

# **ATLANTIC CANADA:** Conversations on an Uncertain Future



CENTRE FOR LOCAL PROSPERITY  
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2020 THINKERS LODGE RETREAT



*Thinkers Lodge, Pugwash, Nova Scotia*

This document represents a compilation of conversations from the virtual May-June 2020 Thinkers Lodge Retreat on Climate Crisis. This is the fifth retreat in this series, made possible through a partnership between the Center for Local Prosperity and the Thinkers Lodge, located in Pugwash, Nova Scotia.

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# INTRODUCTION

***“You never change things by fighting the existing reality. To change something, build a new model that makes the existing model obsolete.”***

- Buckminster Fuller

Welcome to this compilation of writings, covering a range of important topics about our climate-altered future in Atlantic Canada.

The Centre for Local Prosperity (CLP) has been conducting climate crisis retreats in partnership with the Thinkers Lodge, Pugwash, Nova Scotia since 2017. From May 12 until June 17, 2020, CLP gathered 36 international, regional and local Thinkers from many walks of life for the fifth Thinkers Lodge Retreat on Climate Crisis. Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, this retreat was held virtually and encompassed a series of on-line investigations entitled Pandemic and Climate Crisis, and the Uncertain Future of Local Community.

These Thinkers committed themselves to this intensive process in order to explore the preparedness of small, local and rural communities in Atlantic Canada to the many climate, ecosystem and societal changes on the horizon. COVID and the related economic fallout may be a prescient look into our future.

Central among these discussions was a vision for the region's future and how our relationship to the natural world must fundamentally change in order to attain this vision. These explorations then examined local community-based collaborative adaptation strategies that could be implemented – both immediately and over time.

Much has been written about the scope of the

coming climate crisis and ecosystem changes, and many solutions have been offered, but these tend to be at a global or national level. The works contained herein are one of the first instances where a broad scope of place-based local solutions, covering all aspects of community dynamics, has been distilled specifically for Atlantic Canada.

We believe it is desirable and possible for Atlantic Canadian communities to identify and engage the primary drivers of local social, cultural, economic and political change that will allow us to live in a climate-altered, diverse and resilient world. Once understood, implemented and evaluated in Atlantic Canada, it is our belief these drivers can be modified and replicated in other communities across the globe. There is a real opportunity for Atlantic Canadians to set an inspiring example of effective and responsive change.

Ocean and weather changes are more than apparent in Atlantic Canada and will continue to worsen. We need to accept and surrender to the fact that there will have to be significant losses, retrenchments, relocations, changes and adaptations to our built environment due to sea level rise, storm surges, coastal erosion, hurricanes, flooding (due in part to warmer and wetter winters), and summer droughts associated wild fires. There will be an increasing number of climate-displaced persons, even from within our region.

These phenomenon bring with them accompanying ecosystem changes in the decline of certain species, new pests and invasive species, and the resulting and growing uncertainty that farmers will be able to produce food, fishers bring in the catch, and foresters to count on certain tree species remaining in our forests.

We have only partially addressed ocean and weather-related changes and ways local communities can adapt in these writings. We trust that other organizations and resources can provide advice specific for each situation (some are listed in the Resources at the end of each chapter). Rather, we provide here a broad sweep across these and many other aspects of community life that need to be considered and addressed.

We focus on adaptation – preparing for an increasing climate-altered reality – as deep, transformational community measures of adaptation. We believe that we have largely missed most of the window for meaningful mitigation of the effects of climate change through reduction in carbon footprint.

We also recognize the importance of local economic preparedness as a key element in the work ahead. The effects of globalization have left most local communities extremely vulnerable. We are forced to import most of our essential needs through long distance, just-in-time supply chains. These supply chains are becoming increasingly fragile, and in words of one Canadian planner, ‘just-in-time’ needs to change to ‘just-in-case.’

When it comes to future planning at the domestic and community levels, we consider it helpful to begin by understanding a hierarchy of human essential needs: 1) breathable air, 2) clean potable water, 3) healthy available food, 4) shelter and clothing, 5) energy, 6) transportation, 7) local functioning economy, 8) stable local socio-political structures, 9) positive community, culture and future narrative.

An understanding of this hierarchy can be used by communities to establish priorities between and within each of these areas. For example, some communities may already have water shortage issues, some may be in food deserts, some may lack sufficient or affordable housing. Longer term local control of energy and transportation could become

issues.

We believe that the direction forward includes returning in part to how community life functioned 2 or 3 generations ago, while simultaneously utilizing the benefits of appropriate modern technology. Things were more local at one time, and we will re-localize again as globalization becomes more challenging. We know that there will be less energy available. We know that more people will be involved in food production. There will be other similar overarching changes. These changes are not bad; these are changes that can be made to lead to a more rich, fulfilling lifestyle, and to foster a more trusting and close-knit community. There is a silver lining to the future.

Either communities act proactively now and in the short-term, or they will have to act reactively later. Either way, change will happen. Being proactive is always the better choice, as there are more options available while supply chains, resources and systems of civilization are functioning well. Now is an easier time to get things done. Talk with your neighbours, plan at the neighbourhood level and begin planning at the community level as well. The time has come to bring these conversations out into the open – everyone is ready.

This document is intended to act as an inspiration and practical guide for local community residents, groups, businesses and governments. The content is taken from submitted Thinkers essays, quotes and portions of conversation that took place during the on-line discussions. We also include references or resources for each topic for additional value.

Finally, we should restate what may be the single more important thing – begin conversations with others in your community, and keep those conversations regular, active and engaged. That is how change begins. Our communities are our single biggest asset, and it will be the strength and cohesiveness of our communities that represent a strong viable future for Atlantic Canada.

# THINKERS VISION FOR THE FUTURE

*“We see a future in which we are not in denial, we are not silent about what we see, and we take action to work for a better future.”*

- 2020 Thinkers Lodge Retreat

We, the Thinkers, gathered virtually at the Thinkers Lodge, Pugwash, Nova Scotia to craft and converse on a vision and narrative for the future of Atlantic Canada.

This is now the time for a fundamental shift for humanity. We are raising our voices to be heard, and we are amplifying the volume. The Earth is sending us a clear message, and we must listen. If we do not pay attention to that message, the very future of our species will be in jeopardy.

## OUR VISION

We see a bold transformative change based out of necessity, rather than small incremental changes to the old ‘normal.’ If we are to continue to exist as a civilized culture, we recognize a fundamental shift must begin, now.

We see an Atlantic Canada that is community-focused, locally-governed and fully inclusive, where all voices are heard and no one is left behind. We see communities in which all forms of discrimination such as sexism, racism, homophobia, transphobia, xenophobia, classicism and ableism have been acknowledged and transformed. We see a place where residents live together in Mi’kma’ki, fully embracing the sentiments of the Peace and Friendship treaties and working collectively to uphold Mi’kmaq sovereignty over the land. We see a place where communities and governments

recognize and incorporate the knowledge of the Mi’kmaq elders and leaders on an equal footing.

We see local self-reliant bioregions across Atlantic Canada that have eradicated poverty and where people work together to live in harmony with the Earth. We see bioregions focused on sustainable agriculture, small scale community owned energy, and other co-created community initiatives, with confederations of non-partisan municipalities, and economies that are mostly locally self-reliant, secure, accessible to all, fairly traded and ecologically sound. We see regions in which we can be confident that those in positions of power are making decisions in youth’s best interest and securing an increasingly better future for future generations, where meaningful support is given by governments and other segments of society to communities that are and will be facing the largest burden of the impacts of climate change.

We see a future in which we are not held captive by our technologies or by mass consumerism, but deeply recognize our interconnectedness with all of nature and have an abiding interest in undertaking restorative processes to our essential ecosystems. We see a future in which we have time for each other in a kind, gentle and caring way, whereby we have the courage to stand up for each other and build strong communities.

We see the ability to sustain ourselves in a way that



is securely based on a no-growth economy that’s accessible to all with a guaranteed livable income. We see an economy that is based on fair trade, eliminating the exploitation of primary producers and workers, is ecologically sound with food grown without pesticides or monocropping, with agricultural practices that are focused on nurturing the land and not on industrial practices. We see a future where our relationship to the natural world is not based on exploitation and extraction for material gain, but is restorative and for the common good of local communities.

We see an Atlantic Canada based around bioregions more than political boundaries, where citizens know and have stewardship to their region and what it can provide economically in a sustainable way. We see an economy where communities and bioregions have local control over the production of truly renewable energy and, also, have a recognition of what has been lost from each bioregion, what needs to be regenerated and what rifts need mending between the oppressors and marginalized communities through meaningful, true reconciliation.

We see a future with a cultural focus on biophilia, where everybody continues to get outside and enjoy and appreciate nature in a safe context, because you can’t really protect something if you don’t appreciate it. We see a culture in our region that has greater appreciation for what we have in our lives and a willingness to take care of it, a culture that is not just continuing to seek more and more but, rather, appreciates and is grounded in what we

have in our relationships to our natural world.

We see a future where neighborhoods in the cities and in rural areas gather together and make decisions by consensus and identify a respected community elder to represent them. We see a future where children are in school for the morning and in the afternoon are allowed to be outside playing, making friends and exploring their natural surroundings. We see a future where we will look forward with the assurance that future generations will have the same opportunities.

We recognize that we are at a turning point in history, a time it’s taken several hundred years to get to, and it may take several hundred years to truly restore the world and a deep respect for Earth. Yet, we do not have a luxury of time. There is an urgency. We know what needs to be done. We have the technology to do it, and we have the strength of community to do it. We lack the political and cultural will to think seven generations into the future, as do Indigenous traditions, and that each of us is also the seventh generation of someone in the past. All planning can be based on this timeframe.

We recognize that we can no longer be held back by a sense of fear—that no one wants to make a statement because it might be construed as not being politically expedient. We must be the ones who take that brave step forward to demonstrate the alternatives to business as usual and unleash a transformative change. We can articulate and achieve a brighter future.

We know that this vision for our Atlantic Canada region is something that will continue to evolve, yet it is a guiding post and rallying cry for action and an inspiration to do something to fulfill this vision. It is a vision which can uplift marginalized communities and build a better future for all. We can ensure no one is left behind because true climate readiness can't leave people behind.

### TO MAKE CHANGE

Our society and community individuals can make this type of vision manifest by working towards it, so that all our actions come together at different levels and communities take on different flavors based on their unique strengths and assets.

Incredible steps have been taken by communities in our region, and we can document and replicate those works into a cohesive transformative movement. Rather than trying to convert Atlantic Canada as a whole, we believe we have to network with local actions that are happening throughout the region



and provide whatever support we can through local community meetings. We know that planners, local governments and policy makers must play a key role at the insistence of local citizens.

This vision is a living document composed by a small group. It is transient, and it needs to adapt to new information as it is shared with more people. This vision seeks to evolve in a manner which places the best of Indigenous traditional knowledge, Western cultural science, and all human cultures on an equal footing, in the spirit of two-eyed seeing.

Each community, as it should, will define their own vision based on their unique circumstances. For that reason, we trust that these topics, questions and resources we raise from our efforts can provide tools for these community processes as they seek to safeguard their futures.

We, the Thinkers, see a future in which we are not in denial, we are not silent about what we see, and we take action to work for a better future.



# HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE EARTH

*"It is time for us now to come together as one, and to understand how we can engage the gifts that we had been given by the Creator for the benefit of all, which would include our natural world and all of humanity."*

- Elder Albert Marshall

**Albert:** Humanity's current relationship to the earth is disconnected. Nature is seen as separate, and this is deeply ingrained in our colonial culture. No one has the right to compromise the source of life.

We are debilitated. We made ourselves think that science and technology does everything, and that's a mindset that needs to change. The laws of nature need to supersede the laws of man.

Our disconnect is driven by insecurity. We have a need to feel safe, but we overshoot those needs, and not just socio-economically. We need to be sensitive of the delicacy of our and the world's respective rhythms and cycles. We can't allow silence, inaction and denial to be used against nature.

**Christine:** Mass production and consumerism and marketing and branding. All of that has escalated. People are lonely, depressed and feeling a sense of disconnection. It's a materialistic outlook, and it's everywhere. That seems to be what's valued, rather than our fundamental interconnectedness—where the heart, value and goodness of being human really lies.

**Albert:** We have a verb-based language—nature is she, a giver and nurturer. Nature is a subject, not an object. If we can see it that way, no problem. We are the only creatures with a cognitive mind, and we need to use it in a positive way. We need to use

our technology to restore the natural world.

A new way of thinking is the only hope for saving humanity, and we need to move forward on these principles.

There is an opportunity for an awakening by returning to an intuitive way of knowing, by learning from our senses through attention and mindfulness. Intimately knowing a place or spot, at the individual or community level, is important.

It will take patience and commitment; we are breaking a long habit and we must not be afraid to let go of the past to find a better outlook. We must be the eyes, ears and voice of Earth Mother and the beings that cannot speak for themselves.

**Ethan:** We have this Darwinist notion of man versus nature. Individualism and its ethics of privacy dominate today's society, excluding the common people. But if you really look at nature, it's about cooperation, interconnection and interdependence. We are collectively responsible for the natural world.

**Laureline:** Even if you're living in a rural context, it doesn't mean that you have a better connection with nature. It really depends on your activity and how busy you are. If you busy studying or working in your evenings, you may not benefit from or feel a connection with nature. It takes some work to build in the habit of taking in nature regularly



*“Nature has rights. People have responsibility.”*

- Elder Albert Marshall

and keeping it up. But when you can, its benefits can help you be more stable emotionally, reducing stress and anxiety.

We asked if you could to go and spend one hour in nature without doing anything, without saying anything, just silently being in nature. And I hope you've had a chance to do it. Can you share, as individuals, your thoughts and how you connect with nature?

**Lily:** Though I don't have any outdoor spaces in my apartment, I feel a general connection to nature, and this still gives me a sense of place and a connection to the land. This sense inspires the biggest emotions and feelings for me, the magic in beholding the interconnectedness of ecosystems and humanity.

**Christine:** I realized recently that I could go through my day without even feeling the temperature of the air outside. Since then, I've tried to take every chance to just drop into my body, open up all my senses, and just relax. It always leaves me feeling uplifted.

**John:** I felt stirred up today from simply sitting outdoors. Being connected to nature really does work for us because we're part of nature. Our bodies are nature.


**Tracy:** I am fortunate that I live in an area where my

backyard is wooded, and just a little bit through the woods, there's a lake. I kind of just wander through the trail and end up down at the lake. I really don't think of much, but I feel at ease, at home. I lose any anxieties, forget completely about the day. I am just there, in the moment. Nature does that to me all the time. Whenever I'm feeling overwhelmed or underwhelmed, I just go and return to the woods or lake. Whenever I step out that door, there's an energy shift that takes place. It grounds me, and it gives me the ability to think clearly.

**Robert:** Everything is much bigger and more vibrant in nature. The shift in energy lets you feel like you're part of everything very quickly, and I think that's very important. I'm more present and in the moment these days, and I think it's because I'm outside more, hearing the breeze and feeling the elements.

I think with increased urbanization, more and more people are living in densely populated and congested environments, and they don't really have the opportunity to really experience the call to nature and the energy reciprocity that takes place. It's tangible. It's real. It's psychological and spiritual, and I think it's an important part of who we are and what we have to reconnect with.

**John:** We should be trying to be present and be appreciative of the world around us, and that can take any form, you know. Maybe a walk in the



*“Nature is ever expressing herself in glorious ways. It is hard to deny, or ignore, the boundless ways that we are gifted with the simple and spectacular beauty of our Mother Earth. We need to place a value on this love of nature, or what might be termed biophilia, to bring our collective effort to the point that drives more of the decisions we make in the shaping of future life.*

*We will not do the work we need to do if we are not in love.*

*Our resilient communities must reawaken our citizens if we are going to motivate a transitional movement. Without beauty as a value, we will be blinded by the momentum of the materialistic culture that only looks to self-gratification and pursuit of “more.” The new narrative says that we have a choice. We may have ridden the fossil fuel train as far as it could take us. The renewable future is in fact a renewal of quality over quantity. It is about renewing our humanity by opening to our commonality, rather than putting down and setting apart from what might appear to be outside of self. Renewable is a choice to live – together.*

*Architecture and the way we inhabit the planet has always been an expression, or mirror, for the cosmology of the particular period. We have run the limits of the machine as our model of control and dominance of nature. It is time to look to the living interrelationship as the new cosmology. It is a time to remember what we once knew and valued. Only with this sense of interconnectedness can we steer what has come to be “a ship of fools,” to what Bucky Fuller described as “spaceship earth.” This is what future generations will inherit if we choose hope over fear. It's time to get on with the rigors of good work.”*

- David Barrett, Architect



woods or skiing down a hill. But I think for me, it's often by the sea. It's there that I'll feel that deeper connection and peace, and it's there that I find the most inspiration. I think the more time I spend in nature in that quiet contemplative way of being, the better.

**Christine:** Go outside, take a walk and open your senses. Whenever you start over-thinking something just come back to your senses: hearing, seeing, smelling. Let yourself feel. We're so visual, I've actually had people blindfolded so they have to use their other senses. They have to be more tactile and auditory.

One practice you could try is walking meditation. You should feel like you're really caressing the earth with each step. Every time you put your foot down you're making contact with the earth, you're communicating and feeling.

Another practice to try is called Meet the Tree. The idea is to go into a natural environment and allow yourself to be drawn to a spot, and then just wander aimlessly until you feel pulled to something. When that happens, sit down and feel. Open your senses and your inquisitive mind, why were you drawn to that place in particular? What does it feel like, what can you learn? Keep exploring that spot and the energy that drew you there.

You could also try the Sit Spot, which is when you go to the same place a couple times a week throughout the whole year. You will see the changes through the

seasons, you will come to know the animals that live there.

**Tracy:** How much can you like a place without feeling connected to it? You need something more than just bringing people into nature to foster the connection. You need to lead by example.

A few years ago, I started gardening. I would post things that I was growing on my social media accounts. Over the past four or so years I've had at least twenty people ask me for advice on starting their own gardens, with the intention to grow their own food. They saw what I'm growing and said, "Hey, I want to do that too."

So, I feel doing something and showing people how is better than just telling them what to do.

Maybe we can get social media influencers and people in other influential positions to lead by example and encourage more people to get out into nature.

I also think gardening is a key personal and social activity for the future. Being outside in the natural elements benefits people in many ways, such as keeping them attuned to nature, helping them to develop a closer relationship and understanding with the processes of plant growth and ecosystems. It also provides healthy physical activity, creates nutritious food, and builds local resilience against fragilities in global food supply chains.



### Some reconnection ideas generated by the Thinkers:

- Open curtains during the day.
- Pause to quietly watch greenery or clouds.
- Find the moon at night.
- Spend time outdoors as much as possible.
- Challenge yourself with an outdoor activity such as bird watching, gardening, or even rock climbing.
- Think and act to work with nature, not against her. Anything else is superficial, an individual responsibility.
- 'Reconnect hacks' - hot and cold shower, get covered in mud at the mud flats, go barefoot in the snow.
- Find more outdoor education in schools and for adults.
- Engage in citizen science and field work.
- Help to create more common spaces and green spaces.
- Children - more studies outdoors.
- Curriculum - subject teaching in relationship to natural elements (bees, trees, etc.).
- Do random acts of natural art.
- Teenagers can undertake community service of nature, citizen research.
- Do night walks.
- Walk with the intention of peace and your breath.
- Connect to a talisman, such as a stone or other object.



