements will advance our work to ground in respectful and generative relationships.

NEXT STEPS

Ultimately, the gathering reaffirmed and clarified the RAD Network's priorities and provided a springboard for further action. Next steps include reaching out to members and partners to gauge interest levels and capacity, and prioritizing next steps with the guidance of our Leadership Group. Fall 2023 will also be dedicated to advancing reciprocity conversations with RAD Network partners.

As Terry Young shared, a network is like an ash basket; when many individual strands are woven together, they become one creation with a purpose: to carry something forward. Our gathering wove together stories, knowledge, and intentions, and created a strong and flexible container for the RAD Network. We look forward to working together to carry forward our shared vision for Indigenous-led regenerative economies.

"Some of us are coming from very small communities or isolated communities and we feel powerless because we don't have the numbers, but just think what would happen if those small numbers could be empowered? so they could feel that they're not alone?"

– Elder Albert Marshall

Wolinvon, wela'lin, miigwetch, masih, niā:wen, ʔeekoo, marsi, hai hai, anushiik, merci, thank you to all who made this gathering and collaborative work possible

We gratefully acknowledge and extend our thanks to our local hosts and Knowledge Carriers, Local Convenor, Gathering Facilitator, RAD Working Group contributors, and all the participants who shared their time, knowledge, stories, and visions for the future.

LEARN MORE & STAY CONNECTED

radpartnership@gmail.com

[Website](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

Register your interest: [Sign-up Form](#)

INTRODUCTION

In response to the joint global crises of biodiversity loss and climate change, many solutions have been proposed. So far, however, the policies and practices set at local, provincial, national, and international levels have failed to adequately address the challenges we are faced with. It is here that we see tremendous opportunities for Indigenous* resurgence and reconciliation. It has been well documented that 80% of the world's remaining biodiversity is on land managed by Indigenous Peoples, who have been sustainably managing their ecosystems based on their traditional ecological knowledge and governance systems. At the intersection of environmental action and Indigenous resurgence, pathways are emerging that lead to a better future.

Within this context, the Restore, Assert and Defend (RAD) Network has emerged from the streams of work of the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP) to enable conservation finance pathways rooted in Indigenous rights, responsibilities, and knowledge systems. The CRP is a seven-year program hosted by the IISAAK OLAM Foundation, the Indigenous Leadership Initiative, and the University of Guelph that brings together many partners to support Indigenous-led conservation in Canada. As the CRP begins to wind down, the RAD Network is establishing its distinct identity and vision – leveraging the power of network building to build capacity and advance financing solutions for decolonized and Indigenous-led conservation.



RAD Leadership and Operations Group members stand with Elder Ed Perley and Elder Ramona Nicholas to greet the Wolastoq river. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

**In this publication we use the term "Indigenous" to refer to the First Nations, Métis, and Inuit Peoples of Canada.*

In April 2023, the RAD Network hosted a gathering entitled Restore, Assert and Defend (RAD) Network: Envisioning the Indigenous-led Conservation Economy. The gathering was held on the unceded and unsundered Territory of the Wolastoqiyik at St. Mary's First Nation, at Sitsansk (also known as Fredericton, New Brunswick). Over 80 individuals from 60 organizations and Nations traveled from coast-to-coast-to-coast to participate, including Indigenous leaders, Knowledge Carriers, land stewards, and partners to connect, share perspectives, and envision pathways forward. We sought to co-create a shared vision for our emergent network and determine how to move forward together to advance Indigenous-led, regenerative conservation rooted in abundance.

While participants came from diverse contexts and brought forth a wide range of perspectives, the dialogue reinforced our shared commitment to elevating Indigenous leadership and restoring lands and waters via reimagined economies and healthy relationships with Mother Earth. The event was greatly enriched by our local hosts, who helped to ground the gathering in place, ceremony, and Wolastoqiyik culture.

Wolastoqiyik Knowledge Carrier, Terry Young, reminded us of the collective strength we can tap into when we weave our intentions together with good hearts and minds.

This document provides an overview of the events and outcomes of the visioning gathering, including a preview of where we're headed. The report provides three main sections: In the first, we provide an introduction to the RAD Network and the context of where we're coming from. In the second, we provide a summary of the approach and flow of the visioning gathering in Fredericton, including an overview of what we heard, and key themes that emerged from our discussions. In the third, we look ahead at potential working groups, activities, and outputs that we will explore as a network. Finally, we offer closing remarks, drawing on the outcomes of the gathering.



BACKGROUND

RAD NETWORK PURPOSE

The RAD Network is working to advance economic pathways for Indigenous-led conservation in Canada. We believe that conservation, protection of biodiversity, and the resurgence of Indigenous self-determination go hand-in-hand.

We aspire to uncover how we might all walk this new path forward: one that addresses ecological devastation and activates a powerfully connected future of living well together.

However, for Indigenous-led conservation and land stewardship to be successful, this initiative requires an economic core that can sustain it while advancing many related activities and values. This work is about building regenerative economies, not just financing conservation. Shifting authority and financial ownership and benefit to Indigenous Peoples is a critical component of this. There is a need to honour both what has been lost and what is given. Indigenous Nations are seeking a meaningful way to achieve economic reconciliation while providing reconciliation with the environment from which they have been dispossessed for too long.

*We are not the leaders;
we are the spark that
lights the fire or feeds
the flames.*

We acknowledge that the language and ways of understanding the words “conservation” and “finance” and approaches like “nature-based solutions” need to be discussed so shared definitions and understandings can be created based on Two-Eyed Seeing, i.e., elevating Indigenous languages and working with the best of knowledges, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous. Yet, there is a huge opportunity and need to centre Indigenous authority, responsibilities, and knowledge systems in the emerging field of conservation finance, most immediately in emerging carbon markets and also in the wider fields of nature-based solutions, natural asset valuation, and biodiversity and climate finance.

The aim of the RAD Network is to support the work of Indigenous Nations and communities to restore relationships and Indigenous knowledge systems, assert rights and responsibilities, and defend lands and waters. Our leadership group is clear that the purpose of the Network is not to lead the way, but to uplift and support the Nations and leadership expressing their authority through land and water stewardship activities, including Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCAs), and those who are seeking financing mechanisms to support this.

NATURE-BASED SOLUTIONS MUST ALIGN WITH INDIGENOUS SELF-DETERMINATION, RIGHTS, AND RESPONSIBILITIES

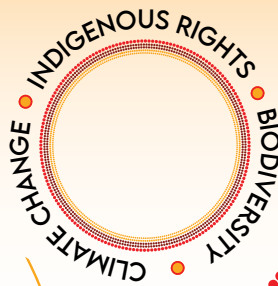
The RAD Network is rooted in respect for Natural Law, which teaches that the first responsibility human beings inherit is a commitment to the continuation of all life. The responsibilities carried by Indigenous Peoples — to ancestors, to territory, to specific species, and to the wellbeing and nurturance of future generations — are the foundation of legal orders and systems which have sustained relationships of integrity, persistence, and ingenuity for centuries. Indigenous rights are *sui generis* rights that are inalienable, held communally, and have existed since time immemorial.

Nature-based solutions projects must be defined, developed, and consented to by Indigenous Peoples exercising these inherent land-based responsibilities and legal traditions. Constitutional, Treaty, and traditional Aboriginal Rights must also be respected in the advancement of nature-based solutions on Indigenous territories. Bill C-15 also affirms the inherent right of First Nations and Indigenous communities in Canada to define how we will manage and make decisions within our territory.

When advancing nature-based solutions, all *sui generis* Indigenous Rights (including carbon rights and rights to other tangible and intangible ecosystem services) should be assessed before allocating and ascribing any entitlement. Nature-based solutions must include free, prior, and informed consent of affected Indigenous groups, and may require the assessment of applicable Aboriginal territories, Rights Claims, Treaties, and Land Claims.



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser,
Minds Eye Creative.)



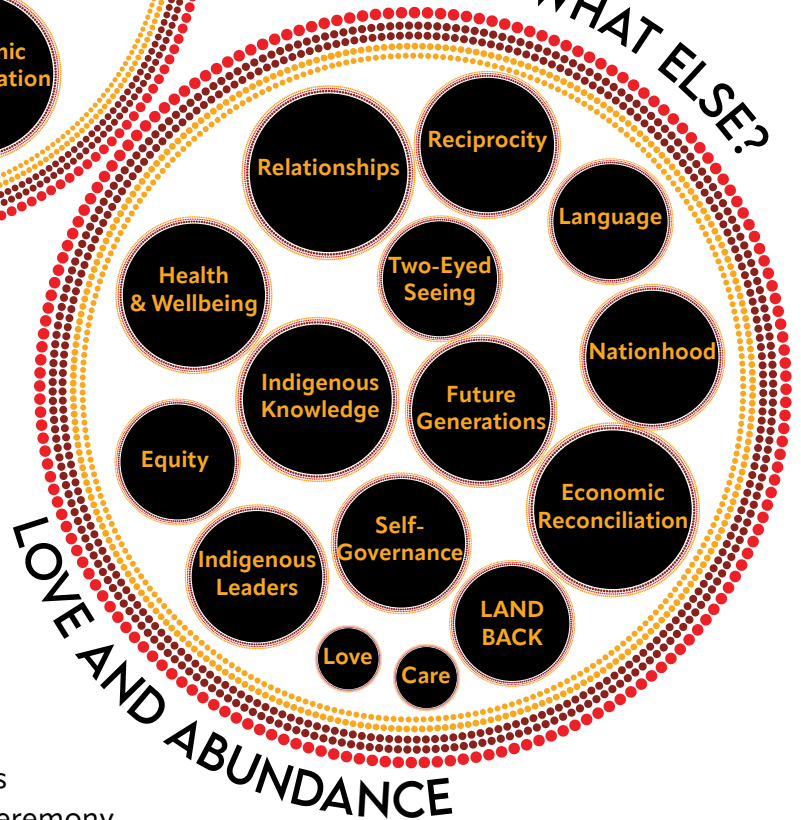
CONSERVATION ECONOMY

SPRIT



Figure 1. Context of the work

WHAT ELSE?



VALUES

- To uphold the knowledge of Elders
- To ground our work in Spirit and ceremony
- To be guided by the Seven Ancestral Grandfather and Grandmother Teachings of Love, Respect, Bravery, Truth, Honesty, Humility, and Wisdom
- To prioritize integrity
- To use Indigenous languages, worldviews, and teachings
- To honour cultural and kinship ties, and past and present trade networks
- To develop relationships rooted in reciprocity
- To work in Ethical Space
- To advance regenerative finance approaches based on Indigenous knowledge systems and shared values, as opposed to colonial-capitalist models of value and worth

RAD VALUES, GOALS, AND PRIORITIES

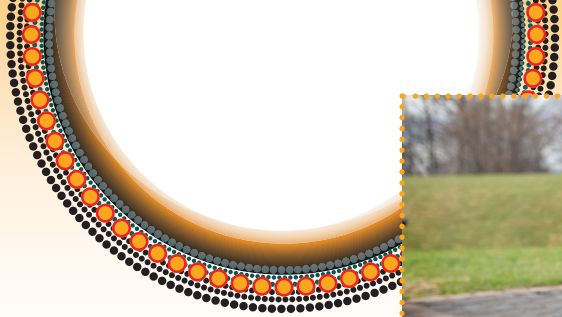
GOALS

1. To advance Indigenous rights and responsibilities to care for lands, waters, biodiversity, and climate, through the establishment of IPCAs and Indigenous-led nature-based solutions.
2. To ensure laws and policies enabling nature-based solutions recognize and advance inherent Indigenous rights, jurisdiction, and authority to care for lands and waters. This includes recognition of Indigenous rights and responsibilities for managing carbon, natural assets, and biodiversity, and ensuring direct decision-making of rights-holders in the design of any conservation finance and nature-based solutions.
3. To support regenerative Indigenous-led economies by connecting Indigenous Nations and communities to each other, and to financial resources, tools, and expertise to implement nature-based solutions on their territories.
4. To establish Canada as a global leader in Indigenous-led nature-based solutions by engaging with market actors and supporting the emergence of financial, governance, and capacity-building tools that centre Indigenous jurisdiction, inherent rights, and worldviews in their creation.

The RAD Network will pursue these goals by building relationships, practical tools, and knowledge. The approach is firmly grounded in Spirit and Ethical Space, and pursued in alignment with the path that has been walked by the Indigenous Circle of Experts (ICE) and the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP).

Nature-based Solutions (NbS) are strategies that work with nature to tackle various environmental and societal challenges like climate change, loss of biodiversity, wildfire management, and water conservation. While NbS recognizes its role in mitigating climate change, it encompasses a wider range of actions, including adaptation, biodiversity preservation, and improved water resource management.

Within NbS, there's a specific subset known as Natural Climate Solutions (NCS). NCS focuses primarily on combating climate change by utilizing natural ecosystems to capture and store carbon dioxide from the atmosphere by conserving, restoring, protecting, and managing carbon-rich ecosystems such as forests, wetlands, grasslands, and agricultural lands. Examples are activities that reduce overall greenhouse gas emissions and bolster carbon storage, such as afforestation, reforestation, avoiding degradation, and conservation.



