



SUMMARY REPORT

NATURE RESTORATION FORUM: REBUILDING CANADA

OCT. 29-30, 2025



FORUM SNAPSHOT

DATE

Oct. 29–30, 2025
(Full day on Oct. 29 and half-day on Oct. 30)

LOCATION

Marriott Hotel, Ottawa

AUDIENCE

The Forum brought together participants representing four key groups:

- **Emerging practitioners:** Organizations or individuals looking to start restoration initiatives and explore best practices for engaging in ecosystem recovery.
- **Active restoration groups:** Organizations already implementing on-the-ground restoration efforts across Canada.
- **Sustainers and stewards:** Groups or individuals focused on monitoring, impact assessment and supporting long-term sustainability and viability of restoration work.
- **Policy and research groups:** Academics and government representatives advancing restoration research, frameworks and strategic implementation.

OBJECTIVES

The Nature Restoration Forum: Rebuilding Canada provided an opportunity to:

- Share key learnings, challenges and opportunities in restoration.
- Strengthen connections across regions and sectors.
- Foster collaboration and peer learning.
- Conduct a collective pulse check on Canada's restoration landscape.
- Restoration research, frameworks and strategic implementation.

THE FORUM IN NUMBERS:

122
participants

73
organizations

21
speakers and
moderators

13
sessions

7
networking
spaces



FROM THE PRESIDENT & CEO



Megan Leslie

President & CEO
World Wildlife Fund Canada

“

For us at WWF-Canada, restoration is about bringing balance back to nature and healing ecosystems so that wildlife and people can thrive together. More precisely, it's the process of supporting the recovery of landscapes and waters that have been converted or degraded because of human activities, things like building roads, energy infrastructures, urban development.

It's also an important way to support the priorities of First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and advance reconciliation.

Individually, we don't know everything about restoration from a technical point of view. But here's what we do know:

Number one: restoration works. It comes in different forms and if sometimes we see setbacks, most times, we see great successes that prove that degraded ecosystems can be brought back.

For example: In B.C.'s Lower Fraser Valley, we're in a partnership with the Katzie First Nation, who have been leading efforts to recover salmon habitat impacted by forestry and the effects of climate change in the Upper Pitt watershed.

Here, restoration means clearing blocked streams, strengthening banks with native plants, using logs to create shade and reduce water temperatures, and even creating new spawning channels. And it works: salmon are already using the restored habitat.

Number two, the need for restoration is urgent. There are only five years left for Canada to deliver on its international and national targets set in the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its 2030 Nature Strategy. And at WWF-Canada, we're halfway through our 10-year plan to Regenerate Canada by expanding habitats, reducing carbon in the atmosphere, lowering industrial impacts to reverse wildlife loss and fight climate change.

But more than that, species and people depend on healthy ecosystems to thrive.

One of our goals to do that is to create the conditions to restore one million hectares of lost and degraded ecosystems by 2030, so we have our work cut out for us.

And number three, restoration requires collaboration. Restoring nature is a huge, expensive undertaking, and it can only be achieved by breaking down silos and working together. Each of us has a role to play, whether through research, funding, fieldwork, knowledge sharing, policy-making or countless other contributions.

That's why we're here: to learn from each other.”

A photograph of a WWF event. In the foreground, a woman is speaking into a microphone. In the background, an audience is seated at tables, some with their hands raised. The WWF logo is visible on the backdrop.

CROSS-CUTTING LESSONS FROM THE NATURE RESTORATION FORUM



Collaboration

Restoration depends on working together, breaking down silos and building partnerships where each person, community and organization contributes to a shared mission.



Interconnectedness of land, people and wildlife

The Forum emphasized that ecological restoration cannot be separated from human wellbeing — land, wildlife and communities are deeply linked and must be understood as one system.



Central role of Indigenous leadership

Indigenous leadership is essential in guiding restoration efforts, shaping priorities and grounding work in place-based governance, stewardship and long-standing relationships with the land.



Indigenous knowledge guiding Western science

Participants highlighted the importance of Indigenous knowledge informing, balancing and leading alongside Western science to strengthen restoration outcomes.



Relationships before restoration

Meaningful restoration requires relationships with the communities who live on and care for the land. We cannot approach restoration work without first listening, connecting and building trust.



Reciprocal healing between people and land

The Forum underscored that healing people helps heal the land, and healing the land supports the emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing of communities — restoration is reciprocal work.



Shared Responsibility

Everyone has a role to play in restoration, no matter the scale of influence; collective action and shared responsibility are foundational to long-term impact.



Time, patience and process

Restoration takes time and success is not a first-try outcome but instead a process built on consistency, revisiting approaches, learning through mistakes and empowering communities throughout the journey.