## *Morning Prayer*

*Creator, I come before you in a humble way.*

*I thank you for this day.*

*I give thanks to the four directions and the four winds.*

*I give thanks for allowing me one more day to walk upon my Mother the Earth.*

*Creator, I give greetings to Mother Earth,*

*I ask her to continue to sustain me and all other life.*

*I tell her that one day my body will return to her.*

*Creator, I thank you and give greetings to Grandfather Sky.*

*I give thanks for the warmth Father Sun brings as he travels from the east to the west.*

*I give thanks for the light that allows me to see the great beauty of Mother Earth.*

*Creator, I give thanks and ask you to watch over my relatives the four legged.*

*I give thanks for what they have given us.*

*Creator, I give thanks for the birds, the winged ones.*

*I give thanks for their beauty and the songs that fill the air.*

*I honour the trees and the healing plants*

*And herbs that hold so much knowledge of life and are our guardians.*

*I give thanks for all they have taught us*

*And still today continue to teach.*

*Creator, for the water, the giver of life, I give great thanks indeed.*

*I give thanks for all that is on, above, below and upon the Mother Earth.*

*Creator, my most humble prayer is for the two legged, the human beings.*

*They are out of balance and need to return to the Old Ways to find love, harmony, peace and spiritual awakening.*

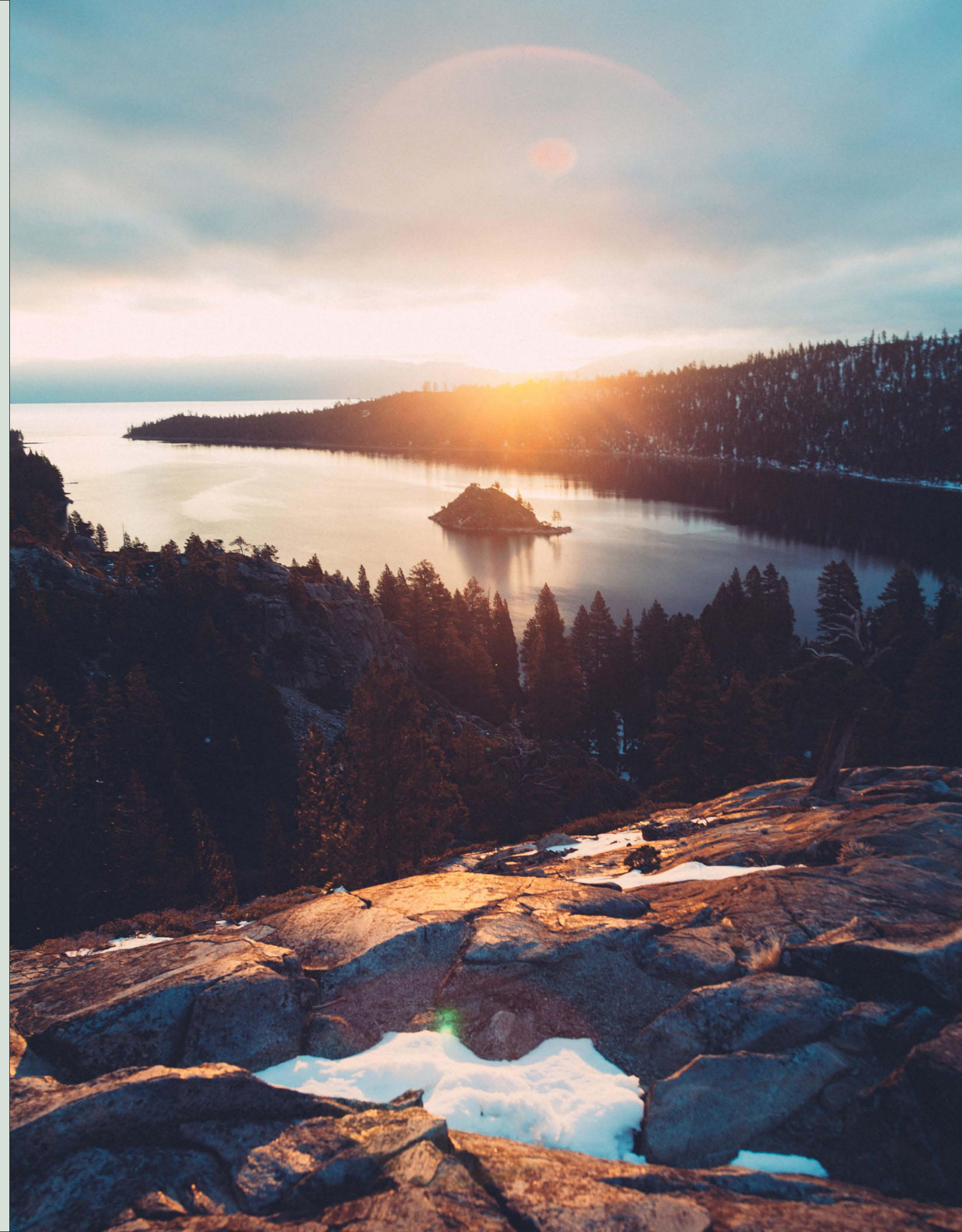
*I ask you Creator to reach down and touch our hearts so that we can all live the good life before the pathway of this life is no more.*

*Creator, accept my love, continue to walk with me upon this pathway and help me in my work.*

*For it is the work of every living being to help and love each other.*

*I give thanks.*

- Elder Albert Marshall



# PROVIDING FOR BASIC NEEDS

*“COVID made it clear just how fragile and unreliable the global economic system is and heightened our awareness of the vital need for community and local self-reliance. Localization isn’t about ending international trade. It is about shortening the distance between production and consumption wherever possible. It’s about bringing the economy closer to home so we can more clearly see the impact of our actions.*

*It’s a simple concept with far reaching benefits. It can help restore more meaningful and reliable livelihoods while greatly reducing our impact on the biosphere. And it restores our fundamental connection to one another and to the earth. It’s truly a win-win-win solution. . A more equitable, healthier, gentler world is not just a pipedream; it is possible.”*

- Helena Norberg-Hodge

**Robert:** Last summer, when we were first scoping out this retreat, the thought was that we would be meeting at the Thinkers Lodge to discuss different aspects of climate change and how it might impact societal collapse, supply chain disruptions, and the ability for communities to function in a globalized context.

With COVID, though, I think it became apparent that the conversation needs to back up to more immediate factors of the basic essentials that we all need to stay alive, to maintain our livelihood, and to continue a sense of well-being and security.

I’ve come up with a list of essentials for life, rooted in the foundations of other’s work, such as Abraham Maslow’s hierarchy of needs. The list starts with breathable air, which of course we take for granted, though it may be in short supply for people living in cities such as Beijing or Mumbai. The second is

clean, potable water, and the third is access to a healthy food source.

These are the three most basic needs for survival, and after that comes shelter and clothing, energy, transportation, a functioning economy of some kind, a local stable political and social structure, and a positive community culture and narrative. Today, we’re going to focus primarily on food and energy, with an understanding that all these needs have an intrinsic connection.

My question is: Where do we start to safeguard what we need to stay alive, literally, and maintain a healthy community, both food and energy-wise?

**Phil:** I’ll take on agriculture, which has been identified as one of the major contributors to climate change, but it’s in a unique position in that it can also be one of the major solutions. Some estimates



say that nearly half the carbon in the atmosphere could be sequestered in the ground through a global transition to sustainable [agriculture](#).

What’s concerning is that NASA science researchers have pointed out that the collapse we might see if we don’t change the food system could happen rapidly and in numerous regions around the [world](#). The question becomes how to transition the existing corporate agricultural structure into one that I like to think of as SAFE: Secure, Accessible to all, Fairly traded and Ecologically produced.

What’s exciting about the transition to ecological agriculture is that when we start looking at small scale farming, there is the possibility of doubling food production without expanding [land mass](#). Food production isn’t just about being organic and is as much about social responsibility as it is scientific technique: We need to have the ability to feed the entire planet.

There are living examples of this working such as [The Legacy Garden](#) in Charlottetown which gives away about 20,000 pounds of food every year, from about an acre and a half of production. The garden sells some produce, but the vast majority of what is grown annually is given to charities we operate as a social enterprise.

Economically, farming is a very difficult way to make a living, especially when talking about a small scale operation. Historically, farmers have always done other things along with farming, like teaching or

blacksmithing. I think it’s just in the last generation that people have become professional farmers.

**Robert:** So, it strikes me that it comes back to the need for personal diversification of livelihood.

**Phil:** Yeah.

**Robert:** So, in other words, you need to become the proverbial jack of all trades, and that’s what cuts it in a rural setting. You can grow most of your food, and you can sell some of it to generate a portion of your income, but then you’re also doing something else to supplement it. If one thing goes slightly up off the rails, you can pick up the slack with everything else because you’ve diversified your income.

I believe one of the stances we’ve taken is best captured in the phrase, “the future is rural.” Rural communities are naturally more resilient than city centers, which are more complex and need daily inputs of all kinds of things just to be able to function properly.

We love technology. We tend to think, oh, we’ll just start using indoor LED-lit vertical gardening and all of our problems will be solved. It’s a technological fix. You need more inputs to grow things indoors than out in a field where sunlight is free. When you have to supply electricity to grow food, you’re much more vulnerable in the long term. When you look at indoor agriculture, almost all of it right now is leafy greens, such as high-end salad mix for fancy

*“The consideration of where we are and what we are, on the spot, turns out to be very important. We are talking about a farming situation in some sense: how we are going to experience the land properly, the real land, the land that grows crops and the land on which animals are raised.*

*When we first wake up in our bedrooms, first thing in the morning, it would be so great if the first incense we smelled were either cow or horse manure or the smell of plants. We have to go back and experience how the earth works, rather than purely smelling our neighbor’s bacon cooking as soon as we wake up, and hearing taxicabs roaring and garbage trucks rumbling. We should all experience working on the land, literally and properly. That is the best way to wake ourselves up: smelling earth, actually experiencing good earth.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, there are a lot of problems that have come up because, since medieval times, the process of conquering the world has been based on conquering the earth instead of touching ground, touching soil properly.”*

- Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche, 1979

restaurants. But how do you grow beans, lentils, potatoes, rice, wheat and corn- the basic staples of humanity? You can’t do that indoors.

**Phil:** I think all of us remember a year ago last August, when the [Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change](#) came out with a report that talked about how the food system that we have today is no longer viable and how large scale industrialized agriculture has to be dismantled.

Farmers markets are a fast growth sector in North America, noting the ever increasing desire for [‘local.’](#) One way we can begin to transition to a local food system is on an individual level, by supporting our local farmers markets. In addition to that, on a provincial level, governments in Atlantic Canada are starting to look at food hubs, centralized depots accessible to small farmers, so that smaller farms can fill the bill of larger orders.

On a policy scale, one thing I think we could be doing to encourage local food production or more sustainable food production is to look at how crop insurance is paid. Virtually every farmer gets crop insurance, and maybe we could start to tie the amount that they have to pay to the stewardship of their land. For example, for every 1% increase in organic matter in the soil, the water holding capacity of an acre of land increases by about 25,000 gallons. Maybe for every 1% increase in organic matter your crop insurance is reduced, incentivizing the farmers to take better care of their land. It makes sense, as the more organic matter in the soil the less it will be vulnerable to drought and disease.

What’s interesting in terms of agriculture is that because we live in North America and are used to an industrialized food system, we tend to think that the whole world is supplied with food in the same manner, but small, diversified farms account for a significant portion of food production. We have a tremendous agricultural base in Atlantic Canada. We’re quite fortunate, and I think we could make a transition and support a diversified smaller scale agriculture model. Consider the example of giving away over 20,000 pounds of food grown from an acre and a half of land, in addition to what we sell to support the farm, operating on a smaller scale can focus on an increase the productivity on a per acre,

or even per square foot basis.

And then there’s the sorts of things that we could be doing to increase output in an urban environment, like edible landscaping. For example, many urban parks in Charlottetown have food growing in them, available for free to anybody that wants to go pick it, along with numerous community gardens.

For the next generation of young farmers, access to the land and the cost of equipment will be a serious barrier to getting into agriculture. I mean, there’s virtually no new potato farmers. There’s virtually no new dairy farmers. The industry is just far too expensive to get into it. If access to land wasn’t such a barrier, I think we would see a resurgence in young people farming, like we did in the back of the land movement in the 70s. Maybe if you have land that you can donate you can hand it over to a land trust or a farm conservation community.

**Robert:** Phil, good points. It’s exciting to see



***“In August 2019, the United Nation’s Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released its report, “Climate Change and Land, Desertification, Land Degradation, Sustainable Land Management, Food Security, and Greenhouse Gas Fluxes in Terrestrial Ecosystems.” The report’s findings assert that the agriculture and food systems on which we depend are no longer viable.***

***For a population accustomed to the local grocery store filled with New Zealand lamb, Argentinian beef, Chilean fruits, and vegetables from Mexico and the USA, the collapse of the global food system seems unfathomable. However, the 100 experts from 52 countries who released the IPCC report revealed that a half-billion people already live in places turning into desert, and soil is being lost 100 times faster than it is able to regenerate. Scientists claim that the window to address the threat of famine is rapidly closing and they warn that food shortages could lead to unprecedented numbers of refugees migrating in search of food secure regions.***

***Cynthia Rosenzweig, Senior Research Scientist, NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies, says “A particular risk to the global food supply is that food crises could develop on several continents at once. The potential risk of multi-breadbasket failure is increasing,”***

***As daunting as this all seems, the lead authors of the IPCC report believe we can avoid food catastrophe. We have the knowledge, resources and technology. The question is, are we are willing to put in the effort?***

***IPCC report clearly states, that the era of climate change requires a radically different form of agriculture, one that prioritizes humanity’s stewardship of the environment. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that a Secure, Accessible, Fairly traded and Ecologically produced (S.A.F.E.) food system replace the mainstream, unsustainable one that exists today.”***

- Phil Ferraro

land trusts and other ideas like that beginning to take hold. Food, of course, is essential, but I also think of energy as the next big one for maintaining our communities, and local agency will become increasingly important in the future. Yuill, you’re very familiar with energy issues and trends at the community level.

**Yuill:** Local communities in Atlantic Canada need to regain agency to address the climate emergency and to improve quality of life, at the same time. For Atlantic Canadians, it starts with taking responsibility for the energy system, which starts with radical change.

There’s a big debate right now around the notion of incremental versus transformational change. For example, with incremental change, altering the diameter of a storm water pipe by 10 millimeters would involve a peer review process that could take years before any pipe is laid, while transformational change would say, actually, we don’t even need pipes anymore. We just need wetlands to store the water because that whole system of conveyance of storm water no longer works in the world of climate change.

Basically, radical transformation is incredibly difficult and disruptive. It’s about breaking the system and thinking about a problem in a completely new way. That’s a very hard transition for society which applies not only in adaptation to climate change, but also the transformation of our energy systems.

Where we can start is by considering the energy system from a different perspective, whereby we don’t really care about electricity, or natural gas, or propane. What we actually care about is food, shelter, comfort, health and security – and electricity is a means to those ends. And so if you can reduce that need for electricity, in turn, you reduce both environmental impact as well as financial costs. That’s the way I think a community needs to look at its energy system—maximum beneficial impact to humanity, using the minimum amount of clean energy possible.

The way in which a community energy plan or energy transition is implemented has the potential

to either continue to perpetrate social inequalities or challenge them.

Communities should also consider whether they should build a renewable energy system using a cooperative model versus one contracted out to a large multinational company, keeping in mind who gains the most benefit from the choice.

**Robert:** That’s interesting. Can you expand on that?

**Yuill:** Sure. Imagine building a renewable energy system using a cooperative model versus contracting out to a large multinational company. Who benefits from this action? Also related is the fairness and community innovation. So, the structure with which you choose to do the project, the governance and organizational, is very important as opposed to just the technological innovation. Even financing is an important choice. For example, is there opportunity for a community bond to raise the money as opposed to going into the bank?

**Robert:** There’s been a number of discussions I’ve been involved with on the idea of local redundant electrical grids, what’s called ‘behind the meter,’ meaning they’re connected and electrical energy is happening before anything gets measured by the private utility. Would that be an example of a potential transformational change, particularly if that type of grid is easily replicable?

**Yuill:** Yes, I think that would be an example of a community taking back control of the electricity grid by taking it away from a large monopoly. Initially, it would be very disruptive because the legal environment isn’t set up to enable that kind of undertaking. We have a utility board in Nova Scotia that regulates those kinds of endeavors.

But if it’s behind the meter, I think you can connect up to a certain number of buildings without going through the utility board, and all of a sudden, you could have an independent electricity system that could slowly grow. And this growth would be happening in a very rebellious way, which would be very interesting.



**Robert:** It seems to call into question the old centralized distribution model.

**Yuill:** Utilities are actually under attack from every angle. People are installing decentralized electricity systems, and large businesses have behind the meter systems coming into play. The old standard utility model in North America is in a death spiral and that's creating disruption across energy markets. There's a lot of openings appearing that are currently being seized by capital driven companies, and there are opportunities for community groups as well. It's going to be very interesting to watch and see if people pull away from the traditional utility model. The current business models might cease to function, and we're seeing that in Nova Scotia right now.

Nova Scotia power is grappling with its future in a decarbonised, decentralized system, and there's the utility board hearing on the future of electricity for the next 20 years. It's hard to see how they fit within that picture, and they're kicking and screaming as a result.

**Phil:** I'm not quite as optimistic anymore. Unfortunately, I think it's too late to see the massive transition necessary for real change. If it's going to occur, it will come from small pods of groups in various regions. Maybe Atlantic Canada is one of those regions, but even at that, I'm not optimistic.

From a federal perspective, I'm also not that

optimistic. Come on, you know, the feds still want to build nuclear power plants and pipelines. Although COVID has shown that they're capable of turning on a dime, are they willing to do that? I think there's just too much resistance from the corporate elite.

**Yuill:** I think efficiency has to be part of the mix and also focusing on quality of life, rather than the economic growth. That may be part of a silver lining of the COVID crisis. People have been thinking, or at least in my world they have, about what life is all about, rather than continuing on the runaway train everyone was on before. So, maybe that's a place where we'll actually start thinking about change.

**Christine:** It just seems like things change because there are people who have a passion. It's happening on our road with a woman that just moved here. She got us all to gather around a Community agricultural initiative that could be year round. We have investigated ways to have big hoop houses that use geothermal heat and producing our own food on this road with the idea that we grow enough for those who can't afford to buy local, organic food. It's just people that have strong passion, they seem to change the world.



# FACING CLIMATE JUSTICE

*“There can be no peace as long as there is grinding poverty, social injustice, inequality, oppression, environmental degradation, and as long as the weak and small continue to be trodden by the mighty and powerful.”*

- His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama

**Laureline:** This is going to be a difficult session for me to facilitate. This is a topic on which I've been working for over a decade, and nothing is really new in what we're going to discuss. All the injustices remain, and still, I feel the pain. Sometimes it's a lot, so I apologize in advance if I cry. I hope we can have a very deep conversation and not fear getting into the emotions that we may feel. I think it's a very

important time to be honest with what's happening, and to look for solutions that come from the heart.

**Albert:** We should remind ourselves on a daily basis that we are not superior beings, but we are very much part and parcel of this wonderful creation. I think we should remind ourselves that we have something that no other species has—a cognitive mind. We can use it to change, to transform our ways,

In our world, in our language, we have words like “Netukulink.” This word acts as a guiding principle of how we go about our life. It tells you that you have the privilege to sustain yourself, but it does not tell you that in the process of sustaining the self, we cannot and should not do anything to compromise ecological integrity. We cannot compromise the cleansing capacity of the system by pumping toxins into her with no attempt to eradicate or mitigate the damage.

Now science is a wonderful tool—no question about it—though for some reason, we have allowed technology to compromise the very essence of life. When are we going to put it to work in the right way? Yes, it can help us to live a better life. It can help us to relieve some of the challenges we have. But we should not allow technology to become our god. It is not a god. It's only a tool. I believe if man



*“Close your eyes. So you will not see me, but at least hear my voice.”*

- Elder Albert Marshall

can create something, then he can transform it in a way that it can be used to help Mother Nature.

At this point, the air is beyond Mother Earth's ability to heal it. The water is beyond her ability to clean it. The soil is beyond her ability to be made fertile. We are in need of ecological sustainability, now, which is easier said than done.

The reason why some of these negative things have happened is because we have chosen to remain silent, inactive and in denial. And in so doing, the government took that as meaning that we are condoning what they are doing.

For me, it's very simple. There is no separation between the government and the multinationals

*“When human beings lose their connection to nature, to heaven and earth, then they do not know how to nurture their environment or how to rule their world - which is saying the same thing. Human beings destroy their ecology at the same time they destroy one another. From that perspective, healing our society goes hand in hand with healing our personal elemental connection with the phenomenal world”*

- Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche

or the industries. The government is no longer interested in doing anything that could be ecologically sustainable. The only sustainability that they are concerned with is what they are going to do to help someone maximize their profits.

To me, what's the point of talking about all these causes of discriminations and environmental racism? Talking alone will not accomplish much. We have to come to an understanding that the time is now. Action must be taken, and that action has to be in the spirit of collaboration. We need a spirit of co-learning from all of us, because we are very much part and parcel of this wonderful creation.

Every one of us has been given enough knowledge to survive and sustain ourselves, and now we have to employ those skills not just for our benefit, but for the benefit of mother earth.

Close your eyes. So you will not see me, but at least hear my voice.

**Tracy:** All of my life, all I have known is bottled water. You could do a quick Google search with just the words: “Potlotek and water” and up come multiple articles on its water issues.

When I would visit my friends off reserve I would ask if I could drink their water. Some of them would often look at me and wonder why the water wouldn't be good to drink. I never really had an answer for them, other than I can't drink the water at home.

Being an Indigenous youth, I never really understood why it was I couldn't drink the water. No one ever explained why we needed to boil water or “Do Not Consume” orders. The elders didn't speak to us about it. I would hear trickles of information around



the kitchen tables, and I would ask questions. But they would brush me off, or maybe give me a fragment of information like, “the water is brown”. Well yeah, I used to think, I can see that the water is brown.

This life is all that I’ve known. When I talk about these issues in our communities—the boil water orders, drinking water, dumpsites, construction, rising water protection, species at risk—most of the people ignore me. They call us cowards.