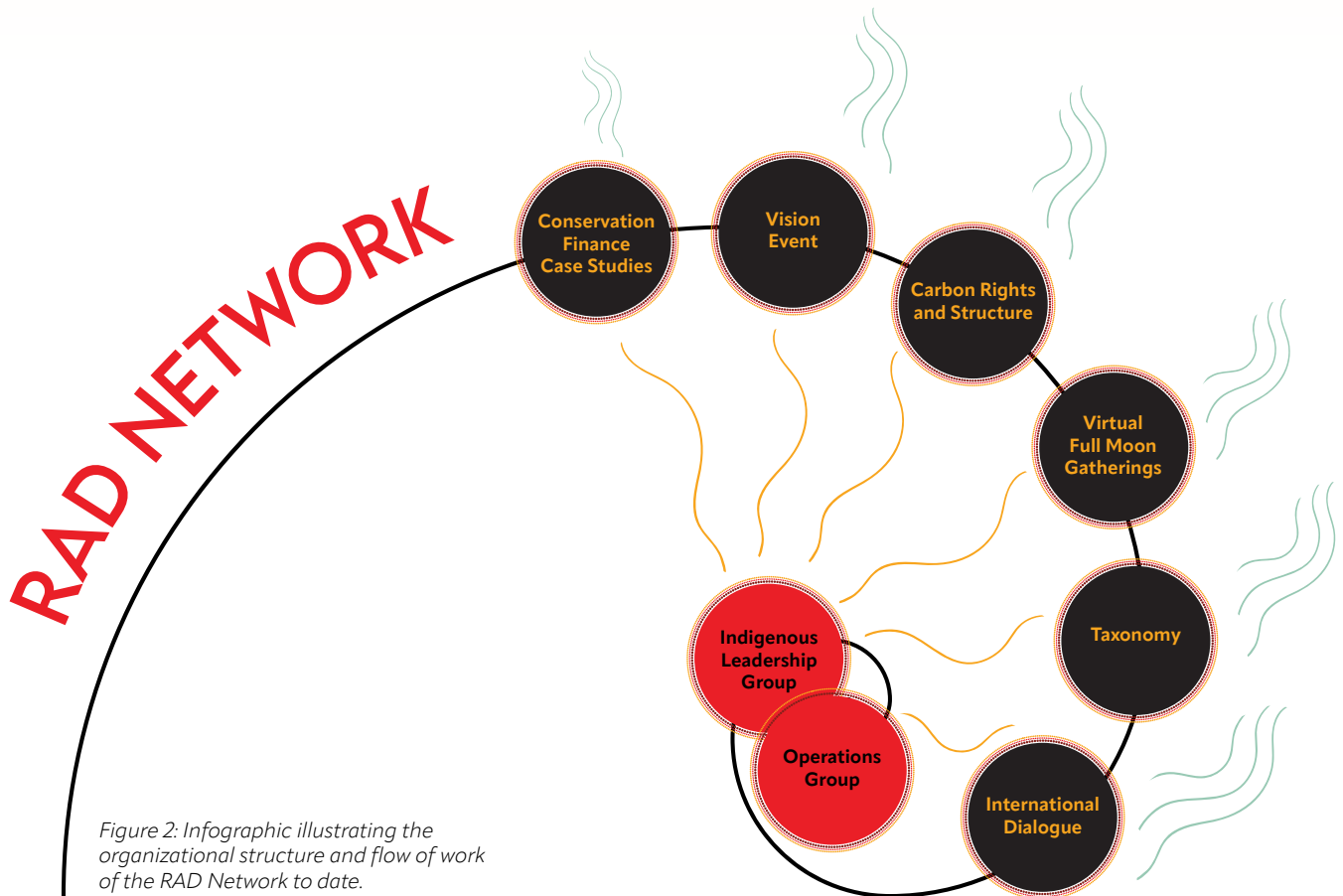
The sacred fire at RAD Network gathering. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

PRIORITIES

- **Be guided by Indigenous worldviews, cultures, and languages** while working to frame and advance this work through relationships and translation into other sectors.
 - Create a directory of terms that are consistent with Indigenous worldviews.
- **Grow relationships and connect people** through the creation of a multi-sector network.
 - Identify the people and organizations interested or involved in regenerative finance — building a marketplace for nature-based solutions, natural asset valuations, Indigenous-led carbon management, conservation bonds, and other related financial innovations;
 - Share elements of best/wise practices with market actors — communicating Indigenous-led approaches and highlighting the barriers.
- **Create and share tools and information** for communities to advance nature-based solutions in their territories (e.g., template language, case studies, stories). Tools are understood to include spiritual, cultural, economic, and educational aspects.
 - Document emerging practices that centre Indigenous rights and responsibilities;
 - Share existing place-based models and showcase leadership;
 - Communicate values, tools, and findings by sharing examples, hosting learning events (e.g., Full Moon Network Gatherings), and producing blogs, podcasts, and Network gatherings;
 - Increase capacity on the ground through the sharing of stories and knowledge, and by growing regional presence.
- **Research and develop** high-level policy and marketplace recommendations that centre Indigenous rights and responsibilities, and inform the Network of opportunities for Indigenous Nations to lead and influence policy decisions and marketplace direction that could enhance or impede their conversation projects.
- **Catalyze and support** Indigenous-led nature-based finance solutions on the ground.
- **Create and share policy resources** with Nations looking to create and finance IPCAs that are policy, rights, and markets-relevant.

OUR CURRENT STRUCTURE

Inspired by the ash basket teachings and weaving so generously shared by Terry Young, RAD Network is deepening our commitment to an “ash basket” network model, where our work is supported through collective contribution. The RAD Network currently consists of a Leadership Group, Operations Group, Working Groups, and a broader network of individuals and organizations.



The Leadership Group guides the strategic direction, goals, and approach of the Network.

The current Leadership Group members are: David Flood (Wahkohtowin Development), Trish Nash (Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources), Steven Nitah (Nature for Justice), Kim Neale (Natural Assets Initiative), Eli Enns (IISAAK OLAM Foundation), and Terry Dorward (IISAAK OLAM Foundation). We are grateful for the contributions of Patricia Saulis who was a founding member of the Leadership Group.

The Operations Group operationalizes the vision of the Leadership Group and the communities we engage while also implementing the priorities of the Network.

The Working Groups advance the overall goals to establish priorities through dialogue, research, and shared action. Thus far, Working Groups have been working on a range of topics, as illustrated in Figure 2. Key focus areas have included carbon rights and responsibilities, conservation finance case studies, Full Moon Gatherings, international dialogues, and taxonomy/language. The Working Groups continue to evolve in focus, membership, and scope. As we discuss further in this report, new Working Groups are emerging around priorities identified at the Visioning Gathering.

The Network consists of lands managers, Indigenous community members and leadership, Indigenous government representatives, Elders, youth, allies, colonial government representatives, academics, Environmental Non-Government Organizations (ENGOS), and aligned industry. The Network meets once a month for Full Moon Network Gatherings, which facilitate opportunities to connect, learn, and exchange ideas. This Network is fuelled by reciprocity among organizational partners with financial support from the Metcalf Foundation, Ducks Unlimited, NRDC, WWF-Canada, and the Catherine Donnelly Foundation, plus collaborative relationships and in-kind support from Future Earth, Wahkohtowin Development, Unama’ki Institute of Natural Resources, Natural Assets Initiative, Nature for Justice, IISAAK OLAM Foundation, Maliseet Nation Conservation Council (MNCC), and Ecotrust Canada, among others.

Our network identity and structure continues to evolve. See “Post-Gathering Progress and Emerging Initiatives” for more on our ash basket network model and our work to create “Reciprocity Agreements” with RAD Network partners.

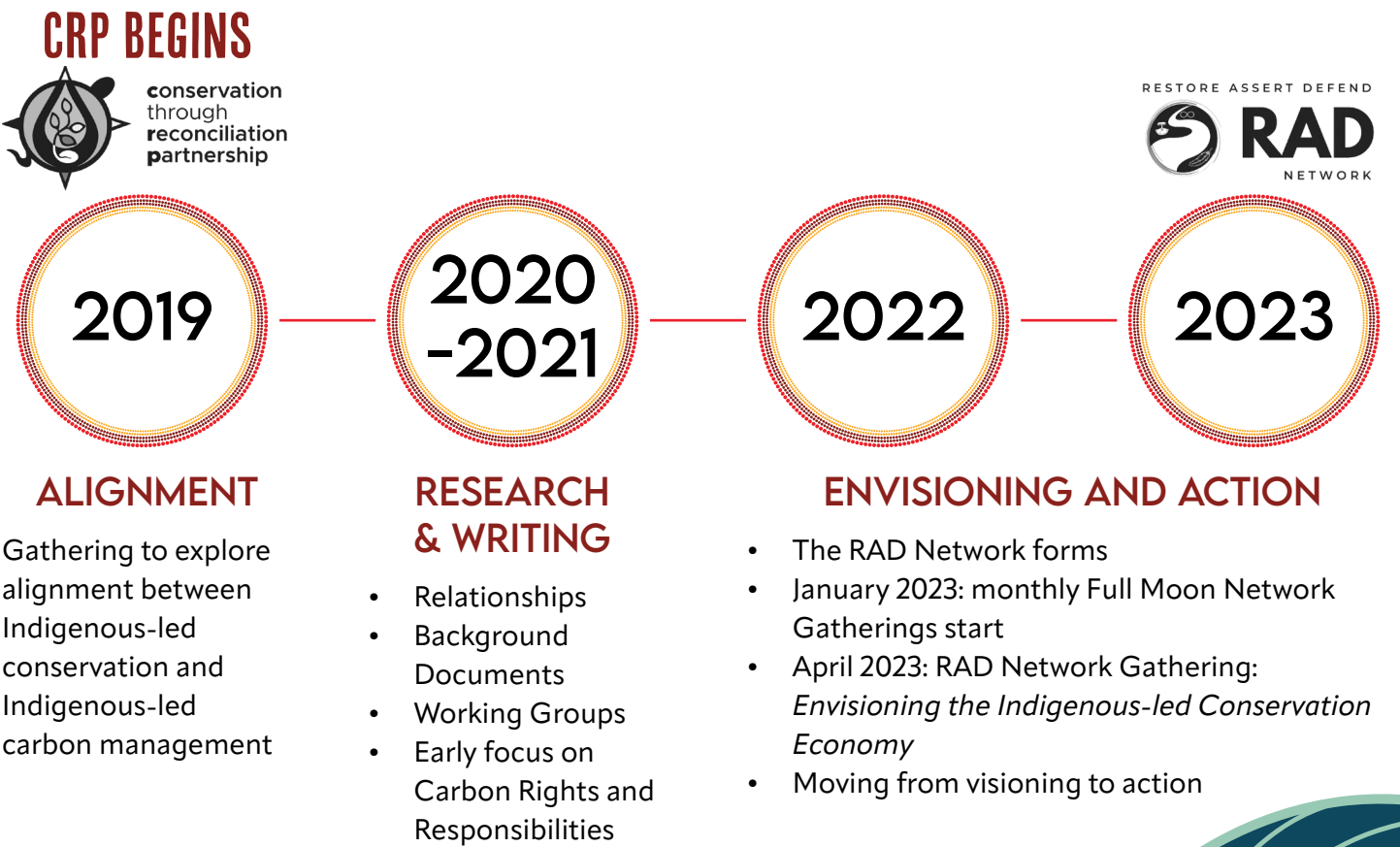


Figure 3. RAD Network Timeline - 2019-2023.

ENVISIONING PATHWAYS FORWARD: APRIL 2023 GATHERING

OVERVIEW

From April 24-27, 2023, the RAD Network convened a gathering entitled *Restore, Assert and Defend (RAD) Network: Envisioning the Indigenous-led Conservation Economy*, hosted on the unceded and unsundered Territory of the Wolastoqiyik at St. Mary's First Nation, at Sitansisk (also known as Fredericton, New Brunswick). Our intent was to foster connections, deepen our understanding of the current context of the work, and co-create a shared vision for our emergent network. As the RAD Network has begun to emerge and evolve in scope and structure, we sought to come together to determine our vision and direction, and to move forward together to advance Indigenous-led conservation and reimagined, regenerative economies.

We came together with Indigenous leaders, Knowledge Carriers, land guardians, Elders, youth, academics, activists, legal experts, and policy advisors, among others, who traveled from near and far to gather with us at the Eastern Gate on the Atlantic Coast.

We were especially honoured by the presence of Elder Albert Marshall, Elder Larry McDermott, and our youth delegates who brought forward important perspectives and highlighted the significance of cross-generational connections.

The gathering was held at Sitansisk, St. Mary's First Nation, which is situated on the Wolastoq river, opposite downtown Fredericton. We were based at the Maqiyahimok Centre (meaning "the gathering place" in Wolastoqey) where we received a very warm welcome from the staff and from Elder Ed Perley and other community Elders, firekeepers, pipe carriers, and mental wellness supports who played important roles throughout the gathering. Our local convenor for the gathering was Patricia Saulis (Indigenous Scholar, Tobique First Nation), who had been a member of the RAD Leadership Group. Facilitation was led by Erin Dixon who works with Reconciliation Canada as lead faculty, and as a researcher with the Banff Centre Indigenous leadership team.