DAY 1

OPENING REMARKS

BY LIZ HENDRIKS,
VICE-PRESIDENT, RESTORATION
AND REGENERATION,
WWF-CANADA



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This year's theme, Rebuilding Canada, goes beyond restoring nature. It's about our shared commitment to strengthening our connections with each other and with the natural world.

Ecological restoration isn't something that happens in isolation. It is a web of knowledge, care and actions — a reminder of how deeply everything in nature is connected. And because of that, the work we do has to be connected too. Every native shrub planted, every acre of wetland restored, every partnership built, and every effort we share through monitoring and collective tracking all add up — helping to rebuild a healthier, more resilient Canada.

In that sense, restoration becomes a nation-building project. It's about strengthening our ties to the places we love, supporting communities and shaping a future where people and nature thrive together. It invites all of us to play a part in caring for the lands and waters that define us.



WELCOME CEREMONY BY
FRED MCGREGOR, KITIGAN
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KNOWLEDGE KEEPER



FIRESIDE CHAT

PERSPECTIVES ON RESTORATION

SPEAKERS:

Megan Leslie, President and CEO, WWF-Canada
Rick Bailey, Councilor, Katzie First Nation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Restoration is about bringing balance back to nature and healing ecosystems so that wildlife and people can thrive together. It's truly a story of hope. It's also a nation-building project that strengthens ecological and economical resilience, as well as communities' well-being.

Restoration is a collaborative effort that brings together diverse strengths and perspectives:

- **Indigenous Peoples leadership and knowledge** and how important it is for us to learn from and support their conservation initiatives.
- **Governments** creating policy frameworks and long-term investment.
- **Academia** contributing to science, research and innovation.
- **Corporate partners** supporting funding and innovation.
- **ENGOS and community organizations** delivering solutions and mobilizing people.

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There's a book called *Flight of the Hummingbird*. There's a big forest fire and instead of leaving, the hummingbird goes to find a puddle and gets a drop of water, goes back to the fire and back and forth. And the other animals are saying, 'What are you doing? You're crazy. You're going to die.' He says, 'Why? I'm doing what I can.' That's what I teach in schools — every little bit you do, no matter how small, can make a difference.”

— Rick Bailey, Councilor,
Katzie First Nation

It takes all these perspectives to make sure restoration is done at the scale we need and unlocks the opportunities that only become possible when we work together.

Restoration is about creating lasting conditions for nature and people to flourish, now and for future generations. The strongest restoration outcomes come from weaving these knowledge systems together and co-developing approaches from the start.

Major lessons:

- Different knowledge systems speak different languages, so we need to be intentional in how we build trust, share learnings and respect processes.
- Success must be defined by communities, which may include cultural, social and spiritual benefits alongside ecological recovery.



PRESENTATION

FEDERAL LEADERSHIP IN NATURE RESTORATION

SPEAKER:

Christian Malouin, Manager, Domestic Biodiversity and Stewardship, Canadian Wildlife Service – Environment and Climate Change Canada

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Canada has committed over \$12 billion in recent years towards nature and climate initiatives.

Canada's restoration efforts are powered by federal programs that work in different scales and purposes. Below are how these programs can be categorized along with their examples:

- **Species at Risk Focus:** Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, Enhanced Nature Legacy, Indigenous Partnerships for Species at Risk, Indigenous Partnerships Initiative, Species at Risk Partnerships on Agricultural Lands
- **Nature-Based Solution:** Natural Climate Solutions Fund, 2 Billion Trees Program, Nature Smart Climate Solutions Fund, Agricultural Climate Solutions
- **Site-Level Remediation:** Federal Contaminated Sites Action Plan, \$1.7 billion for orphan wells clean-up in B.C., Alta., Skas.
- **International Collaboration:** North American Waterfowl Management Plan

Canada constantly needs to improve, foster creation and innovate to become more effective at how we deliver programs on the ground going towards whole-of-government and whole-of-society approaches to achieve restoration at scale.

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Nature action is a shared responsibility. It isn't something the federal government can do alone. It requires collaboration among provinces, territories, Indigenous governments, ENGOs and the private sector. Restoration needs to be embedded in the mitigation hierarchy. Billions of dollars in conservation cannot offset trillions of dollars in development. So, we should be avoiding and minimizing impact first and including restoring ecosystems as part of land use planning.”

— Christian Malouin,
Canadian Wildlife Service – Environment
and Climate Change Canada

Recently, Canada has introduced innovative mechanisms to expand the restoration toolkit. This includes Project Finance for Permanence (PFP), which is a model for financing large-scale conservation and restoration initiatives by bringing together government, philanthropy and private capital.

Nature action is a shared responsibility. It isn't something the federal government can do alone. It requires collaboration among provinces, territories, Indigenous governments, ENGOs and the private sector.