Working towards climate justice at every angle is frustrating for a youth of any race, and when you’re Indigenous, it’s even more frustrating. Most communities do not listen to what youth have to say. They don’t think you have any valuable input or action items to bring to the table. They consider us loud, emotional, uncontrollable and demanding. We, and our values frustrate them. Most of the leaders and older generations have forgotten us, which is funny to me because they’re the ones that raised us.

Elder Albert said, “Close your eyes, so you will not see me but hear my voice.” Whether you’re speaking with someone who’s Indigenous or black, don’t see me, but hear me. Forget everything that you think you know already and be willing to relearn.”

I’ve seen a lot of posts on social media, a lot of people stating that “I’m not racist.” It’s hard to read these things when they’re making what are clearly racist remarks. They just don’t understand that they’re

racist. It’s hard to put into words without seeming offensive, but if anybody were to say that you were a racist just accept that what you are saying is racist. Erase what you think racism is and do better. Don’t engage on social media. A lot of comments just make the situation worse, so just close your eyes. Don’t see me, hear me and listen.

**Ethan:** I don’t really know anything firsthand about environmental racism. I feel like I’m immensely privileged. I have been around a lot of environmental issues, and I feel like listening is a big part of what we need to do. We need to engage in a way that actually creates a world that we would like to see our children grow up in.

**Christine:** I have dreamt of a round table with people of every colour sitting around it in a council. I see this circle and I know there are barriers to overcome, but I think it’s a real possibility. We are imbued with an idea of individualism, and to get past that and to understand the collective and that the collective is good is difficult. We identify with certain groups, we all have our beliefs and loyalties, but when you come together in a circle and really listen, fully and completely, I can’t think of a better method to begin to heal and to come to some sort of action. If we don’t it’s a bad picture for future generations.

I do believe that at the root of every human being is goodness, and we have to create the mechanisms and the structures to bring that goodness forward.

*“Now the signs are very obvious, and there is an awakening around the globe. We see and hear the words kindness and compassion appearing as solutions to this crisis. There are strong voices suggesting that creating local, caring and compassionate communities is our best solution as we face an uncertain future.”*

- Christine Heming

**Laureline:** I would like to ask Albert to share more about possible solutions and the idea of a collective collaborative effort to move forward.

**Albert:** I will no longer allow myself to be silent. I will no longer allow myself to be in denial. I will no longer allow myself to be inactive. I am going to be involved.

The four colours of people are all understood to reside on Mother Earth: the black, the red, the yellow and the white skinned. Each group has unique gifts to bring to everyone else and unique responsibilities as well.

The oldest are the people of black colour. Their unique gift has to do with the power of sound. Physical landscape must be sung into existence. It is their obligation to study, preserve and use the power of sound, of song widely in the universe.

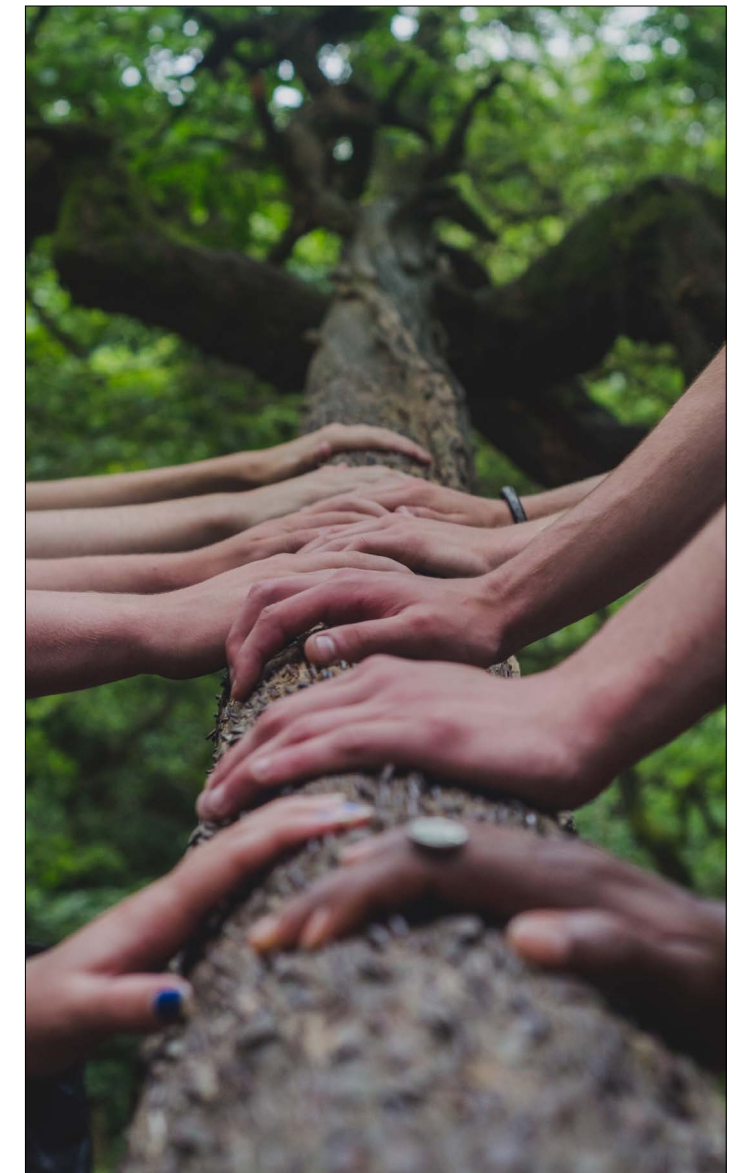
The next oldest are the people of red colour, the aboriginal people of the Americas. Their special gift involves understanding the complex relationship between the four orders of creation and all the living things that exist within. Their greatest responsibility involves preserving the health of Mother Earth: the water, her life blood, and the plants, animals, and their human relatives.

The people of yellow colour are younger still, and their special gifts and responsibilities have to do with understanding the work of the human mind and body.

The fourth group are our white brothers and sisters. Their special gift has to do with bringing about effective communication and understanding between all the peoples of Mother Earth. If we could not communicate with each other, how would we

exchange those gifts with one another?

Whatever colour you may be, you have a special and unique gift. And with that special and unique gift you also have a responsibility. The onus is on all of us to share those gifts, to give us an opportunity to meet the challenges of the future.



# CHALLENGING A CRISIS OF THE SPIRIT

*“We have a saying this was passed down from our teacher Chogyam Trungpa Rinpoche - “Chaos is good news.”*

- Christine Heming

**Ethan:** We’re together, feeling this crisis and that’s a really important thing because crisis brings us to the spirit.

The spirit is unconquerable because it’s not based on territory or ego or materialism. It is something that transcends ideology and religion itself, and it is what we turn to in times of crisis.

**Irene:** Spirit is the best intelligence. Yet there is a crisis of the spirit. And, it is up to us, people of spirit, to lead during this crisis. We need to gather together.

This is why I’ve been involved with [GreenFaith](#) and its mission. We are here because the earth and all her people are sacred, and GreenFaith is working to build a global interfaith environmental movement. We are building power together.

**Albert:** This reminds me of the circle in my culture. A circle has no beginning or end—there is no such thing as superiority. Everything is done with the spirit of consensus.

I think Hollywood introduced that word “Chief.” We never had that kind of a title. For us, there was never a need for anyone to require such a title.

Yes, there were certain people who were exceptionally gifted, and if a person was gifted to

—speak—you know, to convey messages orally in words or other ways—he or she would be acknowledged for that gift. He or she would become a conduit if there were any representation that had to be done.

We don’t understand how hierarchy can be so revered – how it makes those titled people special. Is it because of their title? Is it because a certain number of people would vote for that person or whatever?

You see, these are the things that I, as an old Mi’kmaq, constantly struggle with. I know that my ways will never be accepted or acknowledged, because this romanticized concept of notoriety has become, really, such a powerful way of dominating people. This idea of dominating people creates classes, and depending on what class you come under, then this is where you are meant to stay. For those people creating and cultivating these classes, I think it gives them power—to continue to dominate and to take control of other people.

So to me, a circle really means I am part of this great circle of life, in which I am not special. I am not superior; I am just a part of this whole beautiful cycle.

But I do have something some of my relatives in this circle of life do not have and that is what we can call a cognitive mind. Because I have a cognitive mind—



this does not give me the right to be superior over everyone else, but rather, to use that gift given to me for the ones that need it.

That voice I have, I use that voice for the ones that cannot speak. And I use that cognitive mind in ways to transform many things, especially in my natural world, and to appease those people that have fallen from this concept of notoriety.

**Russell:** When Jesus spoke and gave birth to Christianity, he was speaking of a form of economics. He was speaking for politics and spirituality to be in harmony with both the people and the earth. He was also speaking against the colonial values of the Roman Empire. He spoke powerfully, calling out the violence in governance, the idea that spirituality and human life are not valuable unless they serve the will of the gods and the Emperor. Jesus started a movement of followers who for centuries carried on his form of spirituality, living with his economic values and courage.

Years later, an emperor named Constantine, calling himself Christian, started the process of dismantling the symbol set created by Jesus as a counterpoint to the empire, exploiting the spirituality and medicine of Christianity for his own purposes. Over the last millennium and a half we have been seeing this back and forth repeated in Christianity. Colonialists take over Christianity and the Pope becomes one of the most powerful people on the planet. Someone

like Saint Francis of Assisi or Martin Luther King Jr. tries to bring Christianity back to its roots, and the powers that be find a way to reverse it again.

What we are seeing now is the creation of a community of people including the Indigenous, African Nova Scotians, Buddhists, Muslims, Latin Americans and sexual minorities of different kinds coming together and forming something called the transformational leadership initiative. They are creating a land-based interfaith community that tries to live with the values of peace and friendship.

**Robert:** Russ, it strikes me that you have a good pulse on Atlantic Canada, the various religions of all manner and the Indigenous communities. How would you describe crisis of spirit in Atlantic Canada specifically?

*“What is it about that word—  
Spirit—that is so evocative?”*

- Ethan Neville



*“We particularly struggle in Atlantic Canada and Nova Scotia with not saying things that need to be said. There’s this great sequence in the Book of Luke, in which Jesus teaches mischievous public ritual. What I keep trying to ask is, how can we do Public Theater of that kind that unmasks the power dynamics of an empire, or the colonial project as it is embedded in Nova Scotia, as it is embedded in Atlantic Canada? How can we do this together in a way that engenders a conversation about what we’re doing to the Treaties, what we’re doing to the land and the sea?”*

– Russell Daye

**Russell:** There are a lot of ugly things happening south of the border, and one characteristic of Americans that I really admire is the tendency to creatively speak truth into the public sphere. I think there is a particular dynamic within Atlantic Canada that is the tyranny of a kind of ‘niceness’ that prevents public truth telling. Perhaps because of our island culture, some of the local norms prevent us from speaking as frankly about evil than we might otherwise, and I think that’s highly problematic.

For example, in the family system if somebody speaks an ugly truth and makes the family feel shame, the truth teller ends up being the one characterized as having done something bad. They turn against the person who has done the unmasking because they’ve been made to feel shame. How can we skillfully speak the truth without falling into an honor-shame dynamic that causes everybody to freeze up or just sleep?

**Christine:** One of the things that we do in our Shambhala centers, more so now than ever, is practice speaking from the heart and deep listening. I remember a time in our own small center when we were having a sharing circle, and a woman who had recently started coming more regularly spoke within the circle. Her words brought me to tears. She said there was no other place in her life where she could have this conversation. She didn’t feel she could speak honestly about how she felt about things with her friends or family. That was a real awakening for me, and I think it speaks to what you’re saying.

I see it a lot, this politeness. You know there’s a line you don’t cross. I think that we have to shift this culture.

**Robert:** It strikes me that it’s important in this day and age that we’re able to listen, and listen deeply, to ourselves and the natural world. It helps to retreat from the world for a certain amount of time to find that sacred space, that spirit, that life force. There are similar traditions found all around the world from the Tibetan Yogi’s intensive retreats, to the Greek Orthodox monks on Mount Athos, to the Taoist Chinese hermits in the Misty Mountains, whereby people the world over withdraw for a period of time and go into a contemplative mode and really understand the true meaning and essence of their life force and its connection to a bigger creation. It creates a foundation for bringing spirit back into society.

**John:** I get empowered from nature, from sitting, from having my meditation practice every day. It’s important to me to start the day with meditation, spiritual writings and dialoguing with friends. It’s my way of staying grounded, clear and connected. I find a lot of joy and delight in spending time in nature, I seem to really come back to my natural state.

**Christine:** I’ve been thinking a lot about interdependence lately. About the four elements and our connection through them to the earth. About their and our relationship to climate change and society and the interconnectedness of it all. About

how the elements are out of balance, and how the effects might not just be physical, but psychological as well.

**Russell:** On the edge of a lake named Wentzell Lake there’s a piece of land that was originally used by the Mi’kmaq. In 1840, it was settled by the German settlers named the Wentzells, and the family descendants continued to farm sustainably on the land for 150 years until they had a generation with no children. They were going to have to sell the land, and the forestry companies were hovering around to clear cut these hundreds of acres that had been sustainably forested. Buddhists Jim and Margaret Drescher ended up buying the land and created a retreat center called the [Windhorse Farm](#). This farm, I think, is the clearest incarnation of the value Yeshua Ben Youssed, or Jesus as he is known to most of us, was preaching two millennia ago. There’s a spirituality, there’s economics, there’s a governance model. There’s a community there that fully lives out of the way of life, and that’s completely in harmony, or comes close to it, with the land.

In this community, I work with the elders to lead groups of emerging leaders from Africa Nova Scotian, Indigenous youths, sexual minorities and refugees to live on the land and follow those values together in a multi-faith way. Jim and Margaret are now well into their seventies, and they’re actively working on returning the title of the land to the Mi’kmaq in honour of the land’s first peoples. To me it’s a very moving, pointed story.

**Robert:** It’s an excellent example of an inner wellspring of some type, I think, that motivates everyone to want to be of some benefit to the world, and it always strikes me that we live in a particularly unique time in human history. And because we were born into this time, we bear some responsibility as humans living in this age to be of some benefit.

**Lily:** I think one of the biggest pieces of the puzzle is to foster compassion and listen to people’s stories, whether that is through reading stories written by frontline activists and heavily impacted communities, like Indigenous and African Nova Scotians, attending webinars or just listening to those who are willing to share. The first

step, especially for those coming from a place of privilege, is to listen to those who are most impacted and the marginalized communities. It’s important this kind of transformational work involves constant learning, listening and adopting—to have continuous engagement. There are so many resources out there.

**Albert:** In our language we have a word that encompasses a wonderful saying, Msit No’kmaq, which implies that every living thing is our relative, whether its animals, birds, insects and even plants. So, we consider every living thing, and that’s why we use that word “Msit No’kmaq,” mostly now at the end of any ceremony, like a sweat lodge, to remind ourselves that we’re all related.

I’m really hoping that these conversations will continue and people stay interested in creating a two-way dialog through two-eyed seeing, with our Aboriginal perspective and the mainstream perspective. And I hope that this happens without being subject to a burden of proof and that dialog is equal and considered valid and legitimate.





# EXPLORING PSYCHOLOGICAL RESILIENCE

*“Can you envision the practice of intentional groups that offer a safe place for people to be witnessed, heard and understood; and for the shared wisdom of the group to manifest for healing and envisioning capacity building and eldership for supporting people in their grief. We have to help people learn how to help others in this way”*

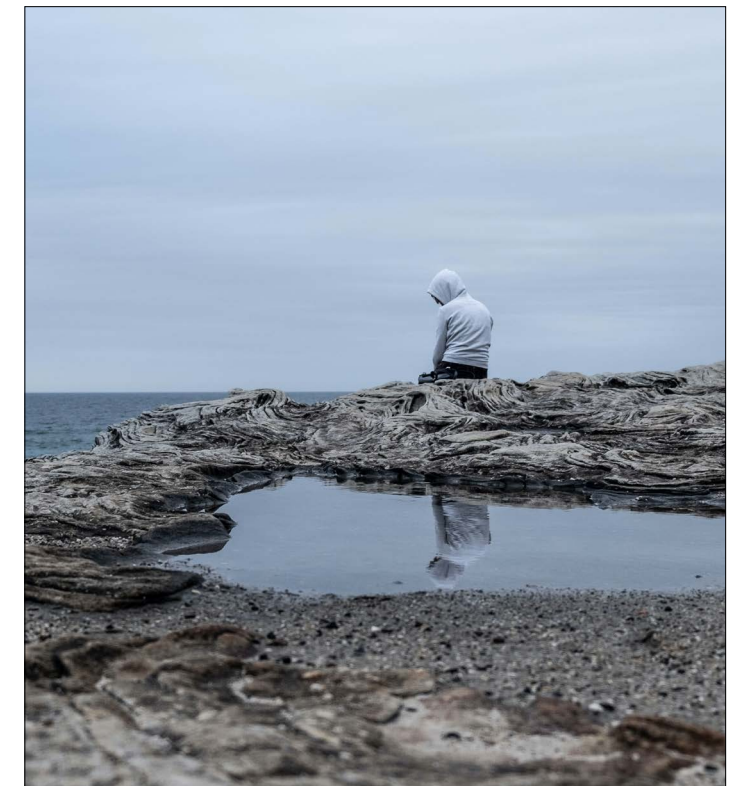
- Sara Demetry

**Laureline:** People working on climate change are getting the same symptoms as people with PTSD. I mean, it's a very heavy topic, and the stress of it can build up in people. In the end, it's a personal journey—it's how you go through it and whether you feel like you're out of it.

People are mourning and talking more these days. For instance, if you're part of the [Extinction Rebellion](#) in Europe, you're going to have group meetings to process the grief of the state of the world. The younger generations, who are afraid for the future, are more open to talking. My kids are aware of climate change, and they're only six and eight. They know it's an issue for their generation, and they're already thinking about it. But people my age, people who have been watching the world change for 15 to 20 years, are afraid to bring it up because they have no idea what's going to happen and many don't want to hear.

How do you discuss these feelings and issues with young children? How do you answer their questions in a way that you're not lying to them, and at the same time, you're not terrifying them? How do you avoid the big questions, like, why did you bring us into this world if you knew all of this? At some point people my age don't want to talk about it.

**Lily:** People don't want to talk about it in my circles, either, but for different reasons. They'll joke about it, saying how in 20 years we're all going to be underwater anyways. A lot of young people don't think that there is anything that they can do, that we're already living in apocalyptic time. It's not



*“People do not have voices. We have to counter the mainstream solution that the scientists and the government are going to save our Creation. It should become obvious at this juncture that as wonderful as science is, how come they cannot use that knowledge to stop the hurricanes, and the severity of weather conditions? And you know, scientists are working now to come up with a vaccine. But that’s only a band aid solution in my opinion. Science should also be working diligently to ensure that she also gets a vaccine. I’m talking about Mother Earth here. Because when is it going to become obvious to all of us that only if she is healthy, how can we be here? So these are some of my concerns and my talk at this point.”*

- Elder Albert Marshall

wanting to talk about it not because you don’t think it’s a big problem, but because you’ve just accepted that it’s going to be a disaster. Clearly, there is a lot of unprocessed grief about climate change.

**Regan:** I always fall back on [Renee Lertzman’s](#) idea of melancholia and how it relates to the environment. There’s basically a set of steps we go through during mourning someone’s death, so we can set the death aside. If we aren’t able to do that, we go into a state where we are never quite able to address those feelings of pain and discomfort. Instead, we buy things, consume things, distract ourselves with devices, make ourselves too busy to care. The problem is that without methods of grieving in our culture, we create a cyclical process that drives environmental collapse. The [Biophilia idea](#), from Edward Owen Wilson, can act as an intervention to help us get in touch with our collective birthright as an inherent part of a global organism system.

In June last year, I went to the Arctic Circle to collect plastics to be used in my work as a symbol of mania. I found that when I presented the collection to people, it just overwhelmed them, stunting their ability to process the feelings of guilt. To tackle that wall, I collected 150 different letters over the last three or four years from scientists (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association), artists, engineers, teachers, teens, adults and children. I asked them all to write a letter to the children of the

future, to the Earth, describing their feelings about what’s happening right now.

What I found was that when you let people have a moment, when they can sit down and put pen to paper and are able to be really present to their thoughts, the kinds of things that come out are pure, intuitive and strikingly diverse in their emotional range. It helped to get the feelings out. When people see all these letters on the wall, a lot of them cry.

**Sara:** I would like to talk about the psychological perspective of climate change, and the trauma responses that we are seeing. Trauma is defined as what occurs when people are overwhelmed by situations and are unable to process the experience they’re having. It’s worth considering that what’s happening right now is really an example of ongoing trauma. It’s not just one event, but layer upon layer. Every day we’re bombarded with news of political instability and economic and environmental devastation. What I want to offer is a look at what’s happening to our brain and our nervous system through this experience.

Essentially, when trauma occurs our brains shut down, and we don’t actually process the experience. Rather, we isolate it in our nervous system where it remains cut off, leading to symptoms like avoidance, anxiety and hypervigilance. Our lives get smaller, our beliefs about ourselves become distorted, and we feel disempowered and without a sense of



agency.