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)



(Left to right:) Elder Albert Marshall, Erin Dixon, and Patricia Saulis. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

While we heard perspectives from diverse contexts and varying viewpoints, the gathering ultimately reinforced a shared vision for a better future for people and the planet—valuing Indigenous knowledge and leadership, and healthy relationships with Mother Earth and each other. The gathering enriched our collective understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing Nations in different territories and jurisdictions, while helping to distill potential pathways forward. The themes and outcomes of the discussions are broken down further in subsequent sections, feeding into a summary of potential RAD Network working groups and next steps.

APPROACH

Unlike a traditional conference, we came together in the spirit of ceremony and visioning. We were honoured by the presence and contributions of Elder Ed Perley, Elder Ramona Nicholas, Elder Marina Moulton, Elder Norman Bernard, Elder Tina Perley Martin, Elder Alex Moulton, Firekeeper Marty Bear, and other local youth helpers. Thanks to our local hosts, we experienced a gathering rooted in place and enriched by ceremony, cultural teachings, and musical traditions.

We learned about the deep respect and connection that the Wolastoqiyik people have for the Wolastoq river, including through a traditional song dedicated to the river, which was shared by Elder Ed Perley, Elder Ramona Nicholas, and others. Before the gathering began, the Elders invited the RAD Operations Group and RAD leadership to greet and pay their respects to the Wolastoq.



Elder Ramona Nicholas sings a traditional song dedicated to the Wolastoq. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

We were grateful for the presence of Terry Young, Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) scholar and Knowledge Carrier from Kingsclear First Nation, who wove a traditional ash basket during the gathering to reflect the spirit and intentions we collectively wove together. The basket now serves as the container for earth (soil) that participants brought from their territories, which, under the guidance of local ceremony, was combined to symbolize our common ground and connection. Following the gathering, RAD Leadership Group member Trish Nash, brought the ash basket to Unama'ki, Cape Breton, where it is being held at the [Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources \(UINR\)](#) until we come together again.



Ash basket crafted by Terry Young, holding soil from across Turtle Island. (Credit: Mag Hood.)



*Wolastoqiyik scholar and Knowledge Carrier, Terry Young.
(Credit: Mag Hood.)*

A Wampum Belt is a beaded belt made from purple and white shells, which serves as a record of a sacred covenant or treaty between peoples. Gathering participants had the honour to partake in a Wampum Belt session led by Elders Marina and Alex Moulton who led us in ceremony, honouring the belts with song and prayer, and shared teachings on their deep significance with respect to the Wabanaki Confederacy and the Peace and Friendship Treaties. After the ceremony, Marina and Alex shared guidance they received about the value of the work we gathered to advance, and the deeply important role of engaging youth in the work.

Guest Elder Larry McDermott drew connections to the Haudenosaunee Two Row Wampum and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty, noting that, “those Wampum Belts link us to an ancestral legacy that is thousands of years old — a principled relationship based on Natural Law – and if we honour that relationship, we can restore harmony, we can restore right relations”.

Various other cultural elements enriched the gathering, from the drumming circle—which led to a group snake dance, to the traditional feast nights, to the gifting ceremony that concluded the gathering on a high note. A particularly special aspect was the session led by Elders Marina and Alex Moulton, sharing teachings on the Wampum Belt. While the gathering was guided by local protocol, we braided various cultures into the approach, such as reference to the Anishinaabe Seven Ancestral Grandfather and Grandmother Teachings as put forward by RAD Leadership Group member David Flood, as a starting point to guide our time together.

Our facilitator, Erin Dixon, and local convenor Patricia Saulis, led the design of an agenda rooted in Ethical Space and guided by Spirit, allowing for participatory design and flow. (For further background on Ethical Space, see [this introduction](#) offered by Gwen Bridge). We sought to foster a safe, welcoming space where all voices would be heard. The agenda prioritized dialogue through thematic breakout discussions and group talking circles, with perhaps equally important conversations unfolding through casual fireside chats and over the traditional feast nights. The full agenda can be found in the Appendix section.

WHAT WE HEARD

We heard from individuals pursuing initiatives from coast-to-coast-to-coast, from those with well established IPCAs to those in the early stages of visioning, and from diverse cultural, jurisdictional, geopolitical, and ecological contexts. The gathering shed light on varying perspectives, while reinforcing that we're all ultimately working towards the same vision of a healthy world for future generations.

The gathering helped to distill needs, priorities, and potential activities for the RAD Network to pursue. Key themes of discussion included values, community kinship, youth, policy and advocacy, voice and communication, markets, jurisdiction, the rights of nature, and discussions around tools that can advance our goals in these areas, including declarations, templates, and a range of potential activities and collaborative outputs.

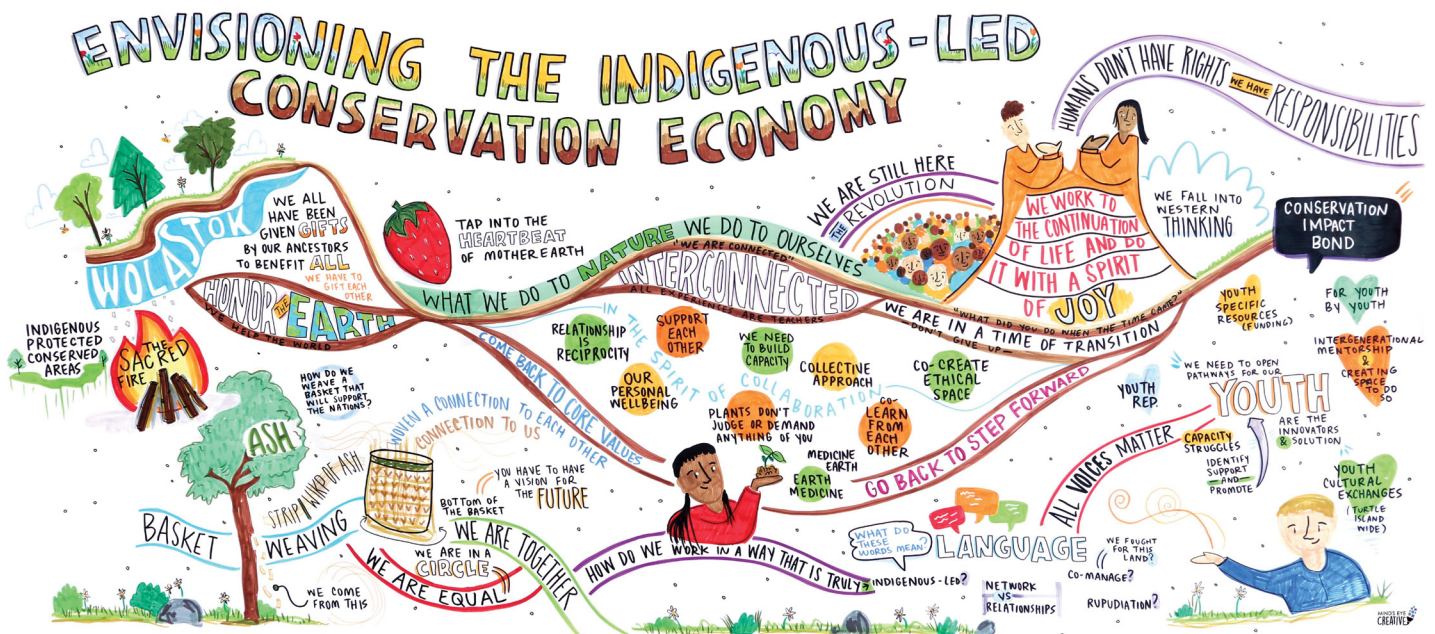


Sticky notes listing key takeaways from participants. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

GRAPHIC RECORDING

Ashton Rodenhiser joined us from Mind's Eye Creative to capture key outcomes and themes from the gathering through a live graphic recording. The graphics provide a visual summary of the conversations that emerged, offering a snapshot of both individual and commonly held perspectives, words that were shared, and emergent ideas.

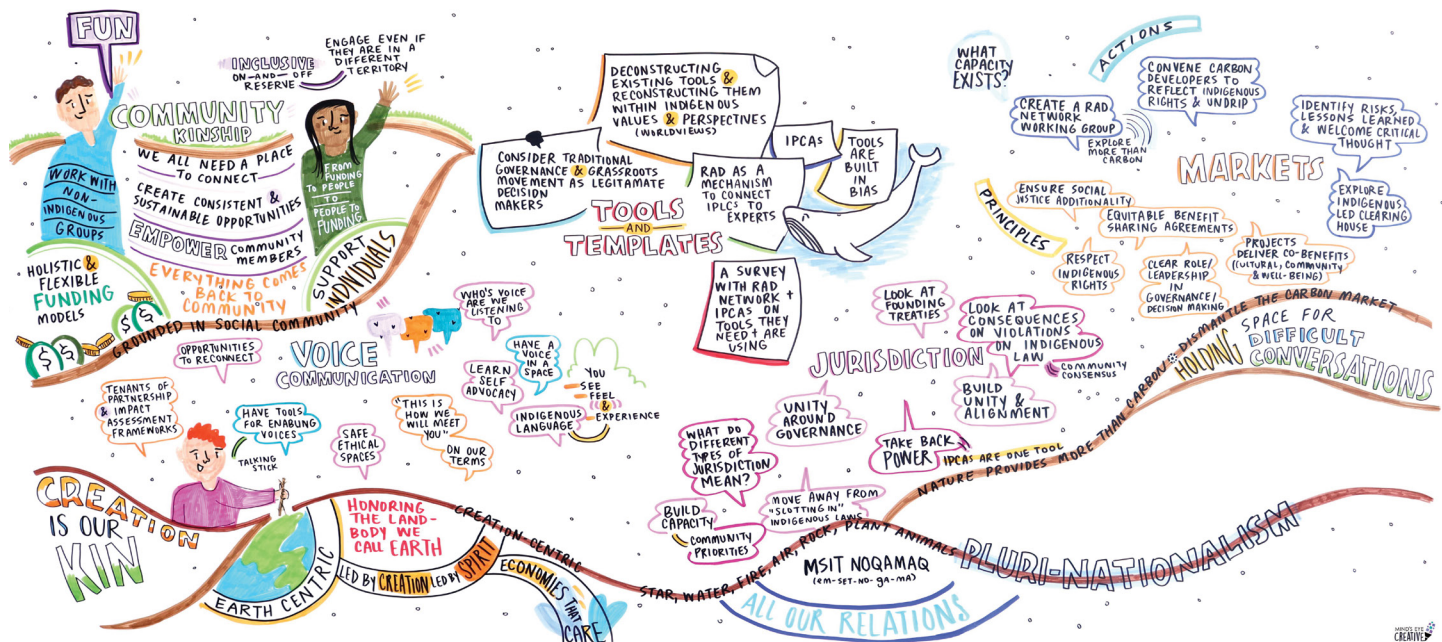
Ashton held the process and honour of the individual and collective voices in the group to add ideas and wisdom, including comments that were spoken aloud, as well as comments that were brought to her from individuals. With the help of participants, she included words in a variety of Indigenous languages. She used the visual metaphor of weaving, grounding, and the earth throughout the graphics to build cohesion and connection to the ideas. She encapsulated the essence of conversation while also highlighting the knowledge and ideas from breakout sessions, and from some of the key takeaways spoken throughout.



Graphic Recording Panel 1. (Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)



Graphic Recording Panel 2. (Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)



Graphic Recording Panel 3. (Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)

BREAKOUT DISCUSSION SUMMARIES

Nine breakout groups were created based on the themes identified by participants: RAD Network Values, Declaration, Jurisdiction, Policy and Advocacy, Youth, Tools and Templates, Markets, Community Kinship, and Voice and Communications. Participants chose to participate in the breakout group discussions that resonated with them the most at the gathering and/or where they felt their skills and knowledge could be most useful. Many people acknowledged that these themes are interconnected. The purpose of each breakout session was to discuss the key challenges and opportunities related to each theme; areas where there may be tensions between different knowledge systems, governance, and current power structures; and key potential actions that RAD Network members could take to advance shared goals and values.

The breakout group discussions are summarized below. Potential actions and outputs that the breakout groups identified are summarized in the next section.

RAD NETWORK VALUES

The **RAD Network Values** breakout group focused on the values that guide Indigenous relationships to the land, to water, to plant and animal nations, and to all of Creation. There is a pressing need to transform the colonial and corporate relationship to the land which is causing harm. Values of Ethical Space create important connections to enable conversations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous worldviews. A core of many Indigenous worldviews and laws is the belief that Mother Earth and kin have agency and are in relationship together, and Indigenous Peoples have spiritual agreements to honour and uphold these relationships.

Indigenous Peoples have also made agreements with settler communities in the form of sacred covenants that have been broken. Different Indigenous Nations and communities have many teachings, and these teachings and stories describe our place within these relationships.

Going forward, we can find our way collectively, but this must include Ethical Space, informed decision-making, reciprocity, and respect for spiritual agreements. Existing covenants should be honoured (e.g., Wampum Belt covenants and the Dish with One Spoon Treaty). Breakout group members expressed a commitment to speaking out on these issues, and emphasized the need to change the systems that are causing harm. This can be through a collective approach where we learn from each other; one that is an Indigenous-led healing journey back to leading with Indigenous knowledge and laws. This worldview expresses the relationships between humans, plant and animal nations, spiritual beings, and all of Creation. Indigenous Peoples are reviving relationships with the earth as a place of medicines, gifts, healing, and exchange. In order to work toward a shared future, we need to build everyone's capacity to come back into these reciprocal relationships. This is connected to supporting people's personal wellbeing, which is also supported with plant medicine and healing exchanges.