- The [Nature Agreement](#) is an example of this effort; there are currently six agreements.

Limited long-term funding and the challenge of monitoring restoration outcomes over decades remain significant barriers.

Restoration needs to be embedded in the mitigation hierarchy. Billions of dollars in conservation cannot offset trillions of dollars in development. We should avoid and minimize impact first and include ecosystem restoration as part of land use planning.

Governance matters. Participatory approaches ensure restoration is tailored to local conditions and delivers meaningful outcomes.

The federal government plays an enabling role in advocating for restoration while navigating complex land ownership and jurisdictional realities.

Indigenous leadership is essential. Indigenous-led conservation and restoration efforts bring knowledge and stewardship practices that strengthen ecological and cultural outcomes.



PANEL

APPROACHES TO OBSERVING AND UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF RESTORATION

MODERATOR:

James Casey, Senior Specialist, WWF-Canada

PANELISTS:

Adam Subject, Lands Manager, Sioux Valley Dakota Nation

Ashlee Prevost, Habitat Restoration Department Head,
Lower Fraser Fisheries Alliance

Kristina Boerder, Lead Scientist, Community Eelgrass
Restoration Initiative/Future of Marine Ecosystem lab,
Biology Department, Dalhousie University

Mike Wong, IUCN WCPA member; former Executive
Director at Parks Canada (retired), Birds Canada Board member;
CPAWS Board member

Val Deziel, Director of Restoration Program, Forests Canada

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Historically, restoration was based on Western science. In the last 30 years, we've seen more social and cultural aspects being built-in. That's very positive in terms of the endurance of those restoration projects — recognizing the role of Indigenous Peoples right at the onset of developing restoration goals and objectives.

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Often, the benefits of restoration start with a spark that grows into something. All these people in this room started somewhere and were supported by somebody and we don't capture that in our measurements. This is a reminder that our restoration work is so much more than what we measure in our Excel tables.”

— James Casey, Senior Specialist,
Restoration and Regeneration,
WWF-Canada

Restoration is often about healing damaged ecosystems and these stories make that healing feel personal to people. These narratives of transformation, resilience and hope help people connect emotionally to landscapes and species.

What restoration means to us is not only about rebuilding habitats but also rebuilding the connection between people and place as well as having a collective view and collaboration between different organizations and communities to help heal the watershed.

We should consider the “Three E's Framework”:

- **Effective:** Successful restoration needs more science. Monitoring is critical for restoration so we can practice adaptive management.
- **Efficient:** With limited resources, we should consider how to maximize benefits through actions, such as incorporating cultural renewal into restoration work and identifying co-benefits.
- **Engaging:** It is necessary to engage the wider community in an early stage of the project. No single organization can generate a lasting transformation alone. We should consider options like citizen science and volunteers.

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The idea is to heal people. The people will then heal the land, and the land will, in turn, heal the people.”

— Adam Subject, Lands Manager,
Sioux Valley Dakota Nation



Restoration is often about healing damaged ecosystems — it’s important to tell those stories. The right story can attract the right investment.

Ecological restoration can contribute to the resurgence of identity of Indigenous Peoples.

Some of the most difficult challenges to navigate include the fact that monitoring is a key activity that needs to be built into planning and it should be considered long-term. However, the monitoring stage of a project often lacks funding. One way to overcome this is via collaboration with groups working on similar projects. Additionally, there is a need to foster pride and interest from community members to keep monitoring efforts ongoing.

Ways to better share our knowledge of the benefits of restoration include:

- **Storytelling:** Successes and failures so people can relate to the work being done on-the-ground.
- **Know your audience:** Producing large reports might not be the best way to transmit knowledge.
- **Regional knowledge sharing circles:** Avoids replicated work.

Caring for the land, caring for one another and healing should be incorporated into how we measure restoration.

It is important to teach interconnectedness to showcase species that are usually in the background.

We need to know our audience to be able to get their attention. A 100-page document might not be the way to communicate with certain groups. We should ask people how they want us to share our knowledge.

People were not the only ones subjected to colonialism — ecosystems were, too.

R’s we should all integrate into our work:

- Reconciliation
- Reclamation
- Restore
- Recovery
- Recognition
- Revolution



KEYNOTE SPEAKER

INTRODUCTION TO THE SOCIETY FOR ECOLOGICAL RESTORATION COMMUNITY

SPEAKER:

Line Rochefort, Chair, SER Chapter Relationship Committee (CRC)

KEY TAKEAWAYS

SER's mission is to advance the science, practice and policy of ecological restoration to sustain biodiversity, improve resilience in a changing climate and re-establish an ecologically healthy relationship between people and nature.

There are three chapters in Canada: Western Canada, Ontario and Eastern Canada.