What we want instead is post traumatic growth. When the trauma is over, processed, and put into context, it’s no longer associated with negative beliefs about ourselves and we realize we are now safe individuals. Communities can actually be stronger and healthier as a result of the experience. The question is how can we increase the chance that people will experience post traumatic growth instead of symptoms like anxiety and depression. What can we do for ourselves and others?

When we’re in a traumatic situation we utilize our most familiar survival instincts, though people will differ in their responses. Where some are more overwhelmed by trauma, others are more resilient and don’t become symptomatic. The important thing is that we learn and help each other—that we self-regulate ourselves and co-regulate with each other.

Now, as far as helping individuals and communities become more resilient, I want to ask you if you can envision the practice of intentional groups that provide the opportunity for safety and offer a place for people to be witnessed, heard, and understood, a place for the shared wisdom of the group to manifest and heal, and for people to be supported in their grief. We have to help people learn how to help others in this way, and I don’t know that we really have that in our modern lives.

Models for circles and groups do seem to be thriving right now, like the [Good Grief Network](#). They are our best hope to adapt to our changing world, not as individuals but as collectives. They say that grief was never meant to be processed or amended/metabolized alone but, rather, in the context of a collective, with elders who have seen death and can hold others in just the right way.

Without that ability to process grief, we are unable to experience our wholeness. We’re not able to feel the depths of life affirming emotions like joy and gratitude if we’re frozen in grief. It also means we’re likely to defend ourselves from the realities of the state of the planet and our role and personal responsibility as well as our culpability. So, I’m suggesting these practices to help communities and individuals, right now. Going forward, I would like to see the creation of these groups to safely explore grief and resilience, holding together the questions of how we face the uncertainty of life, and the possibility of untimely death that faces us all.

**Christine:** When the author Dahr Jamail wrote about his grief in the book *The End of Ice*, he said three things: “Meditate every day, get out in nature every day and gather with friends who care as much as you do.” Be together just to celebrate the goodness of being together, to share. Experience the joy of being in nature and how rejuvenating it is.

To get there, first we have to ground ourselves in the

*“World, I have to worry about the future of life on this planet. I have to worry about the fact that half of the species on this planet have become extinct, and thousands more will become extinct within my lifetime. I have to worry about the fact that with our increasingly inconsistent and changing climate that we are facing worldwide hunger that will only become a greater issue. I have to worry that if I ever do decide to have children (which is largely expected of me as a woman), would it be right for me to subject them to the horrors that they are likely to experience as the frequency and severity of extreme weather events becomes increasingly greater?”*

*The world should be one where it feels amazing to bring a child into it. The generations before me should have created a world for mine where we could be safe, one where we do not need to fight for basic human rights of fresh drinking water or clean air.*

*Unfortunately, they didn't.”*

- Lily Barraclough

view that grieving is a normal emotional response. In fact, if we didn't have these feelings, we would be unable to connect with our environment or with each other at all. We'd be completely isolated.

There is a three step practice taught when people are learning meditation.

The first step is gentleness. Gentleness is the ground work of meditation, and with it, we bring to our practice a loving kindness towards ourselves. We have a saying, “that mind of fearfulness should be put in the cradle of kindness.” When feelings come up in our practice we put them in a cradle of love and gentleness, allowing us to soften and counteract the tendency to tighten and contract.

The second step, once we have an atmosphere of gentleness, is to allow ourselves to stay rooted in our bodies and understand that that's where our emotions are; they're not separate. We can be present with our feelings because we've surrounded ourselves with loving kindness. We have sympathy towards ourselves.

The third step is inquisitiveness, meaning we start to bring our intelligence into the process. We begin to become inquisitive about these feelings and ask ourselves questions like where are they located within the body? How large are they? Do they have a shape or colour? If they had a form what form would they take? This brings in our intuitive natural intelligence and allows us to be more discerning about what we are experiencing in the body. This is the part that allows us to develop emotional intelligence.

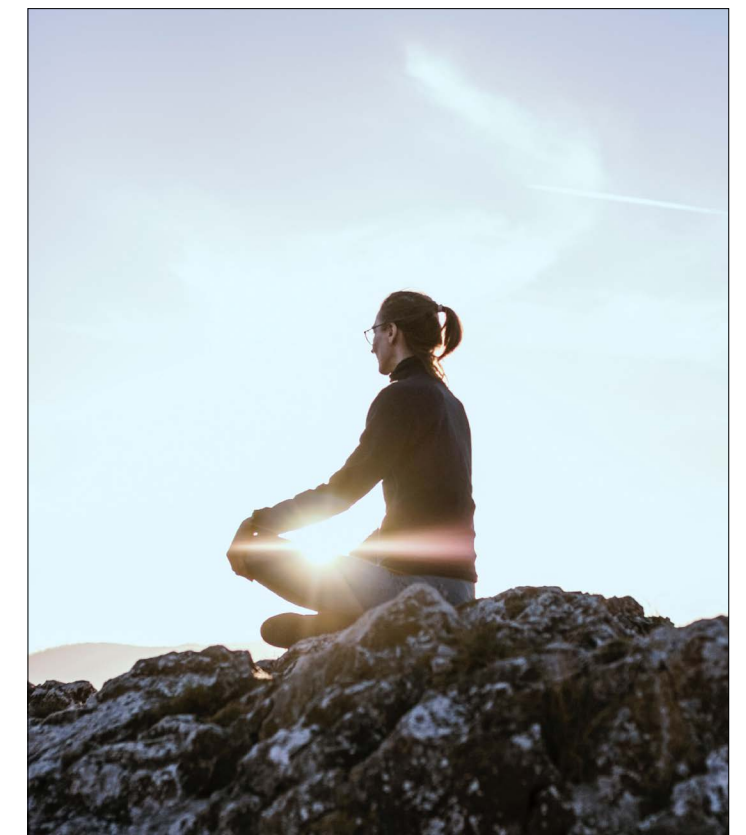
This is all usually taught in a group, starting with simple things—little irritations like dirty dishes—and then gradually applying these ideas to more intense feelings. We find that over time, people will begin to feel more confidence in applying these principles on the spot, and they have more ability to discern what's happening in their body when emotions arise.

**Regan:** Quiet times, being with family, slowing down and knowing where your food comes from – things like that provide a more visceral experience of life. COVID forced a lot of people to reconsider life. There's an opportunity for at least some people

to wake to this alternate possibility.

**Christine:** In one of our sessions, Tracy said something about ‘you can't save something that you don't appreciate.’ I kept thinking about a book by Jack Turner, *The Abstract Wild*, which is about mourning the loss of wilderness and that people's ideas of wilderness is abstract and not real. And I keep wondering—how do you save something unless you love it? How do we re-engage with a love of nature, with a love of the earth, by seeing it as part of ourselves? I feel that something's awakening within our discussions and the sharing their feelings. I'm hoping these talks will convert into social action, and we all acting collectively, sort of at the grassroots, bottom up way. I can't see things changing much from the top down, and I don't think we can wait.

**Laureline:** We need to work today, with our communities, to create safe spaces for people to process climate grief and other sources of stress related to climate change. But, how do we ensure that we create those groups in the best possible conditions? Maybe our discussions should focus on how to make these groups happen on a greater





scale to create groups that can be accessed by a much larger portion of the population, knowing that climate grief is acknowledged more and more. And it's not going to be only about the projected impacts of climate change, but also its effects such as the frequency and severity of storms, torrential rain falls, wildfires, rising sea level, and all those impacts already happening. How do we deal with all of that? How can the communities create safe spaces in it?

**Tracy:** It starts with trust—being heard by somebody we trust and creating the groundwork so that when something traumatic happens that trusted circle, that relationship is there. We talked about the wonder of nature on one side, community in the middle and grieving on the other side. We talked about how it's important to teach and allow men and boys to be more vulnerable. Unexpressed vulnerability turns into anger, and anger has a negative impact on the planet, especially for the women on the front line. We talked about slowing down and reconnecting with silence and meditation, because life is crazy and chaotic in most places. We talked about community engagement, rather than waiting on politicians, and how communities are taking care of each other. You need the relationship, the places you can go to gather with people where

you know that you won't be judged and that they will listen.

**Sara:** Grief is like a stuckness. It's where climate denial comes from, people not wanting to look at the pain of it. And so we should do whatever we can to help people have a safe way to look at why they feel so overwhelmed. Perhaps through art or dance, people need to have an awareness.

**Laureline:** We had the idea that we could set up a council, a communal collective accessible to people. We thought that we could actually create new rituals, that it might be possible to access something deeper than the logical mind. In this council setup, there was a discussion about dance practices and that some ceremonies could include connecting to the energy on Earth, more communal collective without words.

**Albert:** I'm happy to be here. Collectively people here are on the same page. For closing, some questions to leave you with. Now we have to somehow find a way? How do we keep that momentum going? How do we keep this narrative or dialogue going, so that we don't just return to some norm as the way of life, but we get further here?

# REFOCUSING ON COMMUNITY ASSETS

*“Communities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.”*

– Jane Jacobs

**Robert:** There is a lot of embedded wealth in communities. This is often not generally recognized at first look, since this tends to lie under the surface or is fragmented. This wealth consists of the networks, community groups, various skills sets, small scale shops and studios for the processing, making and repairing of things, as well as the built environment and natural assets. And then, there are the cultural and heritage assets of a place. To bring these to the surface can be a surprising and unusual endeavour for local residents. Mapping can be one way of tracking the assets and a good record for the future. We have some great work being done in this area.

**Annika:** I'm with the nonprofit organization [Inspiring Communities \(IC\)](#). We built the organization on the idea that although there's a lot of really great work happening in communities, there's also a lot of fragmentation, isolation and burnout. People need more supports and more opportunities to come together for greater collective impact on the challenges they face. They need new relationships, new approaches and actions to change systems, with enough interconnectedness and collaboration to solve complex problems.

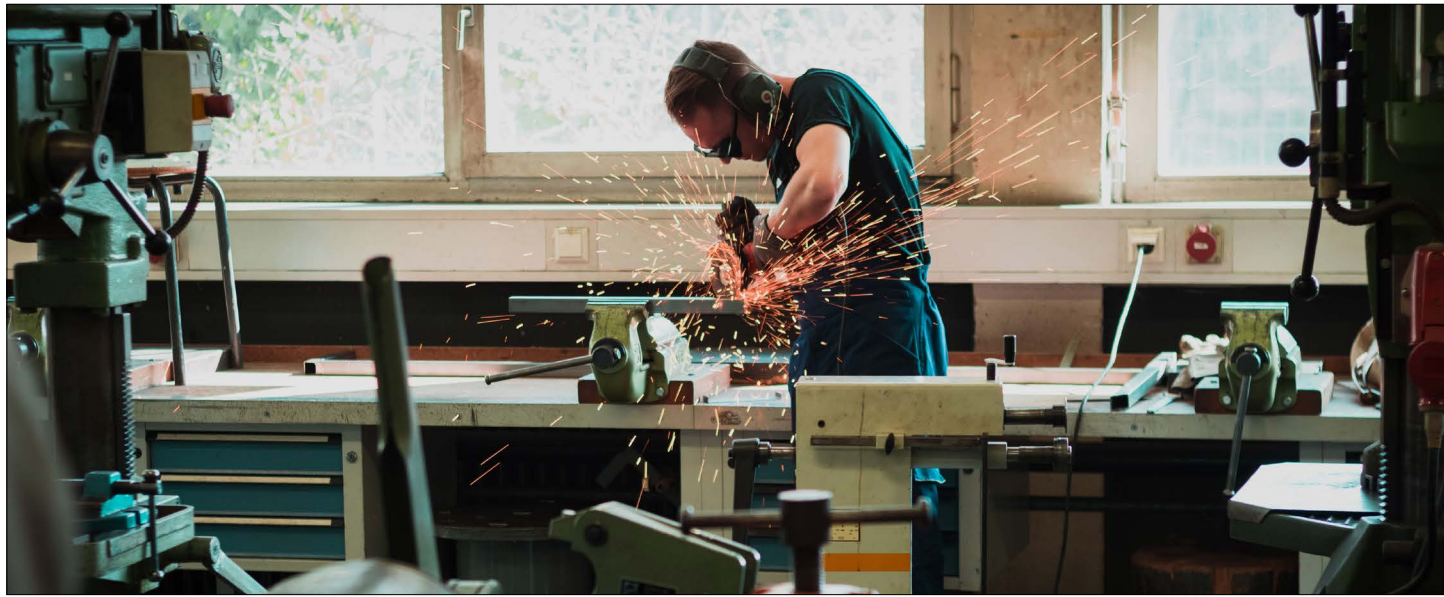
At IC, we use a collective impact framework as the backdrop to our work, with an appreciation that the community knows best on the issues that

are affecting it. We also acknowledge the need for diverse stakeholders to work together to fully identify priorities and find new ways to address them.

**Ric:** I'm an engineer. I'm the guy who fixes it, makes it, tears it down or tries to reuse it. I recently realized that what I've been doing as a hobby can be complemented by a group of people with different skill sets and skill levels, but until you need to go looking for them, you don't know they exist.

I'll give you an example. I drove my old truck off the road during a winter storm and broke the frame. The fix would probably have been to buy a replacement truck. But, at the end of my road, I found a welder, Jim, and he helped me out. We've become good friends and are now collaborating on other projects—using my skill set as an engineer and his as a welder. He was under the radar, and I only knew him because I had a need that sent me looking.

From that point, a social interchange began with friends who have other friends, expanding on the network idea because there's always one person who seems to know where everybody is and does who can point you in the right direction. Those people who know people are the most valuable resource to get things done.



**Robert:** Ric, that's a great example of informal, skill-based networks that exist in most communities. Annika, you've done some fascinating and important work on mapping resources, collaboration around complex systems, change and how networks are an important piece of that.

**Annika:** There's a lot of research to support mapping of communities. It's important to find not only where there are strong bonding ties like social capital relationships, friends, family, etc. but also, where there are what's called bridging ties. We want to see all community networks become stronger and more diverse, and find ways to connect to other communities and their ways of thinking. And then we have relationship density and diversity.

**Laureline:** Lily, you were also involved in mapping community assets related to public spaces.

**Lily:** Yes, that work has been around public spaces, such as green space or recreational centers, which positively influence levels of physical and social activity. Bringing people together in communities and neighbourhoods through physical activity and forms of active transportation is really important. A sustainable life is one in which people can access what they need within a 10 minute walk from their home. That is an urban view, and being this is a rural province, even a 10-minute drive does not allow people to access what they need.

I've done research for an app which quantitatively

scores access to infrastructure across Nova Scotia. This mapping app gives a score out of 100 based on 10 different indicators of the built environment, both things that are more present in urban areas and things more present in rural areas. It can give a basis for comparison between communities across the province and identify areas that have less access to infrastructure, helping to inform the distribution of resources. It can also be used to hold governments accountable for providing adequate resources to neighborhoods that are lacking because this is really an equity issue. Many well maintained, well populated public spaces tend to be in more affluent neighborhoods, and so I think tools like this can be really important in providing a form of accountability.

**Laureline:** Ed, I understand that the College of Geographic Sciences and your work focuses on community mapping as well.

**Ed:** We started doing a community mapping project a number of years ago, and I've been redeveloping it over the last few years to figure out where to take it next.

Modern digital mapping can be very complex. The first goal is to engage people in the mapping process and not to let the technology get in the way. The ultimate vision is to help build an idea of place—building in more resilience into that place while creating a living Atlas of communities that identifies community cornerstones for adaptive capacity.

*“What is your community’s vision for the future? People within communities find that they share the same desires to increase community capacity and well-being, regardless of any differing political or cultural views. It is important to bring together all interested people, groups and organizations into a common vision.”*

- Robert Cervelli

In our project, we have a share map, with technology that allows people to add things, but in a more structured environment. The maps are made for data entry via open source. As the inventory of assets increases, you can browse and discover, and then create story maps to get lost in through the telling and reading of stories that come from these assets. Analytic and assessment and evaluation maps can come next, as another project, for a continuum of the mapping.

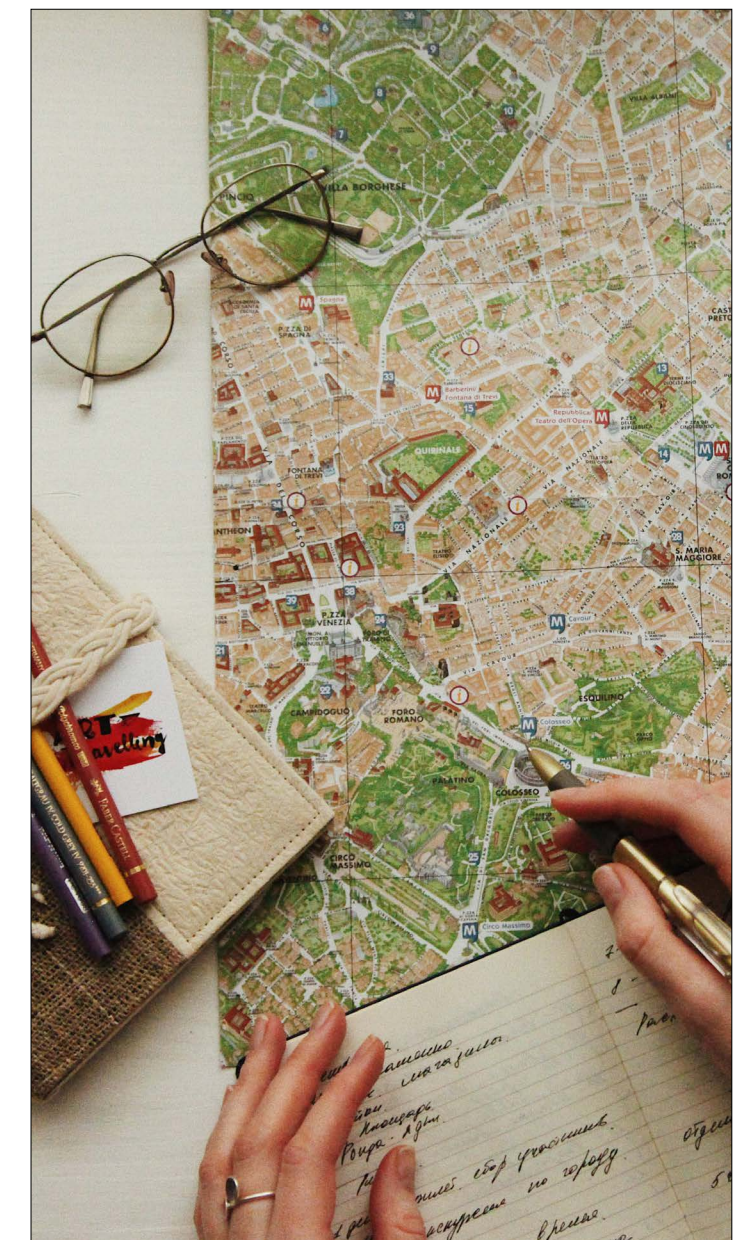
We have a whole lot of alumni who would love just to be engaged in the project, and I think the library system would be a neat way to kind of channel the project through the community.

**Annika:** Mapping keeps coming up in the Atlantic Region. And I think there's different levels of rigor and depth to the kind of mapping that can be done to give landscape to the conversation, like that idea of 'getting lost' in the story. It's like a communications piece whereby you can go deeper and deeper, helping people surf the intergenerational piece or the cultural piece or whatever their interest.

At another level, mapping can help people wrap their heads around where the assets and resources exist, where they are missing, and where there might be potential for development or connection. There is an opportunity to just kind of use it to start those conversations.

**Ed:** From the resilience and re-localization perspective, I see how mapping can be used to understand and to live better in a place, knowing its ecology and what's in that place—the assets that exist to help build a stronger, more resilient community and reshape the future.

As I look ahead to where we are going, yeah, oh my god. We're not in a good place right now. There's much from past generations to learn and catalog, particularly in terms of First Nations sacred sites and such. Story maps can build narratives, rich





*“We are living in a world facing a series of converging crises including deep economic and political uncertainty, climate change, resource depletion and mounting environmental degradation. It is imperative that we seek innovative solutions to these threats to make our communities both sustainable and resilient.*

*Amid the turbulence we face, our future is increasingly uncertain. In a time when change is accelerating and complexity is intensifying, we need to build the adaptive capacity necessary to transition us to our rapidly emerging, constantly evolving, new reality. To build this adaptive capacity it is crucial that citizens know how to learn, gather, process and use information.”*

- Ed Symons

narratives of place, to understand what happened and have a place to keep the stories of the past safe. There's so much to be gained.

**Robert:** When I think of community, the two most important assets are the natural resources available to the community as well as its network of people and their ability to work together and cooperate.

So, there again, it's the networking principle. If you've got strong stewardship of the natural environment and a strong community, you have great potential because people are ultimately adaptable. If they can pull together and look after their environment, then I think they'll do better facing climate change and its impact.