It is very difficult to put Indigenous understandings of our interconnection with Creation into English words that can invoke settler framings and assumptions. It is better to express these understandings in Indigenous languages that evoke and honour a different way of seeing and being. How RAD translates this worldview and these laws and different ways of knowing will be important. It has to centre Indigenous voices and values.

"We talked a lot about values and this does hit home a lot for me because all of the work that I do is deeply rooted in our values of who we are as a people. And when we show up in these spaces, these values come through."

– Sam Whiteye, Carolinian Canada - Indigenous Leadership Pillar

DECLARATION

The **Declaration** breakout group was formed following an idea raised by Elder Albert Marshall regarding the creation of a collective statement on the rights of nature, specifically the rights of earth, water, and air. The purpose would be to speak on behalf of those that do not have a voice within colonial and capitalist economies, namely the land and waters. In Elder Albert Marshall's words, the overarching premise is that "nature has rights, you have responsibilities, and with that responsibility you cannot—under any circumstances—compromise the ecological integrity of the Earth. And if and when you violate that law, then part of restitution is to mitigate and restore the damage that you have created. If a project is not ecologically sustainable, it must be stopped, and together we must create an alternative". Elder Albert pointed out that there are existing frameworks through which we can enforce Natural Law and advocate the rights of nature, stating that "this is not taking the country over, this is us exercising and exerting our rights" (i.e., Treaty rights and Aboriginal rights as enshrined in the Constitution).

The breakout group discussed the idea of a declaration on the rights of nature in the context of restoring balance with Mother

Earth, asserting Indigenous sovereignty, and defending in the spirit of our Guardian role with Mother Earth (reflecting the mandate of the Restore, Assert and Defend Network).

The breakout group discussed the concept of restorative justice and the need to address the context of harm, loss, and misuse of land, resources, cultures, and languages that has occurred, and how to restore balance and harmony. A broad lens is needed to go beyond conservation: for instance, to restore Elder-youth connections, and to take into account history and knowledge such as that from the Truth and Reconciliation commission, the national inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and suicide rates and their inter-relationship. The breakout group discussed taking care of those who are lost and bringing them home through guardianship and care.

In addition to the rights of nature, the breakout group discussed the potential to create a declaration on the notions of Restore, Assert and Defend. The discussion also addressed possible actions around the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery. Potential actions and outputs stemming from the Declaration working group are outlined in the next section.

"Right now we're allowing the laws of man to supersede the laws of nature all under the guise of creating opportunities for a few... I believe we can generate a lot of economic opportunities by putting [the rights of nature] in place in law."

– Elder Albert Marshall, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources (UINR)



Elder Albert Marshall speaks at the RAD Network gathering. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

JURISDICTION

The ***Jurisdiction*** breakout group discussed reconciling Indigenous and state jurisdiction to enable conservation economies and conservation initiatives. It was noted that, before diving into the legal mechanisms for assertion of Indigenous jurisdiction, there are strategic and governance-based pre-conditions that can greatly support the success of a Nation's assertion of jurisdiction. These pre-conditions include creating alignment and unity within Indigenous Nations and communities on: (a) strong governance processes (e.g., how do elected and hereditary leaders work together and for the Nation?); (b) robust and interconnected economic strategies (so that tools are not implemented in a piecemeal manner and there is broader strategy to help guide decision-making and guide relations with third parties); and (c) clearly established protocol for addressing any contraventions of a Nation's laws.

The tension between the recognition of jurisdiction and the usurping of that jurisdiction (i.e., in the IPCA space, if and when the federal government uses these tools to reinforce Crown jurisdiction and place limits around Indigenous jurisdiction) was recognized, and the opportunity to rewrite and/or reinforce the original Indigenous Circle of Experts IPCA narrative was tabled as an approach to help safeguard Indigenous jurisdiction. There was conversation about the potential to piggyback on the fact that the Pope rescinded the Doctrine of Discovery—i.e., could we call upon local religious groups to do so as well, and to hold forums to explore what comes next? This is a potential campaigning opportunity to call on the Crown to follow suit. Broadly, there was a recognition that IPCAs and other conservation tools do not “create” Indigenous jurisdiction. Indigenous jurisdiction already exists and underlies all of these initiatives. These are simply tools through which that jurisdiction is asserted.

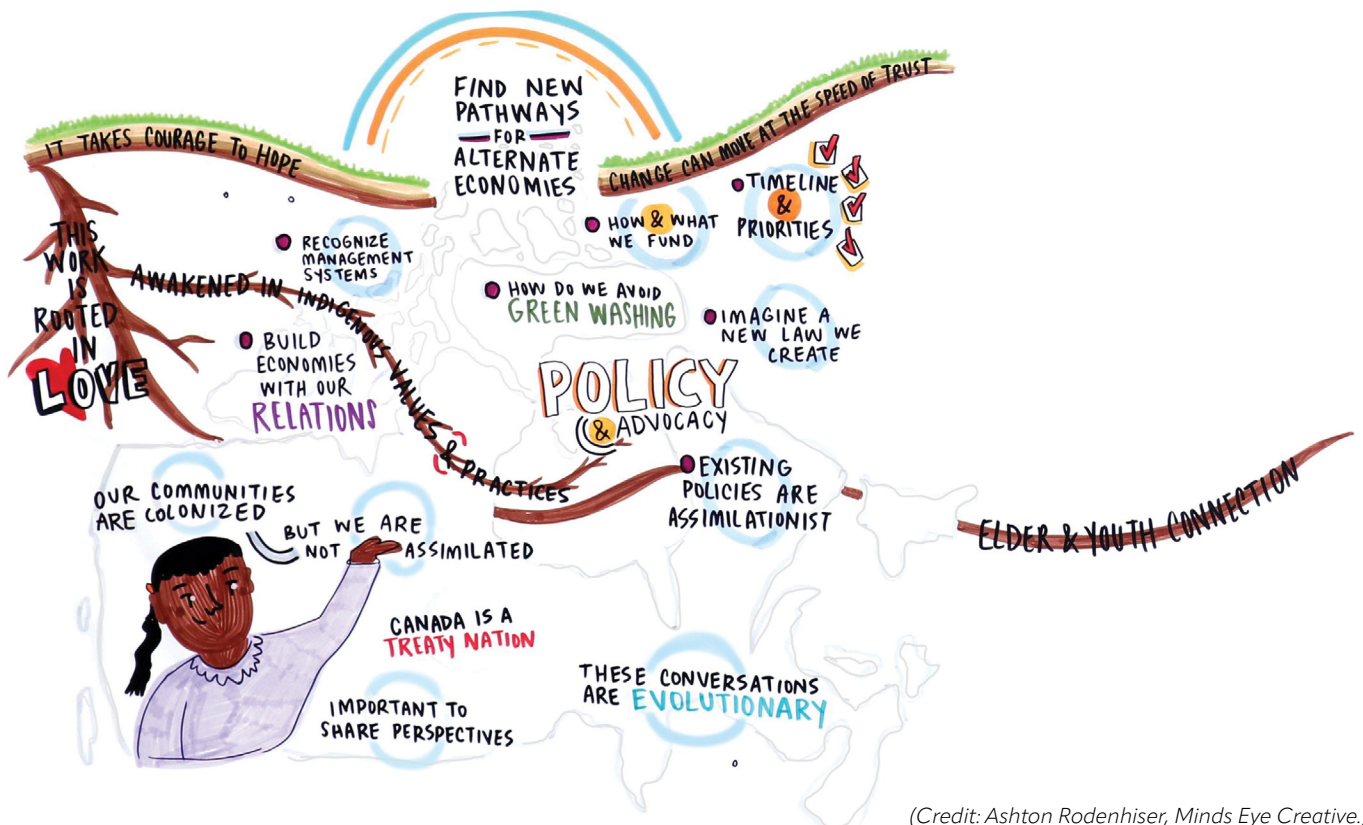


"What does 'Indigenous-LED' mean? What does that require? It requires recognition, respect, and the upholding of Indigenous jurisdiction."

– Victoria Watson, EcoJustice

POLICY AND ADVOCACY

The **Policy and Advocacy** breakout group acknowledged an essential tension in engaging in policy reform in Canada: existing legislation and policies are inherently assimilationist and embedded in a colonial paradigm. However, existing and emerging policies continue to impact Indigenous rights and responsibilities, and, if ignored, could further entrench Crown control over lands and waters, and thereby make achieving shared goals of the RAD Network more difficult. The breakout group also considered that not all RAD Network members may agree on specific policy points, yet there may be policy perspectives that would benefit from a collaborative voice (e.g., opportunities to support RAD values, such as Indigenous jurisdiction, governance, and knowledge systems). For example, many provinces are not coming to the table to create space for Indigenous-led conservation, and they continue to advance industrial development that does not have consent from affected Indigenous Nations and communities. The breakout group considered focusing on the establishment of RAD as an information storehouse on emerging policy and a trusted advisor on policy issues that Indigenous Nations and communities may choose to use.



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)

"There's some work we can do immediately to remove key policy barriers while we're working to make that larger scale change from ... the 'powers that be' to an alternate system."

– Anne Herteis, Forests International



YOUTH

The key message that arose from the **Youth** breakout group was that youth need to be valued and included – in the RAD Network, and in all work around Indigenous-led conservation and stewardship. All generations have a role to play and spaces for Elder-youth connections are especially needed. As Adryan Jones put it, “we all think it’s very important for the youth to be able to talk to our Elders and learn from them because we are both at the two cusps of picking up a mantle and putting it down”. We need to think long-term and build capacity and interest amongst youth. For instance, we can encourage youth to pursue environmental education while also removing barriers like university degree requirements for roles. Instead, we can support growth through mentorship in the context of Indigenous Knowledge systems, and leverage people’s gifts.

To effectively engage youth – within the RAD Network and our respective communities and initiatives – there is need for more accessible language, creative tools, youth representation and presentations at events, outdoor and hands-on activities, and inclusive spaces that make youth feel welcome.

The breakout group members proposed a RAD youth leadership group led by youth, for youth, and potentially a youth presence on the existing RAD Leadership Group. They also discussed opportunities for RAD to elevate youth leadership by providing supports for accessing funding and resources, and to facilitate a range of activities ranging from youth cultural exchanges to intergenerational mentorship, and to youth-led Full Moon Gatherings. The youth identified an opportunity to connect and uplift existing youth groups, providing support but ultimately allowing youth to lead.

“As youth, we thought it was very important for everyone to be able to hear our voice.”

– Adryan Jones, Emily Carr University of Art and Design



Adryan Jones shares reflections from the Youth breakout group. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

TOOLS AND TEMPLATES

The **Tools and Templates** breakout group discussed the implicit and systemic nature of colonialism that resides within many existing tools for conservation financing today. The breakout group's discussions addressed current conservation-based economic tools being used in Canada and how many are inconsistent with the values set forth by the RAD gatherings, as well as the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

To address these issues, the breakout group discussed how current tools need to be deconstructed to understand all the components that may work against a community's values, and how they should be reconstructed with those values. There is also a requirement for adapting and creating co-governance models between Indigenous communities and other involved parties to ensure that Indigenous voices and needs are heard and answered.

Secure and long-term funding was also discussed regarding the need to transition conservation-based economies from ideation to creation stages.

Additionally, breakout discussions led to the acknowledgement that some forms of government may seek to uphold colonialist values, and as such, will be at odds with other grassroots and traditional governing systems. To uphold RAD's values, breakout group participants expressed a commitment to recognizing the legitimacy of grassroots and traditional governments as decision makers, and to challenging existing tools and templates where they may continue to disadvantage Indigenous people and local communities from building their own conservation economies. The breakout group discussed several tools and templates that the RAD Network could create to advance our collective goals and support others working in this space, such as relationship-building tools, a case study compilation, and analysis of funding resources and enabling mechanisms, among others (see Table 1 in the subsequent section of the report for a detailed summary).

The breakout group identified several actions and outputs that the RAD Network may pursue relating to Markets, which are summarized in Table 1.

"The most important thing for me would be to first deconstruct those tools and pull them apart, understand all their pieces, understand where they're coming from, and then reconstruct them, take things out, put new things in to make it really Indigenous-led."

- Wynona Acco-Barron, Future Earth and Sustainability in the Digital Age

MARKETS

The **Markets** breakout group acknowledged the tension that stems from the fact that creating a market from nature requires its commodification. This commodification not only means the incapacity of seeing the intrinsic value of nature, but is also associated with the destruction of Mother Nature. Furthermore, no matter what financial tool is used, money cannot quantify or represent various values. The commodification of nature and its assets may not align with many Indigenous values and worldviews. Thus, capitalist market solutions will always be imperfect and should be seen as just one tool instead of as the only solution towards increased Indigenous leadership and nature protection. However, considering the urgency of our current global situation and the continued rampant exploitation of our lands and resources, markets can be an empowering tool for Indigenous management and protection of lands when implementation is firmly based on Indigenous leadership and values, and long-term sustainability.