The benefits of being a member include professional development, networking and access to resources and information.

SER has a certification program called Certified Ecological Restoration Practitioner (CERP) Program that sets a high professional standard for restoration practitioners and guarantees that practitioners meet minimum standards (knowledge base, on-the-ground experiences, etc.).

SER has developed international standards for various ecosystem types. It is a leading source of technical guidance and capacity building on ecological restoration for international policymakers, implementing agencies and on-the-ground practitioners.



CONCURRENT SESSIONS

FROM SEED TO SEED: A CYCLICAL APPROACH TO RESTORATION

FACILITATOR:

Ryan Godfrey, Senior Specialist, Restoration and Regeneration, WWF-Canada

In this session, experts shared different parts of this restoration cycle, touching on their work, their relationships with each other and how they see this wheel turning for generations to come.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

The session provided a networking opportunity for practitioners involved in seed-based restoration with 23 concurrent paired conversations that facilitated knowledge exchange across regions on the challenges and opportunities related to the flow of native plants and seeds.

Participants shared common challenges related to the native plant and seed supply change, including limited forecasting capacity, short timelines for sourcing material, insufficient advance notice for growers and lack of locally sourced genetics.

Some opportunities and solutions that emerged include expanding seed orchards and seed production areas to increase supply, creating networks to share seeds locally and establishing long-term agreements that support accurate forecasting and contract growing ahead of planting day.

The session also had an interactive activity called Seed Dreams that highlighted future aspirations for the sector. Some highlights are:

- Knowledge sharing network.
- Increased Indigenous-led seed processing and propagation capacity.
- The development of a national native seed strategy.
- Meeting the global restoration targets.

MISTAKES WE'VE MADE: LEARNING FROM SETBACKS IN RESTORATION

FACILITATOR:

Paola Sanchez, Manager, WWF-Canada

Failure and setbacks can be powerful opportunities for learning and growth. This workshop provided a space for participants to share challenges they've faced in past projects, reflect on how they've adapted and highlight lessons that can strengthen future efforts.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Insufficient upfront knowledge: Teams often move forward without having all the necessary information, especially while facing pressure to secure new funding and launch new programs before closing ongoing processes.

Capacity limitations and sustainability: With restricted team sizes, organizations struggle to manage multiple processes at once. The focus should shift from doing more to achieving sustainable change within existing capacity.

Fragmented organizational capacity: Many organizations operate with limited and dispersed resources. Optimizing workflows and approaches is essential to ensure efforts can be sustained over time.

Unclear funding timelines and scope: A better understanding of how funding cycles work, what funding covers, and when it arrives, what is needed to plan effectively.

Relationship-building requires time: Building strong relationships is essential during the preparation phase, but timelines often don't allow for the space needed for this work, impacting project readiness and collaboration.

Monitoring remains a challenge: Limited time and capacity make it difficult to adequately follow up after restoration interventions, leaving gaps in long-term monitoring and learning.



CONCURRENT SESSIONS

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITY-DRIVEN RESTORATION

FACILITATOR:

Kate Landry, Senior Manager, WWF-Canada

This session explored how local communities can play a leading role in funding and managing restoration projects, creating a sense of ownership and ensuring sustainable outcomes.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Communities engage in restoration at different stages of the SER continuum and not all are aiming for Stage 5. Each community's goals, priorities and capacity shape where they are on the continuum.

Communities need time, patience and trust. Trust itself should be considered as one of the results of successful restoration work.

Flexibility is critical. Support communities in carrying out and reporting on their work in ways that reflect their own processes, timelines and knowledge systems.

Find a community champion. Someone from the community who can be there and sustain momentum when community priorities shift. Ensure, however, that this person is supported and not overburdened.

Commitment to the land, water and species must guide the work. Starting from a shared understanding of what we are working towards is the first step to working hand-in-hand with local communities.

THE LINK BETWEEN RESTORATION AND THE CHANGING CLIMATE TO BUILD RESILIENCE

FACILITATOR:

Catherine Paquette, Specialist, WWF-Canada

This discussion was an opportunity to learn and exchange thoughts, ideas and experiences on how to incorporate climate change and future climate projections into restoration projects that build resilience.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Understanding vulnerability and risk is foundational. Practitioners use a wide range of tools and assessments — such as species distribution models, socio-economic vulnerability assessments, estuary change analysis, climate-adapted seed sources and fragmentation monitoring — to evaluate how ecosystems may respond under different climate futures.

Dual-pronged approach to consider vulnerability and risk when thinking about resilience in restoration work can be used:

- Species modeling and forecasting
- Stressor layer across vulnerabilities

Climate change projections are increasingly embedded in planning. Teams are using a variety of climate and biodiversity tools — including Aquamaps 2.0, bird migration platforms, invasive-species climate layers (e.g. AdaptWest), tree-equity models, RISCC networks and federal climate platforms — to guide site-level and landscape-level decisions.