**John:** In the Pugwash area, we have 2500 acres of protected land in maybe 20 square miles. When it comes to global warming, we're definitely going to have some issues. We have a good chunk of protected land, but the land is low, and we have an awful lot of

water. We're also cottage country, so there'll be a lot of problems with erosion and disruption.

But we have a very strong volunteer community and a lot of people will work to keep Pugwash a great place. What I love is the resilience that already exists because of the strong networking. We keep looking at projects and how to make improvements, and that's been going on the last five or 10 years.

**Annika:** Some of you might be familiar with this new app called the [Good Neighbour App](#), whereby people post their tools on it, and others can rent the tools at a daily rate. I think there's something there as another example of using technology as a way to share, so that we don't need to buy more and to become more aware of, to Ric's point, where those resources are that we don't even know exist. There's a potential to develop a barter community through an app.

**Albert:** You know, there is a separation and isolation happening that is not going to help the environment. I believe you know we have been forced into social distancing for a course of 200 years, and yet we are interested in promoting collaboration, co-learning, etc. There has to be some effort to recognize and acknowledge that there is actually a wall of divisiveness.

I'm having difficulty trying to understand why we are so different and perceived as being separate. I also don't understand why people are afraid. Yes, we're on the reservation and reservations are federal property. But there is no security—no walls to prevent people from coming in, and yes, people doing business. I'm still not sure why there is such a fear of of our respective communities.

I'm a human being. Yes, my skin color is different than those in Europe, but you know what? My dollar is worth the same as yours. And if this is something that we're going to be talking about, I'd like to get

onto the conversation of how do we and what must we do, together. This relationship is going to take some time, but to begin, appreciate the fact that there is this invisible wall that's been dividing the mainstream and us.

The question is—how can we put our heads together and come up with a strategy in which we will enter into a proactive mode because of the uncertainty of the future?

# CHANGING THE ECONOMIC PARADIGM

*“A good community insures itself by trust, by good faith and good will, by mutual help. A good community, in other words, is a good local economy.”*

- Wendell Berry, “Work of Local Culture”

**Robert:** The title of this session is changing the economic paradigm from globalization to localization. So we’ve already made the assumption, right there in the title, that localizing is probably a good thing.

The key question here is the ‘how,’ if we assume localization is the right direction. I mean, we’re about as non-localized as you can possibly imagine. Right now, we’ve pushed the envelope as far as we can, absolutely, and we are as global, just-in-time, long distance supply chain oriented as anyone could have possibly imagined.

**Phil:** It’s not just about global trade economy. It’s really about taking care of your home, which is up to residents firstly and then governments. Those are the two swing factors that could influence the business model in between. Never before have I seen such a great opportunity to make actual real and meaningful economic change, which of course affects all aspects of society and our planet.

**Christine:** As an ordinary citizen, I often feel the economy is this huge force, and I wonder who is running it. It can be seen as either the most powerful and visceral display of human selfishness or the manifest of the dynamic potential of human connectivity and community. What is real wealth? What has real value? Seems we have lost some

fundamental principles—consolidation of wealth instead of distribution.

**Lily:** Our economy is not one that works for all people. There are problems for a young person entering the job market. Some jobs are chronically underpaid, and the Atlantic provinces’ minimum wages are amongst the lowest in the country. As cost of living rises, low wages mean many may face poverty, which can sometimes lead to homelessness. There may also be fewer jobs and not having enough to go around means many young people who want to stay here and build a life and a strong East Coast economy will have to leave.

**Christine:** A guaranteed annual income can be a part of a solution. It is especially important now, when the pandemic has triggered more interest, to ensure the conversations around guaranteed livable income and skill training are not just reengaged, but followed through on. With that, we would see a huge, positive difference.

**Phil:** There are more expectations and acceptance to progressive ideas of how systems can change, especially as an outcome of the COVID-19 pandemic. So a new normal may see things like the CERB program continue in some fashion or transition into a guaranteed livable income. Other programs



that focused on rent subsidies and loans to small businesses could be other new norms. The type of things that I’d like to see in that new economy would be, say, a four day workweek. That would get more people working than if everybody was working a 40 hour plus week. It would also free up people to spend more time with childcare or eldercare or self-care, for that matter, becoming more self-reliant.

**Robert:** Atlantic economics sometimes tend to disproportionately impact marginalized communities with health and environmental impacts, and at a National level, there’s heavy consolidation into a few major multinational players. That’s the case with food, which is playing out right now with the Canadian meatpacking plants and COVID infections. Consolidation makes the system fragile, and it’s why everything falls apart so quickly. We’re missing the local resilience that provides buffers. But, there are signs that we’re starting to revert back. Consumers want to know where their eggs come from and who made something or work with the guy down the street who can do repairs, essentially accessing what is possible locally at the consumer spending level.

**Christine:** How that relates to local food is that there’s certainly more awareness through organic food production, but we’re talking about high costs. I think those increased costs create new problems,

you know, such as people shopping at Walmart for groceries because it’s cheaper, even though Walmart uses long-distance rather than local supply chains. We have to somehow make good food and organic food affordable to everyone.

**Phil:** Even at the beginning of COVID, we initially heard rumblings saying—oh, the food system is secure and sound and that people are just are impulse buying and that’s causing shortages—but as the pandemic continued, and as disease started popping up in various processing plants, there was an instant realization that the global food system was incredibly vulnerable.

**Robert:** You’re right, the COVID pandemic did point out the fragility of those long-distance supply chains, particularly for food, and there’s been a dramatic response in local sourcing.

**Phil:** What’s happening now that feeds both your points is how small business has evolved during this pandemic. Many were relying on walk-in customers and struggling because they were competing with online shopping, but over the months of confinement, many have become online distributors. It’ll be interesting to see how Amazon, eBay and Walmart will respond as, I think, more people start or continue shopping locally online.



But whether local businesses are affordable to most of the people is definitely questionable. You may want to buy your vegetables and everything locally, but local organic vegetables are typically much more expensive than what you can get in the supermarket.

**Robert:** How many people might finally realize that they could actually plant a garden? And beyond that, how they could actually start to learn how to repair things or depend on neighbors for mutual help, increasing their own skills. There's a lot of that starting to happen already with the younger generation who don't want to get trapped in the Walmart cycle.

**Wendy:** The local economy is really the major responder, and at this time, it is the non-profit organizations, co-ops, social enterprises and other community leaders doing this by ensuring that the needs of our most vulnerable populations are addressed. This pandemic has also shown us who the 'essential workers' are – store clerks, warehouse workers, health care workers, truck drivers – people who have never before been taken into serious



consideration as critical to the economy. The other trend is collaboration. In Canada, at least, everyone is at the table and have put aside petty issues to focus their collective attention and resources on helping communities survive.

**Robert:** That idea of locality is also critical in building economic resilience. Lack of local resilience has a direct line to economic leakage, whereby regions are vulnerable because dollars spent within them leave.

That leakage happens at three levels. The first is through consumer spending. We all see the UPS and FedEx trucks coming and going delivering packages, mostly originating from elsewhere. Then there are the big box grocery and other chain stores. These stores' profits go to head offices often located outside the Atlantic region.

The second is around procurement with the big anchor players, both public and private, doing much of their buying somewhere else. For example, many millions of dollars in annual spending power by government institutions could be used to support local economies and local suppliers but the money instead leaves the region.

And finally, there are non-local industries that not only efficiently extract our natural resources such as our forest, fisheries and minerals, they also extract the profits out of the regional economic system.

When you look at sectors, consumer behaviours and so on, you see a lot of dollars leaking out of the region. Plugging leaks through local action, businesses and initiatives can have dramatic economic stimulus right there. It can lead to more self-reliance more self-sufficiency, and generate more jobs here, giving the region a chance to become robust and better buffered against global shocks. And it doesn't take much. Plugging that leakage, even a little bit, say 10 to 15% can have enormous economic impact.

**John:** I think there's another factor worth mention. It's also not so much how much money you have, but about people owning the money power that they do have, whatever level of income. With smart spending, it could contribute to transformation of the provincial economy.



I think we're at a point now to where we could run that experiment and get more people focused on buying locally, with the understanding that there needs to be a genuine rethink. It's not just buying from your local hardware store, it's about what can you actually buy at your local store that is also manufactured here, locally, that truly impacts the economy of the area.

**Christine:** People sometimes have a limited view of their own power or potential to do anything locally. If there was a model or service in a community, if there was a group doing this, creating a tipping point that showed, no demonstrated, to people that you do have the resources and you can build change, it could actually spark people to think.

**Wendy:** On the business end, there are collective democratic ownership models that work. We know that greed-driven corporations don't do our economy much good, and yet we know and have tons of evidence that collectively and cooperatively owned businesses and social enterprises contribute hugely, not only locally to our economy, but to quality of life and the well-being of our planet.

**Robert:** It remains to be seen how efficiently governments can make a shift. There is still too much corporate capture going on at high government levels where they feel obligated to maintain the business as usual power structure. That's where I think things are going to get interesting. They

know they've got to change how they do things due to increased public pressure, but are they still too captured by the big corporate players?

I don't think multinationals are going to change on their own.

Also, generally speaking, communities do tend to surrender their local economy agency and assume that a healthy economy is the role of a non-local government.

**Phil:** That may be so, but we don't have a choice but to be optimistic. The public now expects government to start spending money more wisely, to the benefit of the population, rather than the benefit of corporations. Governments and citizens—together—they're going to change spending patterns and in between.

**Wendy:** On the business end, other models of collective and democratic or even public ownership, as opposed to some of the institutions that currently allow foreign corporations to run for us, could be used. One that comes immediately to mind is food cafeteria services and schools and hospitals being served or run by big institutions. Health care centers and hospitals could be owned/managed by the community or the public at large, with intent to both save and keep money exchanges in the local communities.

For example, Northern Canada did something really



*“Our current generation knows how to buy stuff. Generations to come are going to need to know how to build stuff, repair stuff and grow stuff.”*

- Bill Reynolds, Pemberton Tool Library

creative. They took a small First Nations community that was reliant on diesel fuel to power their community and trained a group of First Nations youth and others to install geothermal units to replace diesel fuel with a self-sufficient system. Those workers went on to install geothermal in many other First Nations communities, creating self-sufficiencies for other communities.

**Robert:** Other First Nations are also moving ahead with community-centric approaches, with a diversity of businesses run by the community. That means profits remain in the community to help with community programs and services and build infrastructure. The community can get stronger over time, and it's able to expand. The benefit momentum only continues to increase because profits are captured within the Community.

**Phil:** Perhaps publicly owned industries, of necessity, may have a place as well. I've talked about this before. I'm not calling for a revolution to take over existing companies, but instead, let's just have a public option that gives people the opportunity to invest in corporations that are publicly owned that serve the public good, rather than just distribute profit to shareholders.

I'll use libraries as an example. It's already publicly owned in numerous cities. We have this library system that's existed for hundreds of years, yet its available now on the internet, whereby people have access to a tremendous amount of information quickly.

Why not have free, publicly owned internet systems? Or transportation? Or energy? In Nova Scotia and PEI there are publicly owned renewable energy systems. The profits generated can and could go directly into upgrading and expanding services,

rather than someone's pockets. These energy systems are green and renewable. I think that's how we could pay for the social services, addressing climate change, paying living wages or improving social assistance.

You're talking about looking at privately held enterprises that have become necessities and those that are necessities. In modern life, these should be publicly owned or at least to have a publicly owned option that people could buy into.

And I don't want to hear the word innovative ever again because, really, whatever happened to economically viable? You know, it seems all you have to do to get a government grant is to call yourself innovative. It doesn't matter what impact is, as long you say innovative. We say competitiveness, instead of collaboration, and efficiency, rather than the ecological impact.

**Robert:** And what should be owned in the Commons, so to speak, versus privately? Is it only all of those basic necessities or does it include the Internet and the power grid? You could even throw in banking. Public versus private banks, pretty much anything. Once you remove ownership from that focus on the 'good' for shareholders versus the common good, everything gets better.

**Albert:** How can we create something that includes balanced economics with conservation? I don't see any problems coming up with initiatives that could actually do what we are proposing and reach a balance.

**Robert:** I'd like to raise the idea of a community narrative because that's an important facet of 'locality.' Every community has a narrative, how it



talks about itself, thinks about itself. You hear it in the coffee shop. You hear it in the corner stores. If that narrative is negative, being disempowered, helpless, or not able to do anything, there's a danger it will become a self-fulfilling prophecy, whereby the community awaits someone else to fix problems.

But on the other hand, there are communities where, for one reason or another, this type of narrative shifts, and that's when things start to happen, when communities realize, fundamentally, that no one is going to save them. It's big—knowing that if they don't do it themselves—it's just not going to happen. That pivots the narrative to one of taking agency about the future. And that often leads to self-empowerment and greater levels of

*“Surviving and thriving with the unknowns and challenges of this century means we’re going to need a lot more basic skills and to return, full circle, to a place of locality and self-sufficiency, the building blocks of a resilient, reliable and robust economy.”*

- Robert Cervelli

community engagement.

I like the phrase that captures that shift - ‘capital follows enthusiasm’. Money flows into areas where there's a lot going on, and that leads to a sense of moving forward. You start to see communities working together in all kinds of creative ways, and then the government catches on because they've got something to follow and support, the communities showing them the way.

It's basically about heading in the opposite direction of the neoliberal model, which has privatized and aggregated as much as possible. Instead, existing businesses and new businesses can act more locally and sustainably with their employment base, their own supply chain and where they buy their ingredients components.

**Wendy:** Government needs to make a commitment to economy building, helping people and thinking of the planet as number one. This needs to be reflected in policies that support small and medium sized business, showing we have power in our dollars and we have leadership that supports local economies in a democratic society. And we need to show our collective voice and by holding our decision makers accountable, and also by letting them know what it is that we, based and deeply entrenched in the community want.

**Robert:** That sensibility also needs to be applied in the resource industry, forestry and fisheries

*“The right approach is a priority for all of us, whether it's us as individuals buying and supporting local businesses through to government policies that support community-based initiatives. In taking care of ourselves and building the economy, we don't have to reinvent the wheel. The solutions are all out there. And we know that they work.”*

- Wendy Keats

in particular, which tend to use fairly extreme extractive business models. Their approach is to get it out cheap, at the lowest cost possible, export it to a non-local market, extract all the profit, for a meagre supply of a few local, hourly wage jobs. Essentially, it's extraction not just of the resource, but of the profits and any other value.

So how do you return that to a restorative model, so forests can regrow to their original health. How do you reduce extraction while maintaining or increasing the number of jobs and profits locally? Same with the fisheries. How can the pressure be taken off, so the marine ecosystems can rebound, in a more value-added way, while retaining local profits for the regional economy?

The Atlantic region is a resource rich part of the world with forests, fisheries, arable land, and water, and it's increasing in value quickly due to global scarcities. Multinationals know this and have and will come for our riches. Our government doesn't fully see the value of our many resources and continues to operate out of a poverty mentality job creation cycle, targeting the next election, regardless of cost. They give away our riches for almost nothing, degrading resources to the lowest value commodity levels, such as wood chips that are extracted non-sustainably, without regard to profit, with some exceptions, such as lobster fisheries, etc.

**Christine:** Clear cutting on private land is also going on here. Some owners are older, and they think this is how they can get some value from their land. Of course, clear cutting has many environmental impacts – such as loss of carbon sequestration.

**Robert:** But there are also some excellent

examples of change across all the resource sectors, including forestry. For example, there's a number of businesses where the job count per cord of wood used is extremely high, with almost no environmental impact. So, they're selling very high value added products, whether it's cutting boards, countertops, wooden baskets, like the bushel basket kind of thing. With value-added production, the job count goes up and the demand on the resource goes down, versus what we have now, which is a low value commodity like wood chips, where you need a high volume high demand on the resource not sustainable high automation with low job count.

The same thing is underway with the fishery. In Newfoundland, and Fogo Island in particular, they've cut out the distributors, the middle men. They fish by hand hook in line, the old way, and ship direct to restaurants in major centers where fresh, artisanal, high value product is in demand. There are efforts happening with entrepreneurs, funders, and if more were to happen, government change could really move quickly in that direction.



### ESSAY EXCERPT: WHAT IS YOUR COMMUNITY'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

ROBERT CERVELLI

At a time of increasing global fragility, Atlantic Canada's residents, communities and institutions continue to send disproportionately more dollars out of local economies as compared to the rest of the country. Being heavily dependent on imports through just-in-time, long-distance supply chains, the power of local economy is lost, and in the Atlantic region, the consequence is resilience, capacity and agency are at all-time lows.

Yet, the relatively brief era of globalization, earmarked by these long-distance supply chains and just-in-time deliveries, which began in the 1960's and 70's, is eroding, and the pace is accelerated due to the pandemic making it more difficult to function. It has reached its peak complexity.

Economies are in the process of re-localizing and returning to resemble aspects of how they functioned decades ago, but now with the capacity to adopt modern technologies to their advantage. Part of that localization may also mean involuntary simplicity, readapting lifestyles that can only be supported by cheap abundant energy of the past, transitioning to less complex and less convenient lifestyles.

There are always different paths to move forward, and communities are realizing that they will need to provide more of their essential needs locally, through local production. Some communities have been prescient, picking themselves up by their bootstraps before they had to, regaining local economic agency and control of their own future. Local food and power production, local skills development and local business start-ups are all occurring at an increasing pace in Atlantic Canada.

The principle of Primary Wealth also has great resonance in local economies. Primary wealth is direct ownership of valuable physical resources, such as water from a clear spring, fertile farmland, a woodlot, a wine cellar or gold bullion, while secondary wealth is generated from the ability to produce more physical resources from ownership. Examples include a dairy farm that utilizes the fertile land, a sawmill creating value from the woodlot, a vineyard producing wine for the cellar, a fishing boat or tool-stocked workshop, and other means of production. Tertiary wealth is only a claim to wealth, such as money, stocks, bonds and mutual funds, which in and of themselves have

no value. In other words, you can't eat your money. Most tertiary wealth exists in computer systems and could just as easily not exist if these systems went down.

With our plentiful clean air, fresh water, arable land, diverse forests and valuable fisheries, Atlantic Canada remains rich in primary wealth. From this point of view, we live in an inherently wealthy region of the planet, with assets that are becoming increasingly rare in a crowded planet. There are more and more outside forces looking with greedy eyes at Atlantic Canada's natural resources, and we must safeguard them for the future.

Successful communities of the future will also understand the importance of community conversations and the need to reach out, trust, connect, and collaborate with each other. This is part of the Atlantic Region's cultural DNA and something we do well.

Community conversations are the first important step toward community agency and self-empowerment, as the foundation for building community wealth. It is the basis for educating a community on what really matters for the future. It is a way to find, connect with and learn from other inspirational communities and foster the process of inter-community support. Learning and respecting each other creates a shift in focus from individual to community wealth whereby prosperity is defined as personal and social fulfillment instead of the accumulation of material goods. A clear relationship begins between trust and economic success, with trust the critical supportive base at the family and community level.

What is your community's vision for the future? People within communities find that they share the same desires to increase community capacity and well-being, regardless of any differing political or cultural views. It is important to bring together all interested people, groups and organizations into a common vision to listen and hear what is working, what isn't working, and what might yet be.

# CONSIDERING CLIMATE DISPLACEMENT

*“It will be vital to assess levels of popular support for any new policies designed to promote the idea of Atlantic Canada becoming an intentional magnet for climate displaced persons.”*

- Scott Leckie

**Robert:** If you go back and look at the whole globe—the whole planet—Atlantic Canada could be considered a refugee area for humanity. We have natural resources. We have fresh water. We have a reasonable climate. We have a relatively low population density. We have everything that humanity needs. Meanwhile, other parts of the world are facing sea levels rising, running into fresh water shortages, or simply getting too hot too quickly.

For these reasons, it is clear that Atlantic Canada will be seeing more and more people coming here because it will have become too difficult to live somewhere else. Is our region preparing socially and governmentally for this?

**Laureline:** Let’s go straight to Scott to tell us about climate displacements global trends, local realities and critical questions.

**Scott:** Remember all the people that live in places around the world today that are threatened by climate displacement and not just people that can go somewhere else safely. Though they may be a small overall percentage, they face the most severe consequences. Some can literally go nowhere, safely, even within their own country.

During at least some of our lifetimes, Kiribos in the [Marshall Islands](#), the [Maldives](#), the [Seychelles](#), a number of places in the [Caribbean](#) and [Solomon Islands](#) and other places will no longer physically be there due to climate change. In this first-ever human epoch, sovereign nation states will physically cease to exist.

Historically, the standard estimate used in international circles for the amount of people who would be displaced globally because of climate change hovered around 150 million. The number now used is far greater and up to 250 million, depending on the definition used, and many would double that. Depending on the speed of global warming, some estimate the number to be closer to a billion. We’re talking about a problem that dwarfs most other global problems, and the gap between active solutions and the problem becoming a reality is one of the largest in the world.