Indigenous markets need strong governance structures to uphold and mediate power dynamics with capital. In turn, this will reduce economic leakage from communities and to middle players (e.g., brokers) while increasing fairness and developing a financial system that values nature and gives back to the community as a whole and not just a few. At the same time, these market approaches should provide communities with the long-term funding needed to support nature-based solutions throughout their lifetimes. Strong cross-nation agreements may help support this by creating regional opportunities and flipping the buyer/seller dynamic (i.e., only selling to those who build relationships), ensuring projects are integral, aligned, and validated with Indigenous values. Further, to ensure clear communications, we need a taxonomy (i.e., a naming, describing and classifying) of Indigenous financial terms. What do we mean by “markets”, “conservation”, and “economy” from an Indigenous perspective?



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)

Finally, the *Markets* breakout group agreed that the following principles are a starting point for Indigenous nature-protection markets:

- Possess equitable benefit-sharing agreements
- Are guided by community interests
- Respect Indigenous rights
- Ensure social justice additionality/benefits beyond climate and ecological benefits
- Increase and maintain capacities so communities can access the most appropriate financing that aligns with local values and specificities
- Co-benefits (cultural and community well-being) are a fundamental and central part of every project
- Clear Indigenous role in governance/decision-making and Indigenous Knowledge and ways of knowing are centred
- Strong integrity and reciprocity-based relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations to explore non-Indigenous markets and the nuances of markets

"There should be clear Indigenous roles and leadership in the governance and decision-making of any of these types of projects and [use] the best available types of knowledge...that would include and centre Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing."

– Ross Dixon, Coast Funds



COMMUNITY AND KINSHIP

The **Community and Kinship** breakout group discussed ways to build community and empower communities in the context of Indigenous-led conservation and land stewardship. A key theme was the need for safe, ethical, empowering spaces that support collective healing and value people's knowledge. The breakout group discussed the benefit of incorporating fun, music, ceremony, culture, storytelling, art, and revitalizing language, particularly by connecting youth and Elders. The conversation addressed the need to include displaced, urban, and off-reserve community members in these conversations, as well as non-Indigenous allies, while remaining Indigenous-led. There's also a need to empower alliances between Indigenous Nations and communities, especially in the context of carbon markets. Finally, the breakout group discussed granting more power to communities through flexible funding models that allow communities to set their own mandates – funding that “fits people” rather than forcing them to fit the requirements laid out by the funder. Indicators of success should be set by the community, not the government.

These objectives may be advanced through various actions and outputs, as summarized below in Table 1.



Kerry-Ann Charles (Cambium Indigenous Professional Services). (Credit: Mag Hood.)

“Everything that’s being talked about here comes back to community.”

– Kerry-Ann Charles, Cambium Indigenous Professional Services



VOICE AND COMMUNICATION

The **Voice and Communication** breakout group discussed the difference between voice, communication, and language, and why each is important in our work. What does voice mean, and whose voices are we listening to? An important voice is that of the youth; how can we uplift and celebrate their voices more? What does it look like to create safe, Ethical Space to amplify youth voices? In Elder Larry McDermott's words, "voice without Ethical Space is unsafe". The RAD Network can consider different methodologies to invite feedback and input, such as an anonymous box or online space to share thoughts. An on-the-land component may also create space for hearing different voices and communicating in different ways.

The breakout group also discussed the importance of Indigenous languages, noting the idea that Indigenous languages speak on behalf of the land and provide a richer tool to communicate than English, which tends to flatten the meaning that is conveyed. "Conservation financing" is one example of terminology that needs to be revamped. The breakout group suggested that the RAD Network develop a list of "trigger phrasing" that comes up in this space with suggested reframing. For instance, what if we spoke of "investing in the next seven generations" instead of "conservation financing"?

POWER IN INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

Indigenous languages are embedded within knowledge systems and values, and are imbued with meaning that often cannot be translated into English. Using Indigenous languages can support a shift in understanding. Take for example, three Mi'kmaq guiding principles highlighted by Elder Albert Marshall: *Etuptmunk*, *Netukulimk* and *Tplut'taqnn*.

Etuptmunk - "Two-Eyed Seeing": Learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of non-Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing, for the benefit of all.

Netukulimk - How you sustain yourself and practice the responsibility of ensuring your actions are in harmony with nature. *Netukulimk* reflects the privilege to sustain ourselves with the gifts of the Creator and reminds us that our responsibility extends up to seven generations and beyond.

Tplut'taqnn - An agreement, accord, law, or a process of how we work together to ensure balance is restored if and when harm is caused, to reconcile oversights and right our wrongs.

"Mi'kmaq traditional knowledge is just one small part. Think about Colonel Sander's Seven Spices and Herbs. One spice alone doesn't mean anything. It's only when you put all of the spices together that creates something very profound. By including as many of our Aboriginal perspectives across this country as we can, that would create something profound in which people would really begin to hear and listen."

- Elder Albert Marshall

LOOKING AHEAD: RAD NETWORK ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

The gathering reaffirmed and clarified the RAD Network's priorities and helped identify specific activities and outputs that we can pursue together going forward. In this section, we summarize how the outcomes of the gathering inform what's next for the network.

POTENTIAL WORKING GROUPS, ACTIVITIES, AND OUTPUTS

The RAD Network has had a number of working groups which continue to evolve in focus and scope. So far, the working groups have made progress on research, tools, and events on a range of topics. Key focus areas have included carbon rights and responsibilities, conservation finance case studies, taxonomy and language, event planning, and international dialogues.

Looking ahead, we see a number of possibilities for new and/or revised working groups, which may focus on the key themes that emerged at the Visioning Gathering, such as: youth engagement and leadership, jurisdiction, tools and templates, community kinship, markets, voice and communication, policy and advocacy, values, and the rights of nature. Of course, many of these topics are interconnected, and working groups may address multiple topics. We will prioritize collaboration and cross-pollination across working groups.

In addition to identifying high-level focus areas to prioritize through working groups, the gathering generated ideas for specific activities and outputs. The following table summarizes potential actions and outputs for RAD working groups.



Gathering participants engage in discussion. (Credit: Mag Hood.)



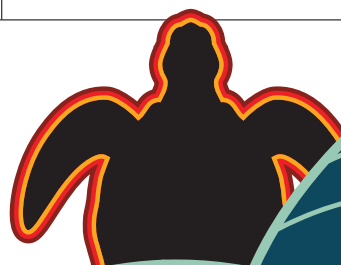
Participants engage in breakout discussions. (Credit: Mag Hood.)



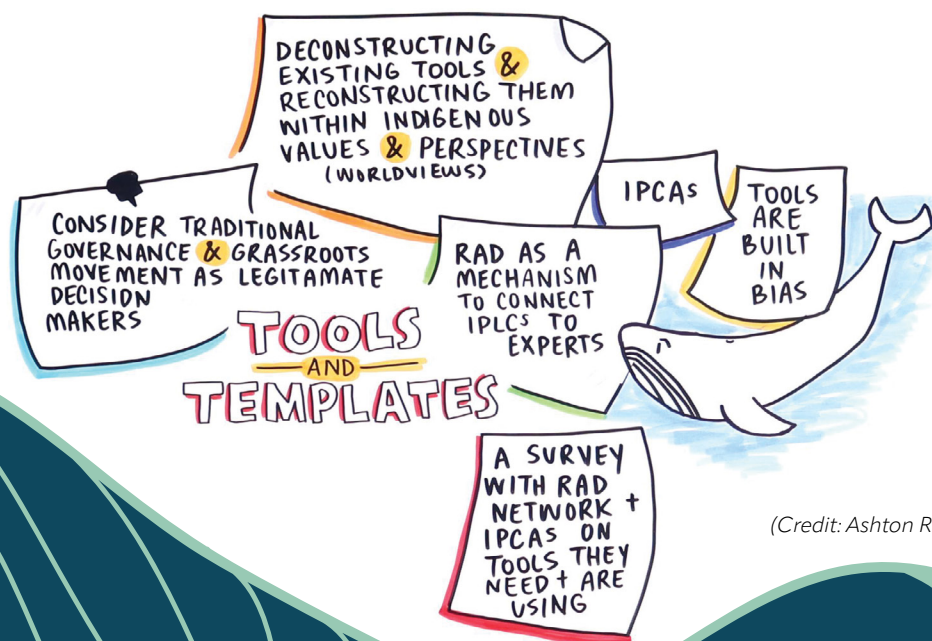
Tools and Templates breakout group discussion. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

TABLE 1. POTENTIAL ACTIONS AND OUTPUTS FOR RAD WORKING GROUPS

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
RAD Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revisit and update RAD values with collaborative input • Centre Indigenous languages in our communications and work • Co-create Reciprocity Agreements with partners in alignment with RAD Network values* <p><i>*Already underway: Read more about Reciprocity Agreements in the next section.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to work with RAD members to delineate further specific actions to centre Ethical Space, reciprocity, and respect for spiritual agreements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboratively developed RAD Network values • Communications outputs centering Indigenous languages • Reciprocity Agreements with RAD Network partner organizations



TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Tools and Templates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Build relationships via practical networking tools* <i>*Already underway: e.g. see our opt-in networking contact hub and feel free to add your own contact details.</i> Compile a list of case studies*, organized by jurisdiction, ecology, and progression <i>*Already underway: A RAD working group previously began drafting case studies, which may be a starting point for additional work.</i> Analyze and compile list of available funding resources and mechanisms for communities to move from ideation to implementation Dismantle and analyze current tools (e.g., Benefit Sharing Agreements, Project for Permanence, ECMs, etc.) to discern potential biases and reconstruct them within Indigenous worldviews and the values brought forth from the gathering Develop an assessment tool for partnership building 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A RAD contact list and an explanation of our expertise to support partnership building and connect needs to resources Equitably owned, governed, and operated public nature-based solutions data facility - organizing case studies by jurisdiction, ecology, financing, governance, partnerships, and progression List of funding resources and supporting mechanisms Reconstructed tools grounded in Indigenous worldviews and RAD values A toolkit that provides Indigenous Peoples with questions they may want to ask to judge the quality or trustworthiness of the organizations who want to enter in partnership with them



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Jurisdiction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct interviews to record examples of guidelines for stewardship rooted in Indigenous law that takes precedence over Crown law* <p><i>*Already underway: Members of the breakout discussion are conducting interviews on this subject. Contact Melika Habibi (melika.habibi@dal.ca) to learn more and/or participate in an interview.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop recommendations/resources to support Indigenous Nations and communities seeking to legally assert their jurisdiction and be prepared to respond to any potential usurp of that jurisdiction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Written output documenting examples of guidelines for stewardship rooted in Indigenous laws Toolkit and/or list of recommendations to support assertion of jurisdiction and response to any usurp of that jurisdiction
Policy and Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advance and mobilize collaborative research/outreach to identify policy barriers to Indigenous-led IPCAs, carbon management, and other conservation initiatives and economies Identify and act on critical policy windows at national and regional scales Identify potential advocacy partners and policy experts Explore the following questions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which legal and policy tools, if any, are most promising to assert Indigenous rights and responsibilities in nature-based solutions? Which provincial and federal policies, new or existing, could unlock RAD's desired outcomes? How should RAD navigate the essential tension that all Crown policies are inherently assimilationist? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Breakdown of policy barriers List of potential advocacy partners and experts Create a report card of how different provinces are doing on enabling access to carbon and other conservation finance/nature-based solutions for Indigenous Nations and communities

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Youth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish model for RAD youth group and bring youth into RAD Leadership Group • Recruit leads and participants* • Provide mentorship and supports for fundraising and other activities • Create youth leadership/advisory/working group which could facilitate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth-specific events and calls* • Cultural exchanges • Intergenerational mentorship • Network building with existing youth groups • Compiling and sharing accessible resources and funding opportunities* <p><i>*Already underway: Read more about progress on youth engagement in the next section of the report.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth events, calls, and exchanges • Tool or database of youth-accessible funding and opportunities



(Credit: Ashton Rodenhiser, Minds Eye Creative.)