Key obstacles include short season work windows (e.g. riparian work between fire and spawning season), limited local field capacity, permitting timelines, prioritization constraints and the need to adapt policies for current and future climate realities. Concepts like assisted migration and connectivity conservation require careful ethical and ecological considerations.

A list of all the resources that were shared during this session can be found in Appendix A.

PRESENTATIONS

RESTORATION PROGRAMS SUPPORTED BY WWF-CANADA

FACILITATOR:

Liz Hendriks, Vice-President, Restoration and Regeneration, WWF-Canada

SPEAKERS:

Presenter 1: Jessica Hutchinson, Executive Director, Redd Fish Restoration Society

Presenter 2: Allyson Heustis, Executive Director, Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.

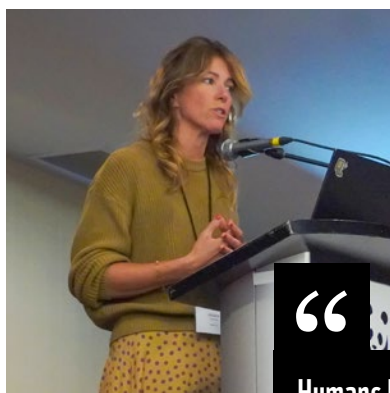
Presenter 3: Angela Kane, CEO, Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society

Presenter 4: Kate Landry, Senior Manager, WWF-Canada

PRESENTATION 1:

JESSICA HUTCHINSON

Executive Director, Redd Fish Restoration Society



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Any type of conservation is hard to achieve without some form of restoration because humans have fundamentally changed this Earth through development, mining, logging, building and climate change.

Logging in the [Hesquaiht Nation](#) territory has caused landslides that buried many streams in gravel and sediments. This has caused the Pacific salmon (pink, chinook, and sockeye) to be on the brink of extirpation in their territory and has meant that the Nation has not been able to harvest fish as food for many decades.

Redd Fish Restoration Society uses willow stakes to stabilize landslides — a nature-based solution. They have also built terraces or modified brush layers.

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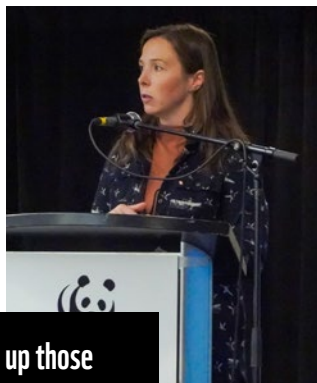
Humans have fundamentally changed this Earth through development, mining, logging, building and climate change. We're hard pressed to find a place that we haven't left a mark. So, I would argue that conservation of species, 30 by 30, conservation of ecosystems or of natural processes absolutely depends on restoration and we will not achieve any conservation goal without some form of restoration.”

— Jessica Hutchinson, Executive Director, Redd Fish Restoration Society

PRESENTATION 2:

ALLYSON HEUSTIS

Executive Director, Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.



KEY TAKEAWAYS

Top threats to the Nashwaak Watershed are the proposed Sisson Mine, unsustainable forestry management, invasive species, agriculture, etc. A common theme to address all of these threats is restoration.

Relationships and trust are important in restoration work as some projects could span many different areas and involve many different landowners.

Sometimes the plan must be updated to reflect on-the-ground conditions. When current conditions differ from the original plan, updates need to reflect how the site functions and what species or users are present.

“

It all comes down to community trust — building up those community ties and really making that connection with local folks to build up trust.”

— Allyson Heustis, Executive Director, Nashwaak Watershed Association Inc.

PRESENTATION 3:

ANGELA KANE

CEO, Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society (SRSS) is on track to plant 3 million trees by 2026, covering approximately 8,600 hectares.

Community relationships are foundational. Restoration work begins by connecting with local communities, building trust and honouring their knowledge of how the land has changed over time.

Seed collection is a big part of SRSS work. A seed recovery program is being developed to ensure seeds collected locally can be returned to the same landscape.

Training and capacity building for communities are a focus of SRSS. This helps improve community-led restoration skills, provide opportunities to be on the land and generate revenue for the communities.

SRSS restore from an Indigenous perspective and using Indigenous knowledge to inform Western science.



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Why do we do the work that we do? Well, it's pretty simple. We're doing it not just for us, but we're doing it for our future generations.”

— Angela Kane, CEO, Secwepemcúl'ecw Restoration and Stewardship Society

PRESENTATION 4:

KATE LANDRY

Senior Manager, WWF-Canada



KEY TAKEAWAYS

re:grow: We learn first, then we plant and then we connect. It is a free online platform and resource hub that helps individuals and communities learn about native plants and understand their connection to local ecosystems.