I am speaking of a massive, ubiquitous, global problem affecting every country in one way or another, some more than others. Without using an alarmist, throwing our hands up in the air approach, and focused primarily on Atlantic Canada, how are we going to address the issues based upon what’s happening elsewhere?

I’ve come up with ten key issues that people and


institutions in Atlantic Canada need to consider when addressing the current levels of readiness.

- 1. Existing and comprehensive diagnostic work, especially along coastlines and waterways, undertaken across the provinces of Atlantic Canada:** Do we know how many people in the various provinces are threatened by rising sea levels and coastal changes? Do we know the time frame and scale of displacement? Do we know what can actually be done in order to prevent their eventual displacement?
  - *Factual diagnostic questions must be asked in order to prepare and respond adequately to the threat of global displacement.*
- 2. Estimates of people and households that will be affected by climate displacement:** What villages and towns will be affected? Who are the people and do they have to move or can they stay where they are with slight adaptation measures?
  - *Knowledge of the full breadth of the problem for appropriate planning.*
- 3. Relevant laws and policies and necessity for new/future ones:** Most places in the world do not have a climate displacement policy or laws, and the time has come to start to craft these. The [Peninsula Principles on Climate Displacement Within States](#) is a legal statement detailing the rights of people who are displaced and what are the incumbent obligations of the government to manage that displacement based on current human rights laws. These principles have been used to begin the process of legislating and policy development, to ensure a rights based approach to climate displacement in a number of countries.
  - *Review planning and zoning laws, the extent that they exist in Atlantic Canada, and how they can be used to benefit threatened communities.*
- 4. Resources for those threatened by climate displacement:** Who is responsible for this matter within the local, provincial, and national government? Is there a particular institution already in place that deals with these issues providing some form of advice and assistance?

Though it is a dynamic situation, most countries still cannot answer that question. The vast majority of places where climate displacement is an issue don’t have a designated political institution, program, or office that’s in charge of assisting displaced people. That’s something that needs to change.

- *Determine overarching government/private resources and responsibility.*
- 5. Budget lines for climate displacement issues in local, provincial, and national budgets:** Budgetary analysis is a really interesting tool, especially useful to human rights activists to determine the extent to which public resources have been dedicated to solving the problems brought on by climate change. If people are displaced, are they expecting to receive compensation, and if so who’s going to pay that compensation, in what amount, from where and under what context and procedure? Or are they expected to simply leave their land, losing all of their assets tied to their land and home?
  - *Gain understanding of budget as a vehicle to achieve justice for climate displaced people?*





*“As a young person, the global collapse and panic due to COVID-19 is what I have pictured ever since I learned about climate change: consumerism gone rampant, scary statistics, not being able to see friends and family, the restriction of civil liberties, and vulnerable and marginalized populations being hit the hardest. The worry of complete societal collapse is on repeat in my mind.*

*These are the sort of worries that keep me up at night and fill me with terror deep to my soul because with accelerating climate change, events that massively shut down public life on a global scale will exponentially increase.”*

- Lily Barraclough



**6. Insurance coverage for threatened households:**

The insurance industry is getting increasingly concerned with the topic. How will insurance work in a world where the scale of the problem is so huge? How extensive should the coverage provided be? What improvements are needed?

**7. Relocation of climate-displaced peoples:** It's one thing to identify who's going to be displaced and basic diagnostic work, but the real question is where will they go? Will it be a diaspora whereby they scatter to a range of different places, every person for themselves? Or will they wish to relocate as a unit or a community, somewhere else? Can we identify where people are likely to go?

- *Explore/identify particular land parcels and locations appropriate for resettlement and relocation.*

**8. Establishment of climate land bank for the future:** These processes are underway in a number of countries across the world. The basic idea is that countries, regions, provinces, and states should all establish a climate land bank, which would hold public or state land in trust. Designated as climate displacement land or some other title, the land would be removed from the commercial market and kept exclusively for use by communities that need to move due to climate change.

- *Explore proactive government measures to*

*manage/mitigate displacement of peoples.*

**9. Political party policies and/or manifestos to address climate displacement:** Most political parties in the world have addressed this issue structurally, and the time has come. So what could such a policy look like in the manifestos of these at the party level and what can be done to push that direction? Every political party, no matter when they come into power, is going to have to increasingly deal with this question.

- *Develop manifestoes at every government level.*

**10. Change local and national immigration policies:**

- *Add a category for climate displaced persons to the pre-existing categories of people prioritized and given status preference under the provincial and national level immigration policy?*

**Gregory:** The points that Scott laid out are absolutely essential ideas that we need to explore to be ready, and any level of readiness is going to come with some level of government funding.

Annapolis county is probably similar to most Nova Scotia municipalities in that there's little readiness. But speaking as a municipal councillor, people are knocking on our doors, and we're in the process of trying to formulate a response.

What we're trying to do in this county is to make sure the community halls have some level of



preparedness. As a community, we're looking at being off the grid, to install more solar panels, renewing focus on the generation of alternate systems, and developing educational programs. But there's not much that can be done without more financial resources. This will take a three-tiered approach. Community members talk to their local government, who talk to the provincial government, who talk to the federal government.

At the end of the day, though, the first door knock always starts at the municipal level.

**Laureline:** That makes me think of the question: How do you know whose door to knock upon for assistance in Atlantic Canada, right now, when extreme weather events or sea level rise put you and your property in trouble and you have to relocate?

**Phil:** Your next door neighbour? Your community? Government is wholly unprepared for the most part, still in denial. I think we need to start forming affinity groups in various regions around the world to provide that support for each other. And I think COVID is really a wakeup call for how well we can do if we all put our minds to it.

**Regan:** Another issue I don't see as solvable in the near future, particularly in the United States unless we have a new change of the guard, is the rise of nationalism and identity politics. I see immigration as a growing issue that will gravely impact relocating people. I feel like some groups will say they "don't want any refugees, not in my backyard." It will also

be exacerbated if/when resources are allocated to refugees. There will be a sense that the resources are being taken away from the local community. What I think is there must be a plan in place, preparedness.

**Christine:** I've been thinking about this a lot. There's a farm on our road, and sometimes it is completely flooded. I want to put something out there, to give something as someone who has more than they need. I think we're all going to have to sacrifice in the name of common values and survival, and I think it could be done joyfully if we're helping others.

*"What steps can be taken to put climate displacement issues centrally on the agendas of government decision making bodies so that you don't have a free for all at the end of the process, where a whole bunch of people end up landless, homeless, penniless, because nobody wanted to do anything in the early period of the climate displacement epoch."*

- Scott Leckie

# POWERING LOCAL GOVERNANCE

*"Governance always has to do with who's got power, who doesn't have power and who's invisible."*

- Rankin MacSween

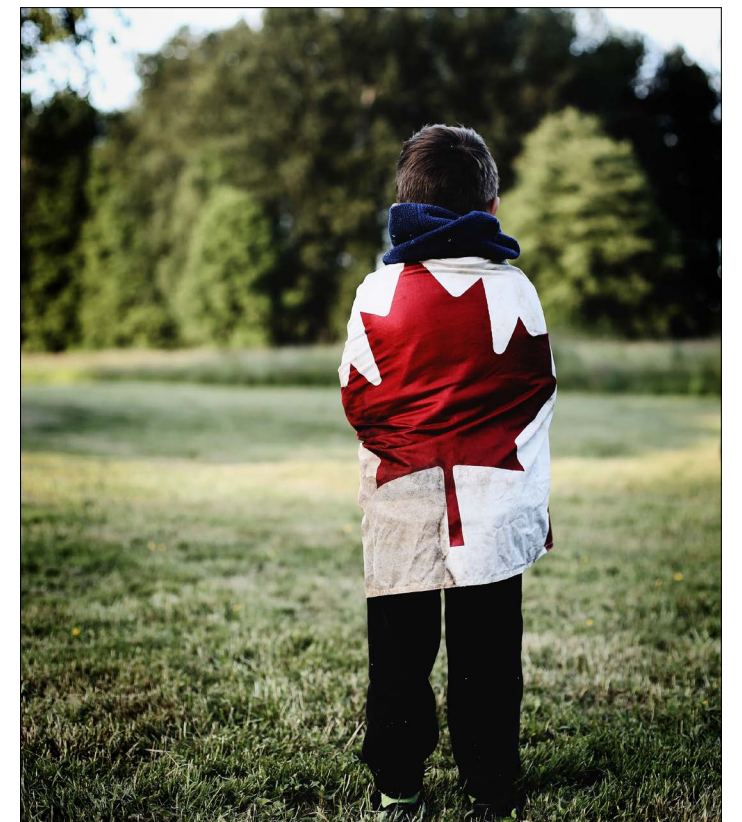
**Robert:** I'd like to set a little bit of context for the idea of local governance. The Center for Local Prosperity is about six years old. It was founded on the premise that local government is the best form of government. It's the most adaptive, the most innovative, and the closest to understanding the real issues with people and their community. As you get into higher levels of government, it gets progressively more removed, more entrenched in bureau-think, and has great corporate capture.

Change is coming without choice, and local governance is at the cusp of how communities are going to be able to adapt to the climate crisis. Even though local governments tend to be small, with low budgets and not a lot of room to move, they allow for enormous creativity.

**Laureline:** So it's clear that local government is adaptive and creative, but what about the people within the community? Dayle, can you say something about fostering engagement in local governance?

**Dayle:** I believe nothing can change without the inspirational involvement of local communities working hand-in-hand with municipal councils. Belief-based communication inspires people. People don't buy into what you're doing. They buy into why you do it.

If I talk about what I believe, I'm going to attract those who believe what I do, and that's why we reach out to early adopters. They're the driven, inspired by belief in the collective's ability to contribute transformational change solutions. When the inspired reach the tipping point, you'll have a critical mass that can pull in the early majority. And once they believe, you've got the momentum to draw on



the rest—the majority—and get the ball rolling.

What would happen if our local municipal councillors led by inspiring us with the belief in what we could accomplish together? We would follow them because we want to follow them, because we believe it's the right thing to do.

The way to harness that change momentum is through participatory governance with inspired citizens who want to work with local municipal councils to ensure greater interactions amongst local communities. This would be a concept to be reckoned with, the reimagining and deepening

*“I am considering drafting a Municipal Manifesto for Transformation through which a municipal council can filter, refine, and amend all council decisions in order to encourage a social, legal, economic and political transformation for the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This manifesto will acknowledge that citizens have a right and a responsibility to participate in decisions that affect their lives. And further, at a minimum, this manifesto will make specific reference to:*

- 1. Precautionary principle including a bill of rights for nature;*
- 2. Full acknowledgement and acceptance of Treaty Rights to insure remediation, reclamation and climate justice;*
- 3. A bill of rights for climate displaced persons.”*

- Gregory Heming

of citizen roles in governance by increasing opportunities for participation.

Local municipal councils can set up a process whereby citizens have an opportunity to directly influence climate change action processes, putting inspired political party participation to work. Three critical local municipal councillor initiatives would be the foundation of the process.

- 1. Create a Citizen Panel:** Local municipal councils would strive to reach agreement with the panel that participates in defining problems and proposing solutions. This requires moving council's agendas from problem solving to democratizing agenda setting, giving residents the space to identify and define problems and influence agendas.
- 2. Create a Citizen and Policy Link:** Decisions would occur in a collaborative fashion, as opposed to governments remaining in traditional politically-motivated 'processes.'
- 3. Ensure Accountability:** Local municipal councils would be duty-bound to meet the agreement, with genuine responsiveness such that citizen involvement is not about 'checking a box.'

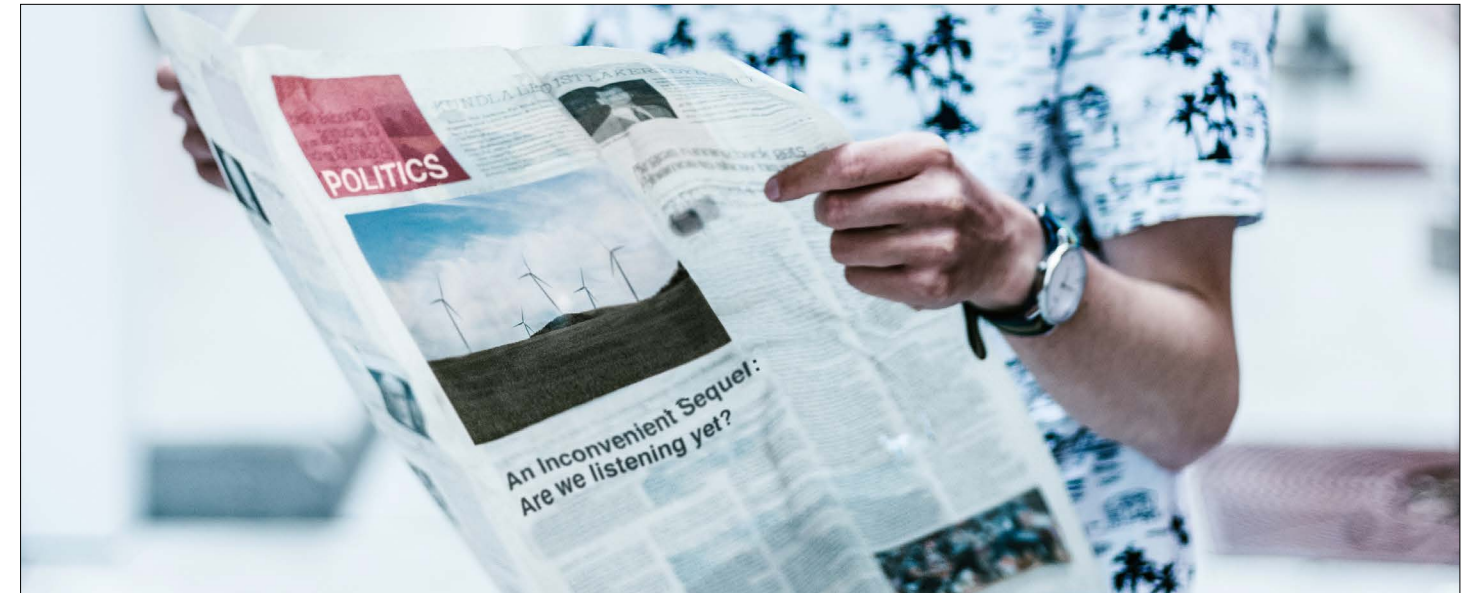
**Laureline:** Thank you, Dayle. Those are important points. Rankin, what are your thoughts on local governance?

**Rankin:** Governance always has to do with who's got power, who doesn't have power, and who's invisible. I come from the perspective of 'white males,' who have always tended to be in a privileged position. That's an important thing to recognize here.

I would like to build on Dayle's comments about local governance. There are three principles that are important to recognize from a local governance perspective—Subsidiarity, Self-sustainability, and Education.

Subsidiarity, whereby decisions should always be made at the level that's closest to the issue. I think that's one of the frustrations for communities and many municipalities.

Self sustaining. I can only speak to my experiences



with Cape Breton Municipality. When I watch a meeting, I am struck by what I would call the perceived powerlessness of people. There's a sense that the power is at the level of senior government. So, the tone sometimes reminds me—it's like—we're begging. And I think that ends up being destructive. If you don't enable communities to be self-sustaining, you're going down a road that ends up being very dark and there are consequences that flow from that.

Education, but not in a traditional sense. I mean education in a transformative sense whereby communities have to be in a constant process of assessing where they are, where they want to go, and taking action.

I think there is a shift, but it's frustratingly slow. Sometimes when you call for change, there's a reaction to it because people take it personally, like it's an attack on the present structure.

**Lily:** I am particularly taken by your remarks on powerlessness. I don't have all the answers, but I do know that there are things that could be done to decentralize a lot of the power that the federal government and provincial governments have over local municipal governments or communities.

Local governments do have many things that they can do right now, but there are still a lot of barriers. I definitely believe that there needs to be more decentralization and autonomy, and there are a lot of examples of what that could look like.

I think that to really act on the climate crisis and to do what needs to be done in the best interest of protecting the quality of life for the future, local communities do need to have the power to make more decisions. Right now in Halifax, just to implement their local community energy project, they had to get the province to [change the laws](#) of what a municipality could do.

**Albert:** To be more autonomous, we have to look at this top down approach and bring back the bottom up approach, which is what local government was supposed to be all about. They are the ones that are intimately knowledgeable about the local environment and local areas. Higher levels of government does not have that perception. They have to rely on the local governments for that.

**Dayle:** Without people voicing their beliefs and getting others behind them, it's very hard to make any change. So, if we want to go with the bottom up approach and give people back the power, I think we have to do it by finding a way to give people a voice and to use municipal governments to move these changes forward. Otherwise, you won't have a loud enough voice.

**Lily:** There is also the question of how to facilitate more engagement from youth, black, Indigenous, People of Colour (BIPOC) and residents in local governance. It is a really important piece and needs to be a meaningful engagement because so often



***“Think about the ‘I Have a Dream speech.’ Dr. King didn’t say what needed to change. He said what he believed. People who believed what he believed took his cause and made it their own. People believe in the need for change. Dr. King gave the ‘I Have a Dream speech,’ not the ‘I have a plan speech.’”***

- Dayle Eshelby

with youth engagement it’s just ticking a box.

For young people of today’s generation, our whole existence is political. We are going to inherit this planet, this climate-changed planet. So, youth are involved in politics and they’re organizing themselves, but we need to make spaces in local governments that are safe. The first step has to be making it a safer space and that means ensuring that councillors and municipal staff are educated on the systemic issues perpetuated through a colonial system. It’s all super complex, especially for youth, and involvement has to be to include the intention to actually act on youth input—taking it seriously—and not just making it look as if its the “right thing to do.”

**Elizabeth:** Indigenous communities have legal traction via treaty rights, and I think that there are many ways for those communities to invite settlers and others to join in a common bond for climate work, backed up with tremendous support. As people become more educated in understanding the Treaties, people are open to that common bond in a sincere way. This is a critical time to invite people into that conversation and create that mutual support.

**Regan:** I would also really like to see some kind of an educational element, both in schools and within the communities, tying into elders of all kinds passing down information about what they know, how the landscape should be, and what will help to create the healthiest of worlds.

I feel a lot of kids don’t really understand much about the natural world around them. I would like to see more of a sense of wonder and engagement

about the kinds of trees, the kinds of plants, the kinds of animals, everything that’s around them right now, and to find a language that explains to them what’s happening with climate change that isn’t overwhelmingly fear-based. We can engage youth to have a sense of ownership and curiosity about what’s right outside their door and that would help propel the movement for this new generation’s sense of love and honor and respect for what’s around them. That’s worth saving.

**Rankin:** Somebody once said that it’s the buildings that dominate the skyline that represent the dominant institutions of that time. If you go back 200 years, the dominant institutions were churches, and the skyline was made up of their steeples. 75 years ago, the dominant institutions were government buildings. Meanwhile today, if you go into Toronto what is dotting the skyline? It is the private sector banks.

But, these things always change. We’re clearly in a moment of change, and the question is: What’s next? What will be the next dominant cultural institution?

Everything is up in the air and the shift is fascinating. Assuming we survive, which is not a given and I’m optimistic, but you never know, what will dominate? What is going to be the next cultural expression? It is what people are searching for, a new way, and we’ll figure it out.