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Convene nature-based solutions project developers to reflect Indigenous rights and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent, identify risks and lessons learned, and welcome critical thought • Identify risks and lessons learned with respect to carbon markets and Indigenous Peoples • Engage existing Indigenous finance organizations • Explore markets other than carbon and their alignment with Indigenous worldviews (e.g., biodiversity, water service credits, other valuation mechanisms, and financial approaches) • Explore creation of an Indigenous-led clearing house (i.e., an organization that could oversee and advise several Indigenous and local financial projects, advocating for fairness and bestowing interested Indigenous Peoples with the necessary information to do high integrity, impactful, high return, and equitable projects with like-minded partners) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge products on alternative markets (e.g., biodiversity, ecosystem services) • Report/analysis of risks and lessons learned with respect to carbon markets • Indigenous-led clearing house/ advisory group to support high integrity, equitable projects and emerging nature market standards • Indigenous taxonomy (e.g., name, description, and classification) of terms for financial and conservation concepts/words/approach that honours Indigenous languages, avoids pan-Indigeneity, and engages Elders • Business/financial case to advance IPCAs, nature-based solutions, and support land back • Business case/policy briefing for ecosystem service payments connected to trade

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Declaration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore the opportunity to develop a declaration or collective statement on the rights of nature, grounded in Natural Law and Indigenous laws, values, and knowledge systems • Research existing declarations and initiatives on the rights of nature and assess applications in the Canadian context • Convene relevant actors at a round-table looking at the use of rights of nature approaches by Indigenous Peoples specifically (e.g., a listening and engagement session with First Nations, Tribal Nations, and Indigenous communities that have adopted these approaches as part of their governance mechanisms) • Explore potential for a declaration centred on the notions of Restore, Assert and Defend to clarify their meaning and scope, and steer the further development of RAD (e.g., text could be proposed by a working group convening Elders and youth) • Explore opportunities for collective action around the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery, and advocacy on the implications for legal systems such as Canada that are still anchored in western legal supremacy and colonial thinking and practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Round-table on rights of nature approaches by Indigenous Peoples • Potential collective statement or declaration on the rights of nature with RAD Network members, partners, and supporters • Potential declaration or collective statement on the notions of “Restore”, “Assert”, and “Defend”, informed by a working group convening Elders and youth, and co-developed with RAD members • Potential declaration on the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery to emphasize the deep and vast significance of the universal rejection of this doctrine, and outline Indigenous-led expectations with respect to concrete outcomes (e.g., regarding Free, Prior, and Informed Consent in all decision-making affecting Indigenous lands)

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Community and Kinship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support to develop or disseminate protocols on community engagement • Support to advance alliance-building between Indigenous Nations and communities to collaboratively assess carbon market and conservation finance opportunities • Elevate Elders and Elder-youth connections • Incorporate fun, music, ceremony, culture, storytelling, art, language, and intergenerational learning within our work • Create space for storytelling* as a means to share knowledge and spark connections <p><i>*Already underway: Read more about our podcast in the next section – one of many potential storytelling mediums.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate/advocate the need for flexible community-centred funding models • Develop Reciprocity Agreements with RAD Network partners* (first internally and later share externally as a model for engagement and relationship building in this field) <p><i>*Already underway: Read more about Reciprocity Agreements in the next section.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community engagement protocols developed • New and strengthened alliances and collaborations • Stories shared on the RAD website/newsletters and partners' communications spark connections • Communications/advocacy materials published on the need for community-centred, flexible funding • Reciprocity Agreements • Community manual or guide to conservation finance • List/scan of Indigenous academics and students to work with • Scan/report to explore and clarify needs in different regions – BC, North, Prairies, Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia • Project development and financial advising supports for communities interested in or establishing IPCAs

TOPIC	ACTIONS	OUTPUTS
Voice and Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a RAD Network youth group and amplify youth voices* <p><i>Already underway: Read more in the next section of the report.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop alternative, accessible ways to receive feedback on RAD Network activities (e.g., anonymously) • Centre Indigenous languages in RAD Network projects and communications • Compile and reframe key phrasing commonly used in the fields in which we work • Facilitate further conversation on what safe space and Ethical Space looks like to different people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RAD youth group • Mechanisms for anonymous feedback • List of “trigger phrasing” and suggested alternative framing/language • Share examples and create an accessible space that has information on Indigenous-led and co-managed projects currently under way or in development • Educate stakeholders about colonialism, history of Indigenous traditional economies and trade, historic economic capacity, and sophistication of our Indigenous Nations and communities (e.g., resilience, reciprocity, and ecological economics)



POST-GATHERING PROGRESS AND EMERGING INITIATIVES

As noted in Table 1, several ideas that arose at the gathering are already being acted upon, including actions flowing from the conversations on jurisdiction, youth leadership, and tools and templates, among others. Beyond the ideas that came up in the breakout discussions, a number of other actions have been flowing from the Visioning Gathering, and we've continued moving forward on ongoing, adjacent efforts. We've summarized some key areas below:

NETWORK IDENTITY, STRUCTURE, AND FUNDING - THE ASH BASKET MODEL

Inspired by the ash basket teachings and weaving that were so generously shared by Terry Young, the RAD Network is deepening our commitment to an "ash basket" network model, where our work is supported through collective contribution. We are not formalizing an organization at this time. We will remain incubated in the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership in the short term, and our work will continue to depend on staff time and funding commitments secured from Network partners and organizations within the core Leadership Group. These braided or woven contributions enable us to advance the goals of RAD Network and produce work through our core Operations Group and the working groups. The creation of Reciprocity Agreements will help to ground our work in respectful and generative relationships.



*Traditional ash basket crafted by Terry Young.
(Credit: Mag Hood.)*

RECIPROCITY AGREEMENTS

Since early on in the RAD Network's journey, we have been creating "Reciprocity Agreements" to ground our work in respectful and generative relationship.

Through case-by-case written and/or verbal agreements, their purpose is to invite partner organizations into relationships rooted in Ethical Space, reciprocity, and relationality in alignment with the guiding principles of the RAD Network. Many ENGO partners are already contributing significant in-kind time to the RAD Network, and/or providing direct community funding, capacity, and fundraising support. Reciprocity Agreements create more space to discuss inequities in the current broader system of funding for Indigenous-led initiatives, acknowledging that philanthropic resources raised by ENGOs often support their internal (non-Indigenous) technical staff, capacity, and overhead, while large capacity gaps remain on the ground in Indigenous communities.

One goal of Reciprocity Agreements is to collaborate on ways to drive more financial support directly to Indigenous initiatives and communities — strengthening the trust and capacity needed to achieve our shared vision of Indigenous-led conservation and regenerative economies.

We look forward to expanding these dialogues to additional partners in the coming months.

These conversations have also acknowledged that overall funding must increase in order to adequately support the protection, restoration, and stewardship work required to achieve multiple, complex goals, including staving off the worst impacts of climate change, halting and reversing biodiversity loss, asserting Indigenous jurisdiction and knowledge systems, supporting the development of non-extractive economies, and mentoring and empowering the next generation of youth.

Financial resources to support on-the-ground work must be increased from public, private, and philanthropic sources, and RAD Network partners will learn and work together to increase financial resources available.

Snake dance showing Sam Whiteye, Simon Mitchell, Chief David Knox, Mark Worthing, Sakej Ward, and Kevin Smith. (Credit: Mag Hood.)



NETWORK GATHERINGS

1. RAD Full Moon Network Gatherings

The purpose of the Full Moon Network Gatherings is to build relationships, learn from one another, and to envision pathways forward. Based on the guidance of Patricia Saulis, who suggested these gatherings, since January 2023, we have been coming together around the full moon each month to build connections and reflect on one question or theme.

We then share reflections and shared notes via our [newsletters](#) and share session recordings via our [YouTube channel](#). Our first session centred around the question, “how do we advance Ethical Space in Indigenous-led conservation finance?”. Since then, the Full Moon Gatherings have explored themes ranging from spirit and ceremony to collaborative tools, visioning, healing and readying, and youth engagement, among other topics.

The Prophecy states that when the Eagle from the North and Condor from the South come together again to fly under the same sky, the Earth will awaken. This meeting would reunite once again, original knowledge, strength, diversity, and connection. Based on the spirit of the prophecy, and under Patricia Saulis’ vision, the RAD Network has started facilitating the International Full Moon Dialogues, meant to create a space where Indigenous Peoples from the North and South can reconvene and share experiences, insights, challenges, and aspirations. So far, attendees from Turtle Island have been able to meet and share experiences with the Ngābe-Buglé Nation, Rapa Nui, the Emberá, and the Embera Wounaan Nations from Panama, Colombia and Chile. We are hoping to keep on exploring and supporting these important dialogues between the North and South.

2. International Full Moon Dialogues

We have also held several international dialogues to build connections with Indigenous land stewards from around the globe.

The International Full Moon Dialogues are born from dreams and visions inspired by the Prophecy of the Condor and the Eagle.

3. In-person Gatherings

While virtual gatherings are a convenient and accessible way to connect, the April Visioning Gathering highlighted the great value of physically gathering together. We plan to convene future in-person gatherings in different regions across Turtle Island, as is explained further in the next section (see “Next Steps”).



Pokaholakanal Witsehkehsolticik' (Sisters of the Drum) share traditional songs at the gathering. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

DIGITAL STORYTELLING AND EDUCATIONAL TOOLS

1. Videos

At the April Visioning Gathering, we were fortunate to be joined by Jeremy Williams (River Voices Productions) who filmed the gathering and facilitated a digital storytelling booth through which participants could share stories and perspectives.

We look forward to sharing videos from the gathering to share with those who couldn't be there, in order to spotlight the words that were spoken and the spirit of the gathering in a way that isn't possible in written form.

We will also share videos from the digital storytelling booth as a means to share the visions of individuals in their own words, and to shine a light on specific case studies. These videos will serve as a component of educational tools the RAD Network is collectively building; highlighting what's already happening, and possible new pathways towards regenerative economies and Indigenous-led conservation.

2. Podcast: RAD Moccasin Telegraph

Before the gathering, we launched a podcast called The RAD Moccasin Telegraph, as a platform to share stories and insightful discussions on Indigenous-led solutions highlighting the importance of restoring Indigenous sovereignty and connection to the land. In the lead-up to the Visioning Gathering, we created two episodes as part of a pilot, featuring voices from our Leadership Group: David Flood and Steven Nitah. These initial episodes provide some of the key context of where we've come from and a glimpse of where we're headed. Going forward, we plan to continue to cultivate the podcast as a key medium for sharing stories of Indigenous-led conservation and emerging pathways through which to finance these efforts. We've been working with RAD leadership and collaborators to plan a line-up of episodes, striving for a balanced and enriching array of perspectives with stories from across Turtle Island. Stay tuned!

Listen and subscribe to The RAD Moccasin Telegraph on [Buzzsprout](#), [Spotify](#), [Apple Podcasts](#), [Google Podcasts](#) or [iHeartRadio](#).

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP

Youth engagement was a significant theme that came up throughout the gathering among youth participants and also many others. Since the gathering, we've started work on a few of the ideas that came up on this topic:

1. Youth Full Moon Gathering

The June 5, 2023 Full Moon Network Gathering focused on youth engagement and leadership. We heard from youth panelists about the importance of youth engagement and what's inspiring them to get involved in land, water, and biodiversity protection. In breakout groups, we also discussed how we can support youth involvement in our work. Review key learnings and themes in [this document](#) and watch the session recording [here](#).

2. Youth Resources and Opportunities Database

We've started a collaborative database listing resources that may be of interest to Indigenous youth involved in/interested in climate action, conservation, and connecting with land and culture. The resources may support youth-led work within the RAD Network or other initiatives by youth and friends of the RAD Network, within their own communities or organizations. It includes: (1) tools and templates, (2) youth-friendly funders and grants, (3) relevant organizations and networks, and (4) a section for any other relevant resources. All are invited to contribute and to share this living document. Access the database [here](#).

3. Youth Working Group

We've begun outreach and are gauging interest in a RAD youth working group. We're currently recruiting youth mobilizers who are interested in taking a lead role. The start date will depend on the level of interest and the group structure and focus will be determined by the youth who step forward. Youth who step forward will be offered mentorship and support to develop a proposal around their vision in order to mobilize funds for RAD youth projects and roles. There may also be an upcoming opportunity for a youth representative to join the RAD Leadership Group. Please help spread the word and invite any interested youth to email radpartnership@gmail.com.

4. Youth Podcast

We're currently recruiting youth who wish to take part in a youth-focused podcast episode (potentially leading to a spin-off youth podcast down the road). Contact radpartnership@gmail.com to learn more.

LEGAL RIGHTS TO CARBON AND NATURAL ASSETS

Building on the foundational research RAD has produced looking at Indigenous Rights to Carbon in different jurisdictions, the Network will pursue opportunities to challenge Crown laws and policies that are out of step with the inherent Indigenous rights and responsibilities to manage and benefit from healthy ecosystems. Specifically, we will continue our work to assert Indigenous legal rights to carbon and other natural assets, based on Indigenous legal traditions, and not solely based upon Crown law or policy. We will update our legal analysis and build regional relationships where Rights holders are working to develop natural climate solutions and are meeting with policy and legal obstacles. We welcome interested communities to contact us to learn more and to get engaged.

INVESTMENT GUIDE - UPHOLDING INDIGENOUS RIGHTS WHEN INVESTING IN NATURE

Purpose:

- Sustainable Finance Action Council (SFAC) published a taxonomy in early 2023 that has not yet been approved by the federal government
- While the SFAC has terms of reference that state Indigenous engagement and participation in the creation of the taxonomy, no Indigenous People are represented on this Action Council, and IPCA's are not currently mentioned as an investment category. An Indigenous-led conservation finance investment guide would be a response to this exclusion
- Guidance for investors on IPCAs and Indigenous-led nature-based solutions
- Recommendations on how to uphold UNDRIP and FPIC for all conservation finance
- Develop sample contracts
- Develop a glossary of terms



Sacred fire at the RAD Network gathering. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

EQUITABLY OWNED AND OPERATED PUBLIC NATURE-BASED SOLUTION DATA FACILITY

Nature markets are fast emerging - some of which aspire to uphold human and Indigenous rights while achieving global climate and biodiversity targets. The integrity of nature markets will be driven by the owners of biodiversity and ecosystem services data. While funding for nature-based solutions continues to grow, the field lacks standardized quality measures that link NbS project outcomes to greater ecosystem services, human wellbeing, and overall ecosystem health. Data ownership, control, access, and possession (OCAP) present risks and opportunities for Indigenous self-determination, sovereignty and the realization of economic reconciliation.