Restoration driven by individuals and communities can be supported through granting programs at schools and post-secondary campuses.

Access to quality native plants remains a challenge for individuals. WWF-Canada addressed this barrier through a partnership with Loblaw Garden centres to improve public access to native plants.

Another challenge is to source good quality seeds. A program through WWF-Canada's Community Action Team, called Seed Orchards, supports native seeds growers. It has planted a 2 hectare area for seed sand and has harvested 75 kg of native seeds.

DAY 2 ANNOUNCEMENT

PRESENTED BY:
MEGAN LESLIE,
PRESIDENT AND CEO,
WWF-CANADA



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Canada has set ambitious restoration targets under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework and its 2030 Nature Strategy. Through our own strategic plan, Regenerate Canada, WWF-Canada has done the same, setting bold goals to expand habitats, reduce carbon in the atmosphere and lower industrial impacts.

Now at the halfway point of our 10-year Regenerate Canada plan, we’ve also learned that restoration faces real barriers — and they go far beyond planting.

They’re about capacity, funding, seeds supply and gaps in tools and knowledge. If we want to scale up, we need to confront these barriers head-on.

That’s why I am thrilled to announce **WWF-Canada’s Catalyst Fund, a new \$500,000 investment designed to accelerate ecosystem restoration across the country.** Today marks another concrete step toward creating the conditions to restore one million hectares of loss or degraded ecosystems in Canada.”

More information available here: [WWF-Canada creates Catalyst Fund to accelerate nature restoration across Canada - WWF.CA](#)

PRESENTATION

WWF-CANADA'S RESTORATION APPROACH

PRESENTED BY:

Liz Hendriks, Vice-President, Restoration and Regeneration, WWF-Canada

KEY TAKEAWAYS

WWF-Canada's restoration work has evolved over the past five years into five interconnected pillars that guide how we deliver, support and track restoration across the country.

One of these pillars is the Nature and Climate Grant Program. This program funds large-scale, complex, multi-partner restoration initiatives and has distributed \$3.3 million to 14 projects across Canada. Many of the organizations benefiting from this program were present at the Forum, reflecting the strong and growing community engaged in restoration at scale.

Another key area is community action, which emphasizes that conservation groups, governments and corporations are not the only groups responsible for conservation. Individuals also play a

MISSION RESTORATION PLATFORM WALK-THROUGH

PRESENTED BY:

Deandra Atmojo, Specialist, WWF-Canada

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Mission Restoration is an initiative by WWF-Canada in collaboration with lands and rightsholders across Canada to track, monitor and increase major restoration efforts consistent with the Government of Canada's national and international targets.

crucial role. Whether through planting native species on balconies, supporting seed orchards in elementary schools or participating in Living Planet @ Campus initiatives, people can help strengthen the native seed supply – the foundation of successful restoration. Participants are invited to explore the re:grow platform and sign up for actions they can take in their own lives.

WWF-Canada also works in priority regions through multi-year, multi-partner, place-based initiatives. These efforts deepen relationships and ensure work is sustained over time. Current regions include the Wolastoq (St. John) River area, the Lower Fraser in partnership with the Katzie First Nation and parts of Interior B.C. These long-term collaborations reflect a commitment to going deeper, not just wider, in ecological and community restoration.

A newly introduced pillar is the Catalyst Fund, which was announced at this Forum. This fund is designed to enable, empower and catalyze additional restoration efforts across Canada, helping partners scale their work and overcome strategic barriers.

Mission Restoration, launched at COP16 in Cali, Colombia, focuses on aggregating and mapping restoration efforts nationwide. It identifies where restoration is occurring, where it is still needed and who is leading the work. WWF-Canada is currently ground-truthing more than 26,000 hectares of restoration completed by non-state actors. Mission Restoration uses UN terminology to describe all contributors beyond government, including many represented in the room. This is only the program's first year, and its success depends on collaboration. Partners like Conservation Ontario, Forests Canada and Tree Canada are already helping shape what national restoration reporting can become.

Mission Restoration:

- Track and counts current restoration initiatives.
- Builds momentum to galvanize organizations to undertake new and complex restoration projects.
- Inspires investments around international restoration commitments.
- Raises awareness of the benefits of restoration for nature and climate.

Mission Restoration collects data on restoration actions from 2020 to 2025 for projects that are 5 hectares or larger. It will continue to gather information on initiatives taking place until 2030. Organizations may combine their total project area to reach 5 hectares and submit aggregated data.

The analysis of collected data will be shared with all contributors to ensure transparency and collective learning.