### Dedication of Merit

*May all places be held sacred.*

*May all beings be cherished.*

*May all injustices of oppression and devaluation be fully righted, remedied and healed.*

*May all wounds to forests, rivers, deserts, oceans – all wounds to Mother Earth be lovingly restored to bountiful health.*

*May all beings everywhere delight in whale song, birdsong and blue sky.*

*May all beings abide in peace and well being, awaken and be free.*

# RESOURCES

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Thinkers Vision for the Future</b>	Rewilding in Canadian urban areas (and crafting a new social narrative)	<a href="https://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/rewilding/">https://blog.cwf-fcf.org/index.php/en/rewilding/</a> <a href="https://rewilding.org">https://rewilding.org</a>  <a href="https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/archive/rewilding-canada-an-1.html">https://www.natureconservancy.ca/en/blog/archive/rewilding-canada-an-1.html</a>  <a href="https://wildlifepreservation.ca/blog/the-science-of-rewilding/">https://wildlifepreservation.ca/blog/the-science-of-rewilding/</a>
	Crafting a new narrative with stories	<a href="https://inspiringcommunities.ca/nourished-by-these-stories/">https://inspiringcommunities.ca/nourished-by-these-stories/</a>
	Indigenous and Faith Leaders Pugwash Declaration for acting on climate change & protecting the future	<a href="http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Pugwash-Declaration-2019-FIN.pdf">http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/The-Pugwash-Declaration-2019-FIN.pdf</a>
	Thinkers Lodge Youth Retreat on Climate Change	<a href="http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/youth-retreat-on-climate-change/">http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/youth-retreat-on-climate-change/</a>
	Atlantic Permaculture network- place for networking and resources to rethink agriculture and food security	<a href="https://www.permacultureatlantic.com/">https://www.permacultureatlantic.com/</a>
	2030 declaration made by a collaboration of unions, environmental groups, social justice groups, business owners, academics, and community members led by the Ecology Action Centre for a vision for a more sustainable future and what needs to be done to get there.	<a href="https://ecologyaction.ca/sites/default/files/images-documents/2030%20Declaration%20with%20Signatories%20-%20Aug%2027_o.pdf">https://ecologyaction.ca/sites/default/files/images-documents/2030%20Declaration%20with%20Signatories%20-%20Aug%2027_o.pdf</a>
<b>Humanity's Relationship to the Earth</b>	Global movement in Rebuilding Nature-Connected, Intergenerational Mentoring Communities, to be more connected to nature - online trainings and resources	<a href="http://8shields.org/">http://8shields.org/</a> by Jon Young
	UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, areas for interactions between society and ecosystems, to learn how to live in harmony with the biosphere	<a href="https://en.unesco.org/biosphere">https://en.unesco.org/biosphere</a>
	Resource on connecting with nature by going and sitting in nature and experiencing the sights, sounds, and animals	<a href="https://www.wildernessawareness.org/node/261">https://www.wildernessawareness.org/node/261</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Humanity's Relationship to the Earth</b>	Resource on outside activities to do in Halifax Regional Municipality and Annapolis Valley regions	<a href="https://earthadventures.ca/">https://earthadventures.ca/</a>
<b>Providing for Basic Needs</b>	Good global overview of food supply	<a href="https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/">https://eatforum.org/eat-lancet-commission/</a>
	A participatory research report on community food security in Nova Scotia	<a href="https://www.feednovascotia.ca/sites/default/files/researchcouncilcanada_makingfoodmatter.pdf">https://www.feednovascotia.ca/sites/default/files/researchcouncilcanada_makingfoodmatter.pdf</a>
	Atlantic Soil Health Lab, collecting baseline data from producers on soil health in Atlantic Canada	<a href="https://www.dal.ca/sites/ashl.html">https://www.dal.ca/sites/ashl.html</a>
	How to book on small-scale successful market gardening	<i>The market gardener: a successful grower's handbook for small-scale organic farming</i> , by Jean-Martin Fortier <a href="https://www.themarketgardener.com/">https://www.themarketgardener.com/</a>
	Mapping resources and tools for new entrants into ecological agriculture in Canada	<a href="https://youngagrarians.org/">https://youngagrarians.org/</a>
	<i>The New Organic Grower</i> by Elliot Coleman	<a href="https://www.chelseagreen.com/product/the-new-organic-grower-3rd-edition/">https://www.chelseagreen.com/product/the-new-organic-grower-3rd-edition/</a>
	Top ten permaculture books	<a href="https://www.permaculture.org.uk/research/top-ten-permaculture-books">https://www.permaculture.org.uk/research/top-ten-permaculture-books</a>
	Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network	<a href="https://www.acornorganic.org/">https://www.acornorganic.org/</a>
	Canadian Organic Growers association	<a href="https://www.cog.ca/">https://www.cog.ca/</a>
	FoodFirst, food justice international network	<a href="https://foodfirst.org/">https://foodfirst.org/</a>
	The Urban Farmer	<a href="https://theurbanfarmer.co/">https://theurbanfarmer.co/</a>
	Energize Bridgewater, community-wide energy planning - "it will cost less to invest in efficiency and renewables, than it will to continue paying someone else to sell us their energy."	<a href="http://www.energizebridgewater.ca/">http://www.energizebridgewater.ca/</a>
	Black River Hydro, small scale hydro	<a href="http://www.blackriver.ns.ca/hydro.html">http://www.blackriver.ns.ca/hydro.html</a>
	Nova Scotia Solar Road Map, Jan 2020, with 13 recommendations to advance solar	<a href="https://www.cansia.ca/uploads/7/2/5/1/72513707/nova-scotia_solar_roadmap__2_.pdf">https://www.cansia.ca/uploads/7/2/5/1/72513707/nova-scotia_solar_roadmap__2_.pdf</a>
	Acadia University Tidal Energy Institute, with information on small scale tidal systems	<a href="https://tidalenergy.acadiau.ca/research.html">https://tidalenergy.acadiau.ca/research.html</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Facing Climate Justice</b>	Academic book & Documentary about environmental racism in Nova Scotia in African Nova Scotian and Mi'kmaq communities	<i>There's Something in the Water</i> by Dr. Ingrid Waldron <a href="https://www.enrichproject.org/">https://www.enrichproject.org/</a>
	Article talking with Dr. Ingrid Waldron on the ties between environmental racism and police brutality.	<a href="https://thenarwhal.ca/vulnerability-ingrid-waldron-environmental-racism-police-brutality/?fbclid=IwAR29nvhTwMKF5or4Fnsoab8fp3cBp333SfIWUFGlyuHOoL1uzgt49Sq_N-A">https://thenarwhal.ca/vulnerability-ingrid-waldron-environmental-racism-police-brutality/?fbclid=IwAR29nvhTwMKF5or4Fnsoab8fp3cBp333SfIWUFGlyuHOoL1uzgt49Sq_N-A</a>
	Documentaries about native land rights, Indigenous rights as land rights.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dkBwu7bKIA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3dkBwu7bKIA</a>
	Article on the intersectionality of racism and climate change, with a look into how the system exacerbates both.	<a href="https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2020/06/09/the-links-between-racism-and-the-environment-frederick-hewett">https://www.wbur.org/cognoscenti/2020/06/09/the-links-between-racism-and-the-environment-frederick-hewett</a>
	Article on how historically environmental academic work and activism has perpetuated white supremacy and racism.	<a href="https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/889qxx/its-time-for-environmental-studies-to-own-up-to-erasing-black-people?utm_campaign=sharebutton&amp;fbclid=IwAR3HSjVC82g46hTYd6l5-95rtpAh-BB3n-89ad5Evlbeo68F-UPNXSgifo">https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/889qxx/its-time-for-environmental-studies-to-own-up-to-erasing-black-people?utm_campaign=sharebutton&amp;fbclid=IwAR3HSjVC82g46hTYd6l5-95rtpAh-BB3n-89ad5Evlbeo68F-UPNXSgifo</a>
	Article on how climate change exacerbates the oppression and marginalization of 2SLGBTQ+ people	<a href="https://earthjustice.org/blog/2020-june/why-queer-liberation-is-an-environmental-justice-issue">https://earthjustice.org/blog/2020-june/why-queer-liberation-is-an-environmental-justice-issue</a>
	Article that discusses the intersections of queer liberation, racial justice, environmental justice and so much more.	<a href="https://earthjustice.org/blog/2020-june/why-queer-liberation-is-an-environmental-justice-issue">https://earthjustice.org/blog/2020-june/why-queer-liberation-is-an-environmental-justice-issue</a>
	Article on how climate change will disproportionately threaten disabled populations.	<a href="https://unenvironment.org">https://unenvironment.org</a>
	Study on the adverse impacts to the health of homeless populations as a result of climate change	<a href="https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2704276/#:~:text=Homeless%20individuals%2C%20already%20vulnerable%20to,of%20cardiovascular%20and%20respiratory%20conditions.">https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2704276/#:~:text=Homeless%20individuals%2C%20already%20vulnerable%20to,of%20cardiovascular%20and%20respiratory%20conditions.</a>
	Study on how protecting intergenerational rights and equity can help prevent climate change.	<a href="https://www.raincoast.org/press/2018/intergenerational-equity-can-help-to-prevent-climate-change-and-extinction/">https://www.raincoast.org/press/2018/intergenerational-equity-can-help-to-prevent-climate-change-and-extinction/</a>
	Canada & US youth blogs (there is a tag for Halifax) on youth taking action for the future (intergenerational equity), climate grief and how they are disproportionately impacted by climate change	<a href="https://www.imatteryouth.org/blog/">https://www.imatteryouth.org/blog/</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Challenging a Crisis of the Spirit</b>	The Green Faith Movement- people of all faiths coming together to act on climate change	<a href="https://greenfaith.org/">https://greenfaith.org/</a>
	Human transformation in the face of transformational crises, book	<i>Steps to freedom</i> by Reshad Felid
	Pope Francis on the need to collectively act on climate change	<a href="https://thejesuitpost.org/2015/06/an-overview-of-laudato-si/?gclid=CjoKCOjwn7j2BRDrARIsAHJkxmz6RBbFofIvO5xV4bnSIZKz9QrlcCzMJwhAFpkrL3a-sF_1ClQoagaAhjXEALw_wcB">https://thejesuitpost.org/2015/06/an-overview-of-laudato-si/?gclid=CjoKCOjwn7j2BRDrARIsAHJkxmz6RBbFofIvO5xV4bnSIZKz9QrlcCzMJwhAFpkrL3a-sF_1ClQoagaAhjXEALw_wcB</a>
	Thinkers referred to “Islands of Sanity” during the discussions, a term in M. Wheatley’s book.	<i>Warriors of the Human Spirit</i> , by Margaret Wheatley
<b>Exploring Psychological Resilience</b>	Grief and mourning loss of natural wonders	<a href="https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/how-to-mourn-a-glacier">https://www.newyorker.com/news/dispatch/how-to-mourn-a-glacier</a>
	<i>The Battle Against Climate Change</i> by Paul Kingsnorth, founder of the Dark Mountain Project and former environmental activist	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_s8VoooXug&amp;vl=en">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q_s8VoooXug&amp;vl=en</a>
	Climate workers circle to help people working in the climate field process the grief and challenges of the pain we experience.	<a href="https://oneresilientearth.org/the-climate-workers-circle/">https://oneresilientearth.org/the-climate-workers-circle/</a>
	Retaining wisdom from elders in communities, documentary	<a href="https://leciel.foundation.com/watch-the-twelve/">https://leciel.foundation.com/watch-the-twelve/</a>
	Poetry inspired by the loss of species	<i>Niche</i> by Basma Kavanaugh <a href="https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2686292982">https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2686292982</a>
	Ted talk on how to turn climate anxiety into art & action	<a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/renee_lertzman_how_to_turn_climate_anxiety_into_action?language=en#t-825433">https://www.ted.com/talks/renee_lertzman_how_to_turn_climate_anxiety_into_action?language=en#t-825433</a>
	A tool to help people connect as a community and work together	<a href="https://workthatreconnects.org/">https://workthatreconnects.org/</a>
	The importance of using dance to interpret and understand climatic changes	<a href="https://workthatreconnects.org/resources/elm-dance/">https://workthatreconnects.org/resources/elm-dance/</a>
	How climate change impacts mental health ted talk	<a href="https://www.ted.com/talks/britt_wray_how_climate_change_affects_your_mental_health">https://www.ted.com/talks/britt_wray_how_climate_change_affects_your_mental_health</a>
	Emotional resilience in the era of climate change	<i>Emotional resilience in the era of climate change</i> by Leslie Davenport

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Exploring Psychological Resilience</b>	Mourning nature and how that is related to grief	<i>Mourning nature: mourning at the heart of ecological loss and grief</i> by Ashlee Cunsolo and Karen Landamn
	'You can't save something if you don't appreciate it.'	<i>The Abstract Wild</i> by Jack Turner
<b>Refocusing on Community Assets</b>	Halifax & St John Tool Libraries, as examples of community sharing assets	<a href="http://halifaxtoollibrary.ca/">http://halifaxtoollibrary.ca/</a> <a href="https://www.sjtl.ca/">https://www.sjtl.ca/</a>
	Sackville Commons & Co-work space, as an example of hub space	<a href="https://coworksackville.com/">https://coworksackville.com/</a>
	Up!Skilling festivals, events for teaching basic skills, crafts and trades at the community level, example from Transition Bay	<a href="http://www.transitionbay.ca/projects/upskilling/">http://www.transitionbay.ca/projects/upskilling/</a>
	Simulation tool to estimate the impacts of climate change on infrastructure	<a href="https://www.climateinteractive.org/tools/en-roads/">https://www.climateinteractive.org/tools/en-roads/</a>
	<i>The Resilient Home: A paradigm shift - potential changes in how we determine real estate value</i> by Robert Cervelli	<a href="http://www.transitionbay.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-Resilient-Home-A-Paradigm-Shift.pdf">http://www.transitionbay.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/The-Resilient-Home-A-Paradigm-Shift.pdf</a>
	App for barter/rental of tools in your neighbourhood	<a href="https://www.thegoodneighbourapp.com/">https://www.thegoodneighbourapp.com/</a>
	Two examples of interactive maps developed at College of Geographic Sciences, NSCC	<a href="http://kingsculturalmap.ca/">http://kingsculturalmap.ca/</a> <a href="http://mapannapolis.ca/">http://mapannapolis.ca/</a>
	Organizing complex data into relationship maps	<a href="https://kumu.io/">https://kumu.io/</a>
<b>Changing the Economic Paradigm</b>	Cooperative Enterprise Council NB blog by Wendy Keats	<a href="https://cecnb.ca/cecnb-blog/how-to-build-a-new-economy">https://cecnb.ca/cecnb-blog/how-to-build-a-new-economy</a>
	<i>A new economic vision for Prince Edward Island and Atlantic Canada</i> by Phil Ferraro	<a href="http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/commentary-a-new-economic-vision/">http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/commentary-a-new-economic-vision/</a>
	Farmland trust in Annapolis Valley helping young farmers start out and avoid difficulties with purchasing land	<a href="http://preservefarmland.com/">http://preservefarmland.com/</a>
	Transferring land rights so that farmland is transferred to new farmers instead of development companies	<a href="https://ca.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-002-5764?transitionType=Default&amp;contextData=(sc.Default)&amp;firstPage=true&amp;bhcp=1">https://ca.practicallaw.thomsonreuters.com/w-002-5764?transitionType=Default&amp;contextData=(sc.Default)&amp;firstPage=true&amp;bhcp=1</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Changing the Economic Paradigm</b>	PEI Land Trust Manual	<a href="https://www.dropbox.com/s/96pdwvyo3jq5zp6/Land%20Trust%20Manual.pdf?dl=0">https://www.dropbox.com/s/96pdwvyo3jq5zp6/Land%20Trust%20Manual.pdf?dl=0</a>
	Annapolis County Forestry Report, providing a local forest management vision and recommendations	<a href="https://annapoliscounty.ca/images/stories/Council/Reports/Forestry%20Report%20Print%20Full%20Page%20Corrected.pdf">https://annapoliscounty.ca/images/stories/Council/Reports/Forestry%20Report%20Print%20Full%20Page%20Corrected.pdf</a>
	Import Replacement study, includes monetary leakage analysis from Atlantic Canada	<a href="http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/import-replacement/">http://centreforlocalprosperity.ca/import-replacement/</a>
	Michael Shuman's site & books, especially <i>Put Your Money Where Your Life Is</i>	<a href="https://michaelshuman.com/?page_id=9">https://michaelshuman.com/?page_id=9</a>
<b>Considering Climate Displacement</b>	Displacement solutions documentary & resources	<a href="https://displacementsolutions.org/about-ds/">https://displacementsolutions.org/about-ds/</a>
	Documentary on how Alaska is being erased by climate change	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw5ii97rurs">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uw5ii97rurs</a>
	Short documentary on Louisiana disappearing as a result of climate change	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4THdX9KOZ_4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4THdX9KOZ_4</a>
	Could Canada be a safe haven for climate refugees?	<a href="https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/canada-climate-refugees-1.5165029">https://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/canada-climate-refugees-1.5165029</a>
	Short documentary on America's first climate refugees	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDNPOEoWnoQ">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDNPOEoWnoQ</a>
<b>Powering Local Governance</b>	Annapolis County Economic Development Strategy 2050, including 5 pillars for food, energy, housing, education and environment	<a href="https://annapoliscounty.ca/community-development/community-development/1111-annapolis-county-economic-development-strategy">https://annapoliscounty.ca/community-development/community-development/1111-annapolis-county-economic-development-strategy</a>
	Jack Novack heads the local government certificates program at Dalhousie University.	<i>Grassroots Democracy: Local Government in the Maritimes</i> by Kell Antoft and Jack Novack
	Examining self-sufficiency and its impact on New Brunswick and its people, essays provide historical and contemporary insights into economic, social and political settings	<i>Exploring the Dimensions of Self-Sufficiency for New Brunswick</i> eds. Michael Boudreau, Peter G. Toner, Tony Trembly
	A story of how within the solutions to the global crises we face, lie the seeds of something greater.	<i>Our Way Out: First Principles for a Post Apocalyptic World</i> by Marc De Villiers

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Powering Local Governance</b>	Why has the Maritime region not developed as well as other Canadian regions, and what can we do about it?	<i>Looking for Bootstraps: Economic Development in the Maritimes</i> by Donald J. Savoie
	A community rooted in place and people dwelling in that place in a practiced way can shape politics into a more cooperative and more humanly satisfying enterprise.	<i>Community and the Politics of Place</i> by Daniel Kemmis
	What is it that leads to economic success in one community while another community struggles? This question is relevant for rural communities	<i>Rural Community Economic Development</i> by Wayne Caldwell
	The governance of natural resources used by many individuals in common. Both state control and privatization of resources have been advocated, but neither have been uniformly successful	<i>Governing the Commons</i> by Elinor Ostrom
	Just Recovery for All, Canadian network about not going back to business as usual after COVID, but towards a system that works for all.	<a href="https://justrecoveryforall.ca/">https://justrecoveryforall.ca/</a>
	Exploring the kind of politics that can enable us to achieve a sustainable world of our choice, rather than one imposed by external forces.	<i>The Local Politics of Global Sustainability</i> by Thomas Prugh, Robert Costanza, Herman Daly

### Organizations to Join/ Resources for Training & Actions

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Humanity's Relationship to the Earth</b>	Trips by transit that does trips in Halifax using the bus to access trails and natural spaces	<a href="https://www.tripsbytransit.ca/">https://www.tripsbytransit.ca/</a>
	A violation of the land by pipelines, a story of those who organized around civil disobedience to protect their land	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7jwg4_JGUo">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q7jwg4_JGUo</a>
	Twin Bays Coalition works to protect NS's coasts from open-pen fish farming	<a href="https://www.twinbays.ca/">https://www.twinbays.ca/</a>
	The Nova Scotia Nature Trust works to steward the land and increase the amount of land that is being conserved	<a href="https://nsnt.ca/">https://nsnt.ca/</a>
	Workshops led by Hike Nova Scotia on re-connecting with Nature	<a href="https://www.hikenovascotia.ca/ourses--workshops--re-connecting/">https://www.hikenovascotia.ca/ourses--workshops--re-connecting/</a>
	Events led by Mi'kmaq Traditional Knowledge leaders, solidarity movements, support frontline Indigenous activists protecting land (& donate, meet and write your elected officials)	<a href="https://unistoten.camp/">https://unistoten.camp/</a> <a href="https://stopaltongas.wordpress.com/">https://stopaltongas.wordpress.com/</a>
<b>Providing for Basic Needs</b>	Elect people who are willing to do the transformative change that we need, elect Black, Indigenous, People of Colour, women, 2SLGBTQ+ people, transgender people, newcomers, especially at the municipal level, get involved in politics and push for a change, we need political will to properly provide for basic needs	<a href="https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/elections/information-candidates">https://www.halifax.ca/city-hall/elections/information-candidates</a> <a href="https://psmag.com/news/why-meaningful-diversity-in-government-matters">https://psmag.com/news/why-meaningful-diversity-in-government-matters</a>
	Invest in and join coops whether that be co-op farms, energy, or other businesses	<a href="http://www.novascotia.coop/">http://www.novascotia.coop/</a>
<b>Facing Climate Justice</b>	Push your MP, MLA, and city councillor to implement all of the recommendations of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report (TRC), and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Report (MMIW)	<a href="https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf">https://www.un.org/development/desa/indigenouspeoples/wp-content/uploads/sites/19/2018/11/UNDRIP_E_web.pdf</a> <a href="http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf">http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf</a> <a href="https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/">https://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/final-report/</a>
	Trainings to decolonize and work on anti-oppressive practices. Process of unlearning and relearning how to fight systemic oppression that is necessary to fight the climate crisis.	<a href="https://www.artreach.org/antioandequityresources">https://www.artreach.org/antioandequityresources</a>
	Participate in the KAIROS Blanket Exercise, invite a facilitator to do it with your community	<a href="https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/">https://www.kairosblanketexercise.org/</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Facing Climate Justice</b>	Powershift resource bank on trainings for anti-oppression specifically related to climate work (a youth climate action organization)	<a href="https://www.powershift.org/resources">https://www.powershift.org/resources</a>
	Organization focused on migrant rights & racial justice	No One is Illegal in Halifax <a href="http://www.nooneisillegal.org/halifax/">http://www.nooneisillegal.org/halifax/</a>
	NSPIRG provides funding & resources for social & environmental justice in NS, campaigns, events, research and volunteer opportunities	<a href="https://www.nspirg.ca/">https://www.nspirg.ca/</a>
	Women's Wellness Within helping women and trans people who have been incarcerated to access resources, healthcare, and support	<a href="https://www.womenswellnesswithin.org/">https://www.womenswellnesswithin.org/</a>
	The Environmental Noxiousness and Racial Inequalities Community Health Project that works with Mi'kmaq and African Nova Scotian communities to counter environmental racism	<a href="https://www.enrichproject.org/">https://www.enrichproject.org/</a>
	SEED (South End Environmental Injustice Society - Shelburne) that works to fight environmental racism in Shelburne	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/seedshelburne/">https://www.facebook.com/seedshelburne/</a>
	LOVE Nova Scotia supports youth in lower-income and marginalized communities	<a href="https://www.lovenovascotia.ca/">https://www.lovenovascotia.ca/</a>
	Learn what land you live on, learn about the peoples who occupy your land and the historic atrocities of colonization that made the world what it is today. Start referring to where you live by the Indigenous name for that land. (e.g. Halifax, Nova Scotia is K'jipuktuk, Mi'kma'ki)	<a href="https://native-land.ca/">https://native-land.ca/</a>
<b>Challenging a Crisis of the Spirit</b>	Join the Green Faith Movement focused on bringing together different faiths to act on climate change	<a href="https://greenfaith.org/">https://greenfaith.org/</a>
	Climate circles for discussing feelings of climate grief and connecting with others who are processing similar feelings	<a href="https://www.wehealforall.com/climate-circles">https://www.wehealforall.com/climate-circles</a>