Since the RAD gathering in April 2023, there have been two advancements in the global context of NbS data that will underpin emerging nature markets:

- Taskforce on Nature Related Financial Disclosures (TNFD) produced a [Case for a Global Nature-related Public Data Facility](#)
- [12 global organizations](#) have partnered to implement the global NbS data facility in alignment with climate-related initiatives such as the [Net-Zero Public Data Facility](#)

We believe Indigenous and local communities should be owners and beneficiaries of NbS data in the marketplace. Building a Canadian pilot which upholds Indigenous data sovereignty in the co-design of a public NbS data facility presents a timely opportunity for members of the RAD Network and a coalition of Indigenous-led NbS data owners to influence nature markets and accounting standards. We can demonstrate that local and Indigenous communities can co-own and govern the benefits from aggregated NbS data - driving increased equitable nature-based investments.

Next Steps: Future Earth, Sustainability in the Digital Age, and Kim Neale acting as a Senior Advisor on the project will collaborate to advance initial steps for the creation of a publicly owned and operated NbS data facility by:

- Initiating a pilot survey with Indigenous-led NbS project owners
- Engage Indigenous-led NbS projects and data rights-holders to scope and develop a public NbS data facility
- Co-design database, governance, and ownership agreements and protocols
- Build relationships with public, private, and philanthropic partners to provide seed funding
- Develop 5-yr business plan and shared data governance policy for the public NbS data facility

Get in touch with Wynona Acco-Barron (wynona.acco.barron@futureearth.org) if you have any questions, want to join the emerging NbS data facility coalition, or would like to have advanced access to the NbS survey.

NEXT STEPS

We have summarized several actions that are already underway, flowing from the gathering. We now turn to the broader network with an invitation to join us in putting into action that which was envisioned in Sitansisk (Fredericton, NB).

In the Fall of 2023, we will be reaching out to members and partners to gauge relative interest in, and capacity to support, the various potential focus areas identified at the gathering. We will also consider relative urgency and the areas with the greatest potential impact as we prioritize next steps with the guidance of our Leadership Group. Stay tuned for further communications from RAD and please reach out directly to RADpartnership@gmail.com with your questions, suggestions, or interest in supporting a particular working group, regional gathering, or focus area.

Fall 2023 will also be dedicated to advancing Reciprocity Agreements with RAD Network partners, as discussed earlier in the report. Please contact us if you are interested in learning more, or are keen to engage in this process with RAD. If your organization wants to be considered a core partner and isn't already, please let us know.

Going forward, we plan to convene further regional gatherings across Turtle Island.

The ash basket created by Terry Young – which now carries earth from participants' territories – will remain with Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources in Unama'ki, Cape Breton, until the next gathering. We look forward to coming together once again to recommit to our shared vision, and to continue weaving our metaphorical basket, with the ash basket as a visual reminder of where we started. Through regionally-focused conversations, we will continue to identify challenges and opportunities to develop solutions grounded in place and geopolitical context.

We are also actively fundraising to mobilize resources in order to bring what the RAD Network has envisioned into fruition, and to maintain the core operations of the Network. Please reach out if you would like to contribute financial support, or to provide volunteer or staff time to the RAD Network.

Finally, we invite you to stay connected with the RAD Network. If you haven't already done so, [register to join the RAD Network](#) to be added to our mailing list and Full Moon Gatherings, and connect with us on [LinkedIn](#). You can also connect through our [opt-in contact hub](#), a contact list created to facilitate networking and relationship-building.

CLOSING THOUGHTS



Terry Young creating an ash basket. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

The intent of the Visioning Gathering was to establish a shared vision as a springboard for strategic, collaborative action. Our vision is clear: to advance collaborative solutions that will support the work of Indigenous Nations and communities to restore relationships and Indigenous knowledge systems, assert Indigenous rights, and defend lands and waters. Within our own communities, organizations, and spheres of work, we may pursue different pathways forward; yet, we're all working toward the same vision of an abundant, balanced, and equitable world for future generations.

As Terry Young so wisely shared, a network is like the ash baskets he wove during our Visioning.

When many individual strands are softened and then woven together, they become one strong, beautiful creation with a purpose: to carry something forward. At our gathering, we wove together our stories, knowledge, and intentions, and created a strong and flexible container for the RAD Network to carry forward our shared vision for Indigenous-led regenerative economies.

Ultimately, the RAD Network is all of us; we are RAD and we must work together to drive the action we've collectively envisioned. We look forward to mobilizing our collective knowledge, strengths, and passion together to turn this vision into action.

"I believe we need to somehow think about...where do we go from here? I think this is a beginning here in which the overarching message that I'm receiving is that there's a great need for us to begin to find a better way of not just how we can work together, but how can we support each other? ... some of us are coming from very small communities or isolated communities and we feel powerless because we don't have the numbers, but just think what would happen if those small numbers could be empowered? so they could feel that they're not alone?"

– Elder Albert Marshall

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Medicines and ceremonial water jug. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

Woliwon, wela'lin, miigwetch, masih, niā:wen, xeeekoo, marsi, hai hai, anushiik, merci, thank you to all who made this gathering and collaborative work possible.

We wish to express our gratitude for the lands on which we gathered on the traditional unceded and unsundered Territory of the Wolastoqiyik at Sitansisk, a territory covered by the Treaties of Peace and Friendship. We also express gratitude for the spirit of your ancestors who helped to guide the gathering and the spirit of the Wolustoq for showing the importance of flow and good energy.

Woliwon, thank you, to our local hosts for the very warm welcome to their territory and for enabling a gathering rooted in Wolastoqey protocol, ceremony, and culture. Woliwon to Elder Ed Perley, Elder Ramona Nicholas, Elder Marina Moulton, Elder Norman Bernard, Elder Tina Perley Martin, Elder Alex Moulton, and Firekeeper Marty Bear. Woliwon to Patricia Saulis for your vision and dedication to creating a gathering guided by Spirit; this gathering would not have been possible without you.

Chi Miigwetch to our wonderful facilitator, Erin Dixon, for guiding us with thoughtfulness and intention, and for holding the space with love.

Woliwon to Terry Young for your presence, teachings and beautiful ash basket which now holds our soil, stories, and vision. Woliwon to the Maqiyahitimok Center of St. Mary's First Nation for hosting the gathering, and to the Maliseet Nation Conservation Council for their support. We are very grateful to Tammy Nash and Georgina Craig for all your hard work and support to make the gathering possible. Woliwon as well to Brad, Corey and team. Woliwon to Pokəholakənəl Witsehkehsolticik (Sisters of the Drum) drumming circle for sharing your songs with us.

None of this would be possible without the guidance, vision and leadership of the RAD Leadership Group. Many thanks to Trish Nash, David Flood, Kim Neale, Steven Nitah, Terry Dorward, and Eli Enns.

We acknowledge and are so grateful to the early guidance of Leora Gansworth in helping to ground this emerging effort in right relations and Ethical Space, and for coining Restore, Assert and Defend as the context we all hold. We gratefully acknowledge the Operations Group, Event Planning Working Group and other working group members who made this possible. Thank you Mary-Kate Craig, Darcy Riddell, Chelsea Martin, Lara Powell, Julee Boan, Wynona Acco-Barron, Kevin Smith, Dani Warren, Audrey Popa, Santiago (Santi) Ramirez Said, Saba Thackurdeen, Rebecca Rogerson, and Sophie Sanniti.

Many thanks to Robin Roth (CRP/University of Guelph) for all your support. Wela'lin to special guest Elder Albert Marshall, and miigwetch Elder Larry McDermott for sharing your knowledge.

Thank you to our creative team, Jeremy Williams, Mag Hood, and Ashton Rodenhiser for capturing the special moments and communicating the stories of the gathering. Thank you as well to Adyran Jones for your artwork, and Cynthia Walker and Corey Brewis at Unfussy.

Finally, we gratefully acknowledge all of those who traveled from near and far to take part in the gathering. Thank you for so generously sharing your stories, knowledge, time, and visions.



Attendees at April 2023 RAD Network Gathering: Envisioning the Indigenous-led Conservation Economy. (Credit: Mag Hood.)

TEAM BIOGRAPHIES



GATHERING FACILITATOR: ERIN DIXON

Growing with the crystal-clear waters of Beneshi Okaninissing (Skeleton Lake), Erin/Gizhagat walks with vision and all of life in mind, sharing her Otipemisiwak-Métis heritage and love for Indigenous knowledge systems. Erin works with Reconciliation Canada as lead faculty and researcher with the Banff Centre Indigenous leadership team, leading Truth and Reconciliation through Right Relations and Wise Practices for Indigenous Leadership. She is a teacher and director on the board for Feather Carriers: Leadership for Life Promotion and within the Canadian Association for Suicide Prevention, and was asked to lead the development of First Nations and Indigenous Leadership within the International Leadership Association.



GATHERING CONVENOR: PATRICIA SAULIS

Patricia Saulis is a member of the Wolastoqiyik or Maliseet Nations, whose lands lay along the Saint John River watershed on both sides of the US and Canadian border in Northeast Maine and Southern New Brunswick. She is an experienced tribal policy administrator, environmentalist, and educational planner, and has a very extensive background working with First Nations on matters of social well-being, education, and environmental sustainability. In the midst of a highly fluid environment of changing political, economic, partnership, and financial circumstances, she keeps the mission of restoring Wolastoq/St John Watershed in accordance with Maliseet rights and cultural stewardship squarely in her sights.



VIDEOGRAPHY AND STORYTELLING: JEREMY WILLIAMS

Jeremy is a professional filmmaker and photographer. Passionate about social, political, and environmental issues, he possesses a diverse skill-set, including written, digital, and oral communication. He has training and experience in all aspects of digital film production. Jeremy's strong leadership skills are balanced with an ability to communicate visual ideas and concepts. He has extensive experience as a public educator and mentor, teaching filmmaking to youth, including youth at risk.



GRAPHIC FACILITATOR: ASHTON RODENHISER

Ashton is a creative ideas person who is always taking her passions to the next level. She loves watching people have “a-ha” moments and reflecting their own wisdom back to them through her work. Ashton has a background in facilitation and community development, all of which inform her work as a graphic recorder and facilitator.



PHOTOGRAPHER: MAG HOOD

Simply put, Mag loves photography. To her, there is nothing more rewarding and amazing than capturing that perfect shot: Not the perfectly posed or perfectly lit shot, but the type of picture you look at and feel exactly what was felt in that moment, when you feel exactly what the people in it are feeling.



COVER ARTWORK - ‘LISTENING TO THE LAND’: ADRYAN JONES

Adryan is a youth living in Unama’ki and working towards his Bachelor of Media Arts at Emily Carr University of Art and Design in Vancouver BC. He is of Haudonosaunee ancestry from the Grand River territory. He is deeply passionate about the protection of the natural world, Indigenous knowledge, and advocating for nature-based solutions through art. He loves spending time outdoors, learning new skills, and collaborating with others to create memorable projects that reflect the relationship we have with the world around us.

Created to embody RAD’s mandate, “Listening to the Land” is a digitally painted piece that brings elements from all of Canada’s Indigenous Peoples together: the bison for Métis, the seal for Inuit, and the eagle for First Nations. They are all under Skywoman’s protection. Each part of the painting is meant to represent our ancestral territory from coast-to-coast-to-coast, as well as to symbolize some of the biggest carbon sinks across Turtle island. This we do for future generations.



LEADERSHIP TEAM

DAVID FLOOD

David Flood is from Matachewan First Nation. He has over 30 years of experience in Forestry and Land Management combined with roles in First Nation advocacy, policy, and in leading business development. Currently David serves as the General Manager for Wahkohtowin Development, which is a social enterprise held by three First Nations to design pathways to full participation in Forest and Land Management across their respective Territories. The desire is to fulfill inherent land stewardship responsibilities, to enhance community well-being and diversification into climate change, and to action activities that seek to maintain a sustainable environment in their homelands. David is passionate about cultural revival and investing in the youth-Elder intergenerational relationship — fundamental for emerging Guardian Programs to keep the circle intact for the individual youth, but also their interconnectedness and place in this world (Wahkohtowin).



STEVEN NITAH

Steven Nitah is the Canadian Managing Director for Nature for Justice, and a specialist in Aboriginal and Treaty Constitutional Rights, Negotiations, and Relationship Building with Indigenous Peoples. Steven has been the lead for the Carbon Rights and Responsibility Working Group, and, as a past elected chief, was the former head of the political, social, cultural, and economic life of Lutsel K'e Dene First Nation.



TRISH NASH

Patricia Nash's family has always had a special relationship with the earth, and she was fortunate to grow up in the territory of her Haudenosaunee ancestors. Her respect and love for nature led her to obtain an Honours BSc in Zoology from the University of Guelph. She has worked for First Nation and Inuit organizations across Canada on rights recognition and self-determination, and is currently the Indigenous Protected and Conserved Areas (IPCA) Program Manager at Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources based in Eskasoni First Nation. Patricia also co-chairs the Indigenous Land Trust circle of the Conservation through Reconciliation Partnership (CRP), was an aboriginal fisheries guardian, and is a certified polar bear guard.