Organizations can start submitting their data through www.wwf.ca/mission-restoration



PANEL

LEVERAGING FUNDING FOR RESTORATION

MODERATOR:

Kathrin Majic, Senior Vice-President, Development,
WWF-Canada

PANELISTS:

Jill Weaver, Director of Partnerships, ALUS

Jim Shinkewski, Director of Grants and Community
Programs, Pacific Salmon Foundation

Mark Cullen, Chair, Trees for Life and Director, Barrett
Family Foundation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Restoration takes time. The language that we use with our funders is that we're exploring something together. This is so we can be transparent about the outcomes — whether we deliver, we hit a target, go beyond that or there is a complication. We're on a journey together.

We've learned to accept that sometimes things don't turn out as they do because nature is not entirely predictable, and we're ready for that. A lot of the people working on the ground are volunteers and they're doing this out of the goodness of their hearts. We don't want to make life more difficult when they're just trying to help.

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One of the biggest pieces of the restoration puzzle is funding. Restoration work isn't just vital; it's also expensive. It simply can't happen without the right financial support behind it.

For those of us who spend our days thinking about fundraising, we know that raising money for environmental causes can be an uphill climb. In Canada, only about 1.5–2 per cent of philanthropic giving goes to the environment — such a small share, considering how deeply this work connects to everything else: people's health and wellbeing, our food systems, economic prosperity, even the infrastructure that supports our communities.”

— Kathrin Majic, Senior Vice-President,
Development, WWF-Canada

It's really important to be confident about who you are, understand what the pillars of your organization represent as well as where you and a donor fit into the larger context.

Indigenous Peoples have been living on the land for 10,000 years. It's time to quit denying and denigrating Indigenous knowledges across this country. Reach out to Indigenous Peoples who are willing to deploy their traditional ecological knowledges to help fight climate change. Climate change does not discriminate who it's going to impact. It's going to impact us all.



3. Clear interest in practical, technical and applied knowledge

Practitioners want accessible guidance on monitoring, seed systems, prioritization, site preparation and native plant materials.

Case studies, lessons learned (including failures) and real-world examples were repeatedly identified as valuable for continued learning.

4. Key challenges underscore why a network is needed

Participants identified persistent barriers that a national network could help address:

- Funding instability and short timelines.
- Complex permitting and multi-jurisdictional administrative hurdles.
- Limited access to native seed and plant materials.
- Shortages in skilled restoration capacity and workforce burnout.
- Data gaps, inconsistent monitoring approaches and difficulty accessing shared evidence.
- Partner coordination difficulties, including knowing who is doing what and where.
- Climate-driven uncertainty affecting planning and timing.

These challenges reinforced the need for shared tools, guidance and supportive relationships across the sector.

5. What an effective network should look like

Participants emphasized that the network must be:

- **People-centered:** Grounded in trust, relational work, mentorship and safe spaces for honest exchange.
- **Inclusive and diverse:** Accessible to organizations of different sizes, regions, cultures and mandates, and with the intentional inclusion of Indigenous voices.
- **Purposeful and clear:** Defined by a shared vision, transparent governance and clear goals to avoid mission drift.
- **Accessible and flexible:** Offering a mix of regional and national gatherings, hybrid/online spaces and low-barrier participation options.
- **Supportive of both informal and formal learning:** From networking opportunities to structured training and topic-specific sessions.
- **Respectful of knowledge systems and data sovereignty:** Especially around Indigenous knowledge and sensitive ecological data.

6. Desired features of a national restoration platform

Participants recommended that a future network or platform include:

- Directories of expertise, funders, suppliers and technical services
- Curated case studies (successes and failures)
- Interactive project maps
- Topic-specific learning streams
- Practical administrative guidance (permitting, standards, templates)
- Shared monitoring tools and common metrics

7. Risks and pitfalls to avoid

Participants flagged several important points to watch out:

- Avoiding models dominated by large organizations or expert halos.
- Preventing knowledge extraction without reciprocity or consent.
- Avoiding overwhelming users with complex systems or redundant tools.
- Ensuring an initiative does not rely on a single person or funder.
- Avoiding one-way communication formats with low engagement.
- Ensuring continuity — networks fade when not maintained, updated or responsive to changing needs.

8. Overall workshop insight

The workshop provided a strong mandate: Canada's restoration community is ready for a national network. Participants are eager to collaborate, learn from one another and build a shared approach that integrates Indigenous leadership, practical tools, peer learning and long-term sustainability.



FORUM'S REFLECTIONS TO CARRY FORWARD



Restoration in Canada is already underway, guided by many hands, voices and communities. Forum discussions reminded us that advancing this work requires safe and inclusive spaces where we listen, learn and hold multiple worldviews. Integrating Indigenous knowledge with scientific approaches deepens our understanding of how to care for the lands and waters that sustain us.