Topic	Description	Link/Resource
<b>Exploring Psychological Resilience</b>	Find environmental art initiatives near you and community groups that can help process these major changes	<a href="https://dalspatial.maps.arcgis.com">https://dalspatial.maps.arcgis.com</a>
	A tool that helps communities come together and share resources and skills	<a href="https://workthatreconnects.org/">https://workthatreconnects.org/</a>
<b>Refocusing on Community Assets</b>	The ESRI community map initiative, can be used for free by communities to map assets and needs	<a href="https://esri.ca/en/programs/the-community-map-of-canada">https://esri.ca/en/programs/the-community-map-of-canada</a>
	The Firelight Group which works with Indigenous communities to map their knowledge and resources	<a href="https://firelight.ca/">https://firelight.ca/</a>
<b>Changing the Economic Paradigm</b>	A narrative building movement to bring people together across Atlantic Canada to redefine the future	<a href="https://www.howwethrive.org/">https://www.howwethrive.org/</a>
	Support the Black Business Initiative that helps to foster black owned businesses in Nova Scotia	<a href="http://www.bbi.ca/">http://www.bbi.ca/</a>
	Buy from Black owned businesses, either in person in Atlantic Canada or online across Canada	<a href="https://www.afrobiz.ca/">https://www.afrobiz.ca/</a>
	Support Indigenous owned businesses and services in Atlantic Canada	<a href="https://www.ulnooweg.ca/">https://www.ulnooweg.ca/</a>
	Support businesses owned by 2SLGBTQ+ individuals living in Canada	<a href="https://www.cglcc.ca/">https://www.cglcc.ca/</a>
	Redistribute your wealth, if you are someone that comes from a place of financial privilege, pledge to donate a portion of your monthly income to communities that need it most	<a href="https://www.sharemycheque.org/where-to-give">https://www.sharemycheque.org/where-to-give</a>
	If you are a woman or a non cis-gendered male, consider working with ellevest or similar investing firms that help to redistribute wealth to women and gender queer people	<a href="https://www.ellevest.com/">https://www.ellevest.com/</a>
<b>Considering Climate Displacement</b>	Migrant Rights Network Canada, supporting migrants to Canada, pushing for migrant worker rights	<a href="https://migrantrights.ca/">https://migrantrights.ca/</a>

# ABOUT THE THINKERS



*Elder Albert Marshall*

In the Spring of 2020, thirty-six women and men, many strangers to one another, contributed to or gathered together for twelve 90-minute sessions to reflect and dialogue together on our future. We would like to acknowledge these individuals for their generosity of spirit, their many insights and learnings, and their bravery.

Elizabeth Allard  
Lily Barraclough  
David Barrett  
John Caraberis  
Robert Cervelli  
Russell Daye  
Sara Demetry  
Cathy Eaton  
John Eaton  
Dayle Eshelby  
Adam Fenech  
Phil Ferraro

Ben Grieder  
Ric Hattin  
Christine Heming  
Gregory Heming  
Yuill Herbert  
Wendy Keats  
Laureline Simon Krichewsky  
Amy Larkin  
Scott Leckie  
Rankin MacSween  
Elder Albert Marshall  
Tracy Marshall

Bill Martin  
Elder Joseph Michael  
Ethan Neville  
Nina Newington  
Richard Peisinger  
Regan Rosberg  
Michael Speraw  
Paul Strome  
Ed Symons  
Susan Szpakowski  
Annika Voltan  
Irene Woodard

Bios are provided for those Thinkers whom are quoted in these chapters:

### *Elizabeth Allard*

Betsy is the co-founder of digital company engaging children, youth, families, health providers and educators aimed towards transforming the purpose of children's digital games by promoting verbal dialogue as the primary medium for child-initiated, creative performances and interactions. She has been a health/education consultant for more than 40 years, involved with clinical practice, programs, professional training with universities, health institutions, schools and government. Betsy has chaired a residential association through five municipal planning strategies and has acted as a multi-organization ad hoc chair for protection of a community watershed, organizing 55 interveners at Nova Scotia environmental control council hearings. She has been instrumental in shifting land use designation from heavy industrial to residential, business and parkland. Betsy's interests are in advancing healthy digital ecosystems for children/families food and water security, and land use.

### *Lily Barraclough*

Lily Barraclough is an Environmental Science graduate from the University of King's College and a Master's of Environmental Studies student at Dalhousie. Her involvement includes research on the ability of the built environment to lead to physical activity in Nova Scotia and reduce the

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carbon footprints of neighbourhoods, scientific literacy in the context of modern biology, and how art and science can work together to create vocabularies and rituals to help process climate grief. An environmental activism since the age of five, she has been a part of school eco clubs, Toronto-wide climate change conferences, the Toronto Youth Environmental Council, the founder Canadian Branch of iMatter Youth, the Green New Deal for Canada, the 2019 Thinkers Lodge Youth Retreat on Climate Change, and many other youth initiatives and community climate action projects in rural Nova Scotia. She is committed to organizing for social justice, insuring approaches that solve climate change also work for justice.

#### ***David Barrett***

When David founded his architecture practice in 1977 in Boulder, Colorado, his love of design was coupled with an ethic of environmental stewardship. From large-scale master planning projects to the architecture of singular buildings, his designs offer a timeless connection to the unique places they inhabit and the people that inhabit them. As Founding Principal and Design Director, the constant among David's designs is "Living Architecture": architecture that is inspired and informed by the patterns exhibited in the surrounding living and natural systems. David has penned articles and given lectures on green design throughout the United States, Canada and Europe.

#### ***John Caraberis***

John is a well-respected businessperson and co-owns Basic Spirit, Pugwash, Nova Scotia, with his partner Bonnie Bond, a company that handcrafts fine pewter giftware and wholesales throughout North America. They are passionate supporters and volunteers of the Nature Conservancy of Canada's mission in Nova Scotia and many other local and community projects and fully understand the issues maintaining a viable and sustainable business in rural Nova Scotia.

#### ***Robert Cervelli***

For over 35 years, Robert has been rebuilding economic resilience at the local and regional through his work in community building, local economies and climate readiness. He is a co-founder and Chair of Transition Bay St. Margarets Bay, one of the first Maritimes Transition Initiatives. As a life science tech start-up entrepreneur for over 25 years, he understands the issues related to new business creation and the health of local economies. He manages a teaching centre mini-farm at his home and has over 40 years experience in horticulture and food production. Robert is the Executive Director of the Centre for Local Prosperity.

#### ***Russell Daye***

Russ Daye is lead minister of St. Andrew's United Church, Halifax. Russ has lived on four continents but grew up in Nova Scotia and has called it home again for the 15 years. In his 30 years of ministry, he has served churches in Halifax, Quebec, and Newfoundland outposts. He completed a Ph.D. in comparative religion and taught at several theological colleges and universities. Russ worked on national reconciliation processes in Fiji, South Africa, and Canada. In recent years, his travel to the Middle East, where St. Andrew's is a partner in a school and a medical clinic for refugees, has been a priority. Currently, a great deal of his time is spent on the Centre for Social and Spiritual Innovation, hosted on the St. Andrew's site, working on interfaith initiatives for justice and the development of a network of leaders that cuts through the historical barriers and silos that have isolated so many Nova Scotia Communities.

#### ***Sara Demetry***

Sara is a Clinical Social Worker Specialist in St Johnsbury, Vermont. Having more than 29 years of diverse experiences, especially in clinical social work as a counselor and psychotherapist, she use a variety of tools to gain new perspectives on personal challenges in ways that bring out strengths and wisdom. Many of these tools are based on mindfulness approaches in which body sensations, emotions, thoughts and inner experiences are explored. Sara believes it is a simple fact that all need to have awareness of what is going on within themselves and in their relationships before making choices and decisions about what changes need to be made. Mindfulness approaches help to slow down and take notice, see more clearly what is happening, and evaluate the results, empowering individuals to be more effective in life.

#### ***John Eaton***

John is an experienced social entrepreneur. During his ten year tenure as CFO and then GM, NextBus, Inc. developed technology that enhanced the Public Transit rider experience while offering a substantial return on investment to shareholders (a classic example of "doing well by doing good"). Currently, he is the Chief Commissioner of the Pugwash Park Commissioners, the non-profit steward for the Thinkers Lodge National Historic Site. Working closely with partners in the Canadian, Provincial and Municipal government, this Nova Scotia landmark has been completely restored and is again offering innovative educational programs, with an emphasis on issues critical to the survival of the planet like peace and security and climate change. John is also the Treasurer of two community focused non-profit organizations: Sustainable Lafayette and the Lafayette Community Garden and Outdoor Learning Center. John received his BA from Dartmouth College and his MBA from Saint Mary's College of California.

#### ***Dale Eshelby***

Dayle draws strength from enduring community growth and development. Dayle is the Rural Coordinator for St. Mary's Silver Economy Engagement Network and a Lockeport Town Councillor. Dayle leads RESOLVE! Management, enhancing development leadership by empowering an organization's people and has community service employment support caseworker experience. Involvement with academic institutions include Research Assistant and Coordinator in a partnership with Mount St Vincent University/ Tri-County Women's Centre, over fifteen years at McGill University and participation in the President's Roundtable at the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education National Convection. Locally, Dayle was Lockeport's Integrated Community Sustainability Plan (ICSP) Coordinator and is Chairperson of numerous community boards. She is currently the President of the Centre for Local Prosperity.

#### ***Phil Ferraro***

Phil Ferraro and his wife, Nancy Willis, founded The Institute for Bioregional Studies Ltd. with a mission to help, "Restore Community, Protect the Land and Inform the Earth's Stewards." Phil is also a founding member of the Atlantic Canada Organic Regional Network, a board of director at Gifts from the Heart Inc. and an advisor to the Centre for Local Prosperity. Phil is a certified Permaculture Designer with a Masters degree, in Social Ecology. He graduated from the Institute for Social Ecology (under Murray Bookchin), and established one of the premier certified organic farms in Nova Scotia. Phil led the creation of the PEI Farm Centre's Legacy Garden, one of Canada's largest urban farms. He is the director of a new pilot program, 'Engaging Youth in the Era of Climate Change.'



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### ***Ric Hattin***

Ric 50 years, Richard has been a professional engineer, with expertise in military acoustic systems and marine structures. He is an active community participant in his local area and HRM, and since his 2010 retirement, he continued his community representation on the Capital District Health Authority Ethics Board number 3, retiring in 2015, chaired a Seniors Committee for the local MLA for 3 years, has been vice chair of the Regional Waters Advisory Board for 3 years and was a member of the Bay Treasures Chest Board of Directors for 1 yr. He is very interested in the interactions of our different societies as development pressures continue to increase, and has an abiding interesting cosmology. He also finds a bit of time to make wine for his friends.

### ***Gregory Heming***

Over the course of the last 40 years, Gregory has devoted much of his time and energy to promoting a dialogue on the inter-connectedness of ecology, economy, rural community development and politics. He has done so as a journalist, academic, published author, community activist, businessman and elected representative. He holds a PhD in Literary Ecology with post-graduate studies in religion and philosophy. Gregory is co-founder and senior advisor to the Centre for Local Prosperity. He lives with his wife Christine on small farm along the Annapolis River in Port Royal, Nova Scotia.

### ***Christine Heming***

A writer and educator, Christine is former associate professor for the School of Human Communication Disorders, Dalhousie University and former Consultant in Student Services for the Annapolis Valley Regional School Board. She also has 45 years' experience as a practitioner, teacher and meditation instructor in the Shambhala Buddhist tradition. Christine is a Director with the Centre for Local Prosperity.

### ***Yuill Herbert***

Yuill has been a Sustainability Solutions Group Principal for over 17 years. He pioneered land-use and GHG emission planning in Canada, helped introduce the LEED for Homes rating system in Canada, and co-developed the Integrated Design Process course used throughout Canada and the US. Yuill has worked on and led more than forty community energy and GHG plans and models across Canada. He has leading expertise on climate change mitigation and adaptation systems modelling that incorporates energy, GHG emissions and co-benefits. Yuill serves as a director on the boards of the Canada Research Chair on Sustainable Community Development, the Canadian Worker Cooperative Federation and Tatamagouche Community Land Trust.

### ***Wendy Keats***

Wendy has worked in community economic development for 40+ years and is a co-founder and Executive Director of the Co-operative Enterprise Council, a leading community economic development organization that helps build local economies and healthy communities through co-op and social enterprise development. Wendy has spent her life working on issues of inequality, poverty, and social injustice and says she has never seen so much opportunity as there is today to make true and meaningful change and to build a better world where people and planet matter more than profit. A bit of a "green nut", Wendy has lived completely off-the-grid on the beautiful Petitcodiac River since 2005 and is a well-known speaker and advocate for renewable energy.

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### ***Scott Leckie***

Scott is the Founder and Director of Displacement Solutions and the Oneness World Foundation. He is an international human rights lawyer, academic, author, social entrepreneur, environmentalist and world citizen. He is the world's most widely published author on housing, land and property rights themes, with more than 250 books, articles and substantive reports on these issues. At the age of 25, he was described by leading human rights scholars as an international human rights pioneer. Over his almost 30-year human rights career, he has carried out human rights work in more than 80 countries. He hosts the only podcast dedicated to exploring all aspects of world citizenship and how to get there - Jointly Venturing.

### ***Rankin MacSween***

Rankin has served as president of New Dawn Enterprises, a not-for-profit social enterprise in Sydney, Nova Scotia for twenty years. Rankin has witnessed and sought to influence the rapidly changing social and economic Cape Breton landscape. In an effort to move towards its vision of a self-reliant people in a vibrant community, New Dawn administers a Real Estate company, Health Care company, Community College, Meals on Wheels program, Community Engagement and Education division, the New Dawn Centre for Social Innovation, and a multi-million dollar Community Economic Development Investment Fund. Rankin has served as a Founding Director of Island Community Justice, Chair of the Cape Breton Branch of the Canadian Mental Health Association, and is a Founding Director of the Canadian Community Economic Development Network. He is engaged in the follow-up to the One Nova Scotia Report as a One Nova Scotia coalition member. Rankin is a Director with the Centre for Local Prosperity.

### ***Albert Marshall***

Albert is a highly respected and much loved Elder of the Mi'kmaw Nation; he lives in Eskasoni First Nation in Unama'ki (Cape Breton), Nova Scotia, and is a passionate advocate of cross-cultural understandings and healing and of our human responsibilities to care for all creatures and our Earth Mother. He is the "designated voice" with respect to environmental issues for the Mi'kmaw Elders of Unama'ki, and he sits on various committees that develop and guide collaborative initiatives and understandings in natural resource management or that serve First Nations' governance issues, or that otherwise work towards ethical environmental, social and economic practices.

### ***Tracy Marshall***

Tracy is from Potlotek First Nation. She is an active member of Bras d'Or Lakes Collaborative Environmental Planning Initiative (CEPI Youth) and is the Youth Coordinator for CEPI. Tracy sits on the Bras d'Or Lakes Biosphere Reserve Association board of directors as their youth representative. As a child, she learned about melting ice caps and was concerned for polar bears, and ever since, she has been an environmental activist. Not knowing where to start, she just stopped littering and encouraging friends and family not to as well. The rest was a ripple effect from this moment on.

### ***Ethan Neville***

Ethan Neville is a film maker and multimedia artist living in Halifax, Nova Scotia. He has worked as a professional cinematographer and editor since 2001. He is currently working on a long-form multimedia art experiment : Stone Soup Unlimited, the Stone of Kindness project. This social art work is based on a hunch that humanity has the tools to evolve out of ignorance and aggression.

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These tools are social in nature, with the practice of Kindness, Conversation and Celebration we may attend to our collective ecological, social and scientific imbalance.

***Regan Rosberg***

Regan is an interdisciplinary artist who weaves together science, psychology, history, and social engagement. With a passion for studying various ecosystems and biota, her work investigates not only the exquisite intelligence of ecology, but also the causes and ramifications of over-consumption. Rosburg teaches at the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design and is the Artistic Director of Cayo Artist Residency in Eleuthera (Bahamas). She is represented by William Havu Gallery in Denver, Colorado. Publications and interviews include the IGI International Journal of Civic Engagement and Social Change, Truthout, CPR News, The Westword, The Shambhala Times (CAN), Elysian Magazine, One Resilient Earth, and the Denver Post. Her residencies include the Arctic Circle Residency (Norway), RedLine (CO), S\*Park (CO), Ayatana (CAN), and the Oak Spring Garden Foundation (VA). She received her BFA from the University of Colorado at Boulder (2000), and her MFA from Lesley University College of Art and Design (2016).

***Laureline Simon***

Laureline is the co-founder and executive director of One Resilient Earth, an international non-profit organization that empowers people to become resilient to climate change through art, science and new experiences, so that they can contribute to regenerating their communities and ecosystems in a climate-altered world. For over 10 years, she has worked in Asia and Europe to co-design and lead international cooperation projects in the field of climate change mitigation and adaptation, including with the Agence Française de Développement (French Development Agency), and the United Nations Climate Change Secretariat. She is passionate about the protection and regeneration of living systems and in bringing both ancient wisdom and the latest tools and technologies into the design and implementation of transformative resilience initiatives.

***Ed Symons***

Ed Symons teaches a Community Mapping class at the Centre of Geographic Science, at the Nova Scotia Community College, in Lawrencetown, Nova Scotia. Within the program, students focus on the use of Geographic Information Systems and data to support regional and community well-being through mapping projects. The course introduces Public Participation Geographic Information Systems (PPGIS) as a mechanism to undertake modern mapping at the local community level in order to promote knowledge production. Ed's particular focus is with mapping issues and assets related to climate change.

***Annika Voltan***

Annika has been with Inspiring Communities since 2016 and supports the strategic operations of the organization and the Board of Directors. She works closely with provincial stakeholders to build collaborative relationships in government, the community sector, academia and business to maximize our collective social impact in the region. Annika completed a PhD in social entrepreneurship in 2019 and has interests in how networks can be used to bring about change. Her experience across federal and provincial government departments, academia and businesses enables her to skillfully build bridges between sectors. Annika brings inspirational energy to building a transparent learning environment with a long term focus on systems changes in Nova Scotia. Born and raised in Nova Scotia, she is dedicated to breaking down barriers that stand in the way of creating equal opportunities for

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all. She lives in Halifax with her husband and three young children.

***Irene Woodard***

Irene is a GreenFaith.org Fellow and is the Vice-Chair on GreenFaith's Board of Directors. GreenFaith, established in 1993, is one of the world's oldest interfaith environmental organizations. As GreenFaith's first Buddhist Fellow in 2011, she later represented GreenFaith at Standing Rock. Her work with GreenFaith has included convergences in Rome, New Orleans, COP23 and COP25, and she recently marched with Joan Fonda in Washington DC Fire Drill Friday. Irene Woodard is the owner of True Blooms, a floral business using seasonal, fresh, local plants and flowers. Irene is a co-founder of The Shambhala Touching the Earth Collective, and a senior teacher in the Shambhala Buddhist tradition. She was Director of Practice and Education, 2013-2018, at Sky Lake Shambhala Meditation and Retreat Center. She is a new Grandmother of Amelia and adoring mother of adult children, Charles and Catherine. A baker, poet, artist, and friend, she is endlessly committed to the care of the Earth.

# Acknowledgments

We would also like to acknowledge the generous support of the following supporters for this May-June 2020 Thinkers Lodge Climate Crisis Retreat:

Thinkers Lodge  
Cyrus Eaton Foundation  
Arjay R & Frances F Miller Foundation  
Municipality of the County of Cumberland  
Cumberland Energy Authority  
Village of Pugwash  
Basic Spirit Pewter  
NS Environment  
Halifax Regional Municipality

And, generous individuals who contributed their time and funds



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