KIM NEALE

Kim Neale works with local and Indigenous communities from across Turtle Island with a focus on putting nature on the balance sheet to support ecological, economic, and social decision-making. She works as Indigenous relations and nature finance specialist at Natural Assets Initiative (NAI), and is advising on creation of an equitably owned and operated public NbS data facility through partnerships cultivated in the RAD Network. Kim holds an environmental engineering degree from the University of Guelph, and professional designations in finance, insurance, and greenhouse gas and energy accounting. Her more than 15 years of innovative finance experience includes design of some of Canada's first green bonds, carbon credits, parametric insurance, and other bespoke instruments advancing natural climate solutions. Kim lives on Odawa Mnidoo Mnising (Manitoulin Island) and has Anishinabek-Métis heritage. She founded the local not-profit Manitoulin Climate Collaborative, and she supports local youth-led Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK), regenerative agriculture, and agroecology projects in her community.



ELI ENNS

Eli Enns is an internationally recognized expert in bio-cultural heritage conservation and Indigenous economic development. He is a nation builder and Canadian political scientist focused in constitutional law, geopolitics, and ecological governance. Eli was a co-founder of the Ha'uukmin Tribal Park in the Clayoquot Sound UNESCO Biosphere Reserve on Vancouver Island, and was Co-Chair for The Indigenous Circle of Experts for The Pathway to Canada Target 1 (Aichi Target 11). Eli is CEO and President of the IISAAK OLAM Foundation, and co-founded the IPCA Development Fund and IPCA Innovation program at MakeWay Canada, where he continues to provide strategic guidance.



TERRY DORWARD

Terry Dorward is the West Coast IPCA Conservation Director for IISAAK OLAM Foundation. A member of the TLA-O-QUI-AHT First Nations, Terry grew up in Port Alberni and was raised by his great-grandmother, Susan Marshall from Xwisten (Bridge river) of the St'at'imc Nation. At the early age of 12, Terry participated in the 1984 marches and blockades that declared Wah-Nah-Jus/Hilth-Hoo-is (Meares Island) a Tribal Park. It was this profound experience that politicized Terry to have an awareness of the struggles to uphold and protect Indigenous title and rights. Terry graduated from Malaspina University with a Bachelors of Arts with a focus on colonization/decolonization and was an elected councillor for Tla-o-qui-aht First Nations from 2010-2016, and from 2018-2022. From November 2007 to January 2023, Terry was the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Project coordinator that helped deliver cultural, educational, stewardship, and economic projects in the rainforest. Terry was one of the co-founders of the Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks Guardian program that continues to monitor and enforce Tla-o-qui-aht traditional laws within the region. Tla-o-qui-aht Tribal Parks continues to be upheld nationally and internationally as a successful, ongoing developing IPCA.



RAD CORE OPERATIONS GROUP

MARY-KATE CRAIG

Mary-Kate Craig is a consultant, entrepreneur, and passionate community builder whose work is related to transforming how we live on the Earth. Mary-Kate has worked in not-for-profit, private sector, and academic settings. She is a cofounder of Anwaatin Inc, a company that works with Indigenous stewards on the front lines of climate change. She is a doctoral candidate at the University of Guelph, investigating the aspirations, barriers, and enabling conditions by which Indigenous-led nature-based climate solutions might occur in Canada. She is also the co-founder of an urban intentional community called the Junction Village Guelph.



DARCY RIDDELL

Darcy Riddell is a fifth generation British Columbian, living with her two children in Tsleil-Waututh, Musqueam, and Squamish territories. She works with environmental initiatives, philanthropy, and Indigenous-led organizations to advance justice and protect nature, specializing in convening, learning, complex multi-stakeholder contexts, and scaling innovation. Darcy held previous roles as BC Program Director at Makeway, and Director of Strategic Learning with the McConnell Foundation. She sat at contentious land use planning tables on the west coast, working with Sierra Club and ForestEthics to co-create conservation solutions in the Great Bear Rainforest. She holds a PhD in Social and Ecological Sustainability/Social Innovation (University of Waterloo), and an MA in Philosophy, Cosmology and Consciousness (CIIS).



LARA POWELL

Lara Powell is a settler from Toronto, Ontario, living on the Treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit and the traditional territories of the Attawandaron, Anishinnabe, and Haudenosaunee. Lara is supporting knowledge mobilization, coordination, and event planning for the RAD Network, as well as community outreach for WWF-Canada. She is grateful to connect with, and learn from, many land stewards championing positive change in their territories. As an MA student at the University of Guelph, Lara partnered with Wahkohtowin Development on a project focused on Indigenous Guardians and natural climate solutions. She continues to collaborate with Wahkohtowin as a Mitacs Intern. Since 2019, Lara has also worked with the Hydro Empowerment Network, a knowledge exchange and advocacy platform for community-scale hydropower.



CHELSEA MARTIN

Chelsea Martin works for Ducks Unlimited Canada's National Boreal Program as the Head of Indigenous Relations. Her work focuses on working directly with Indigenous communities, Nations, and organizations to advance conservation goals, as well as to support various DUC projects within the Boreal region, including the establishment of Indigenous Protected Conservation Areas. As a social scientist and a proud member of Chippewas of Nawash First Nation, Chelsea is very excited to support Indigenous carbon markets and how DUC can better support Indigenous-led nature-based climate solutions.



JULEE BOAN

Julee Boan is the Boreal Partnership Manager at Natural Resources Defense Council. She works collaboratively with Indigenous Peoples and organizations, local and national conservation groups, industry, and governments to support the protection, conservation, and stewardship of northern forests. She has a PhD in forest sciences, where she researched approaches to mitigate the impacts of industrial logging on boreal caribou. She has taught in the Indigenous Learning department at Lakehead University, and is committed to supporting Indigenous rights to self-determination, Indigenous-led conservation, as well as advancing land back initiatives. She works remotely from her office just outside of Thunder Bay, Ontario, located on the traditional lands of the Anishinaabeg, Fort William First Nation, and Robinson-Superior treaty lands.



WYNONA ACCO-BARRON

Wynona Acco-Barron is a research assistant at Future Earth and Sustainability in the Digital Age, and a BSc student in Environmental and Sustainability Sciences at Concordia University. Her work focuses on bridging the gap of Indigenous and western sciences in the application of nature-based solutions and nature climate solutions. In an effort to reconnect with her late grandmother's Métis roots, she looks forward to strengthening her connection to the land and advancing sustainable and equitable futures for Indigenous Peoples.

PARTICIPANT LIST

Local Convenor: Patricia Saulis, Wolastoqey Nation

Facilitator: Erin Dixon, Reconciliation Canada

Digital Storytelling: Jeremy Williams, River Voices Productions

Graphic Facilitator: Ashton Rodenhiser, Mind's Eye Creative Consulting

Photographer: Mag Hood, Mag Hood Photography

Basket Maker: Terry Young, Wolastoqey Nation

Local Ambassadors: Elder Ed Perley, Elder Marina Moulton, Elder Norman Bernard, Elder Ramona Nicholas, Elder Tina Perley Martin, Marty Bear, and Alex Moulton of Wolastoqey Nation

Guest Elders: Elder Albert Marshall and Elder Larry McDermott

RAD Leadership:

- David Flood, Wahkotowin Development
- Steven Nitah, Nature for Justice
- Patricia (Trish) Nash, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources
- Kim Neale, Natural Assets Initiative

RAD Operations & Core Team:

- Mary-Kate Craig, RAD Network / University of Guelph
- Darcy Riddell, RAD Network
- Lara Powell, RAD Network / WWF-Canada
- Julee Boan, Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC)
- Kevin Smith, Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Chelsea Martin, Ducks Unlimited Canada
- Wynona Acco-Barron, Future Earth & Sustainability in the Digital Age
- Dani Warren, Coastal First Nations - Great Bear Initiative
- Santiago Ramirez Said, Future Earth & Sustainability in the Digital Age
- Audrey Popa, University of Victoria
- Saba Thackurdeen, Kahnawake Environment Protection Office
- Rebecca Rogerson, EcoTrust Canada

Other Participants:

- Adrian Perreault, *Garden River First Nation*
- Adryan Jones, *Emily Carr University of Art and Design*
- Alethea Pezzo, *Missanabie Cree First Nation*
- Ana Maria Peredo, *University of Ottawa*
- Andre Vallillee, *Metcalf Foundation*
- Anne Herteis, *Community Forests International*
- Ben Bradshaw, *University of Guelph*
- Brennan Vogel, *Chippewas of the Thames First Nation*
- Cassandra Blondin Burt, *Yellowknife Dene First Nation*
- Chief David Knox, *Kwakwaka'wakw Hereditary Chiefs Confederation*
- Clint Jacobs, *Walpole Island Land Trust*
- Courtney Kehoe, *Nature Investment Hub*
- Curtis Endanawas, *Land First Youth Initiative*
- Darran O'Leary, *Peskotomuhkati/Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc.*
- Donna Ashamock, *Inninuwig/Cree Nation*
- Gwen Bridge, *Gwen Bridge Consulting*
- Hank Cauley, *Nature For Justice*
- Isabelle Allens, *Wahkohtowin Development*
- Jason Evans, *Nishnawbe Aski Nation*
- Jeremy Johnson, *Mi'gmawe'l Tplu'taqnn*
- Jesse Sabattis, *Wolastoqey Nation*
- Jessica Pauze, *Garden River First Nation*
- John Cutfeet, *Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwig*
- Jordan York, *Métis Nation of Alberta*
- Joshua Laporte, *Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources*
- Kate Slorach, *Passamaquoddy Recognition Group Inc.*
- Kat Jeremiah, *Missanabie Cree First Nation & Quilts For Survivors*
- Kelsey Scarfone, *Métis National Council*
- Kerry-Ann Charles, *Cambium Indigenous Professional Services*
- Kerry Lee Morris-Cormier, *Fort Folly Habitat Recovery*
- Kiara Genereux, *Sheshegwaning First Nation, Land First Youth Initiative*
- Lillian Trapper, *Chiefs of Ontario*
- Lynn Palmer, *Four Rivers, Matawa First Nations Management*
- Mark Worthing, *Awinakola Foundation*
- Melika Habibi, *Dalhousie University*
- Michael Jeremiah, *Missanabie Cree First Nation*
- Nadine Lefort, *Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources*
- Rachel Plotkin, *David Suzuki Foundation*
- Robin Roth, *Conservation Through Reconciliation Partnership*
- Ross Dixon, *Coast Funds*
- Sabaa Khan, *David Suzuki Foundation*
- Sakej Ward, *Mi'kmaq*
- Sam Whiteye, *Carolinian Canada - Indigenous Leadership Pillar*
- Satnam Manhas, *Forestry Consultant*
- Shaughn McArthur, *Nature United*
- Simon Mitchell, *World Wildlife Fund Canada*
- Susan Sullivan, *Caldwell First Nation*
- Tess Zakaras, *Nature For Justice*
- Victoria Watson, *Ecojustice*
- Zack Hamm, *Caldwell First Nation*

PHOTOS

The full photo album from the gathering, provided by Mag Hood, can be accessed [here](#).

GATHERING AGENDA

Mon. April 24, 2023 - Delta Hotel, 225 Woodstock Rd., Fredericton

5 - 10 PM.....Greetings, Social & Buffet Dinner | *Optional*

Tues. April 25, 2023 - Maqiyahitimok Centre, 247 Maliseet Drive, St. Mary's First Nation

8:30 AMFire Lighting

9 AM.....Opening Ceremony – Elders Ed Perley, Marina Moulton, Ramona Nicholas, Alex Moulton
Elders Opening Remarks – Elder Albert Marshall, Elder Larry McDermott

10:30 AM - 12 PMWeaving our Intentions: Introducing the Communal Ash Basket – Basket Maker, Terry Young
Setting the Context – Erin Dixon, Facilitator
Opening Remarks – Steven Nitah, RAD Network Leadership Group

12 - 1 PMLUNCH

1 - 4:30 PM.....Small Group Discussions - Rapid Introductions
Sharing Existing and Emerging IPCAs & Indigenous-led Solutions Across Regions
Storytelling and Conversation - Current Situation, Interest & What is Needed

5 - 8 PM.....Feast Night & Drumming

Wed. April 26, 2023 - Maqiyahitimok Centre, 247 Maliseet Drive, St. Mary's First Nation

8:30 AMFire Lighting

9 AM.....Opening Ceremony

10 AM - 12 PMDialogue and Circle

12 - 1 PMLUNCH

1 - 4:30 PM.....Pathways for Collective Action - Small Groups on Emergent Themes and Workstreams

5 - 7 PMFeast Night & Drumming

8 - 10 PM.....Wampum Teachings – Elder Marina Moulton
Delta Hotel, 225 Woodstock Rd.

Thurs. April 27, 2023 - Maqiyahitimok Centre, 247 Maliseet Drive, St. Mary's First Nation

8:30 AMFire Lighting

9 AM - 12 PM.....Ash Basket Completion
Reflection, Sensemaking,
Contributions: Creating Pathways Together
Circle, Closing Ceremony (Host community)

12 PMLUNCH & Departure

ENVISIONING THE INDIGENOUS-LED CONSERVATION ECONOMY