Indigenous leadership and knowledge are essential for shaping restoration priorities and guiding how we work on the land. Restoration is strengthened when Indigenous teachings, place-based governance and ancestral relationships inform our decisions, methods and understanding of what success looks like.



Meaningful restoration happens when organizations, governments, communities and knowledge systems work side-by-side, openly and without silos. Collaboration that is rooted in humility and mutual support enables knowledge exchange, resource sharing and creates pathways for both established leaders and new actors to contribute and grow.



Restoration is deeply interconnected — between communities and institutions, and within the ecosystems themselves. The work we do never stands alone; each action touches a larger web of relationships among land, water, wildlife and people. Impacts ripple outward, showing that restoration generates benefits that extend far beyond the immediate intervention.



Sustaining restoration over time means building relationships that allow us to integrate, interact and innovate together. No single entity can carry this work alone. By sharing progress, challenges, tools and lessons, we create the conditions to scale what works, respond to emerging needs and expand our collective impact.



Restoration is a long-term journey that requires patience, consistency and room to learn. Success is not a first-try destination but an iterative process. When we make space for experimentation, mistakes and the empowerment of communities, we strengthen our ability to advance restoration in ways that are resilient, inclusive and grounded in trust.

CLOSING REMARKS

MEGAN LESLIE,
PRESIDENT AND CEO, WWF-CANADA

“

The diversity of approaches to restoration is immense, impressive, creative, effective, respectful of Indigenous knowledge and practice, and most of all, it's done in collaboration and partnership with others. Restoration is hope. It's about taking action towards making things better in a world where nature and wildlife habitat have been degraded, destroyed or remain under threat.”

— Megan Leslie, President & CEO, WWF-Canada



NEXT STEPS

1. Consider [joining](#) your local chapter of SER.
2. For projects less than 5 hectares consider [registering for the re:grow platform](#).
3. For projects more than 5 hectares consider engaging with our [Mission Restoration data collection platform](#).

APPENDIX A

Climate Change & Adaptation Frameworks

- National Park Service. (2021). Planning for a Changing Climate: Climate-Smart Planning and Management in the National Park Service. <https://irma.nps.gov/DataStore/DownloadFile/662814>
- Parks Canada. (2019) A Climate Change Adaptation Framework for Parks and Protected Areas. <https://parks-parcs.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/A-Climate-Change-Adaptation-Framework-for-Parks-and-Protected-Areas-October-2019.pdf>
- Atlantic focus: CLIMAtlantic: <https://climatlantic.ca/>
- Climate Change Vulnerability Index <https://www.natureserve.org/products/climate-change-vulnerability-index-canadian-version>
- Climatedata.ca: <https://climatedata.ca/>
- Climate Atlas of Canada: <https://climateatlas.ca/>
- Canadian Centre for Climate Services: <https://www.canada.ca/en/environment-climate-change/services/climate-change/canadian-centre-climate-services.html>
- RISCC: Regional Invasive Species and Climate Change Network: <https://www.risccnetwork.org/>
- Adaptwest includes invasive species: <https://adaptwest.databasin.org/>
- CAKE: Climate Adaptation Knowledge Exchange: <https://www.cakex.org/>
- A Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu: <https://forestadaptation.org/sites/default/files/Tribal%20Climate%20Adaptation%20Menu%2011-2020%20v2.pdf>
- Plan to Adapt - [Plan2Adapt](#)

Vulnerability and Risk Assessment Tools

- Commission for Environmental Cooperation. (2017). North American Marine Protected Area Rapid Vulnerability Assessment Tool. <https://www.cec.org/files/documents/publications/11733-north-american-marine-protected-area-rapid-vulnerability-assessment-tool-en.pdf>
- Canadian Wildlife Federation's Aquatic Barriers Database: <https://aquaticbarriers.ca/en>
- Carbon Brief: <https://interactive.carbonbrief.org/impacts-climate-change-one-point-five-degrees-two-degrees/index.html#>
- [DCRRA | ClimateReadyBC](#)

Climate-smart conservation/restoration resources:

- National Wildlife Federation. (2013). Quick Guide to Climate-Smart Conservation: https://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Global-Warming/Climate-Smart-Conservation/Climate-Smart-Conservation_Quick_Guide.pdf
- Parks Canada. Parks Canada's Principles for climate-smart conservation: <https://cpcil.ca/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/FINAL-Principles-for-Climate-smart-Conservation-Feb-2025.pdf>
- Climate-smart Restoration Toolkit, Point Blue Conservation Science: <https://www.pointblue.org/climate-smart-restoration-toolkit/>
- SER Webinar: A Framework for Climate-smart Restoration: <https://www.ser.org/news/506068/Open-Access-A-Framework-for-Climate-smart-Restoration.htm>