

# 2023 Fundy Connects Summit

Local Economies Leading with Purpose

Poley Mountain, Waterford, New Brunswick

**November 1–3, 2023**



Presented by the Rural Upper Fundy Partnership  
*A Friends of Fundy-administered regional initiative*



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# WELCOME

We've got what the world wants – fresh air, open spaces, gorgeous views and a fun, laid-back culture that proudly shows off its roots.

We live, work and operate businesses in the northeast half of the Bay of Fundy ecological zone, roughly 3,000 square kilometres stretching from the outskirts of St. Martins through to Cape Enrage. We are home to about 15,700 residents and over 170 small businesses many of which rely on the destination economy and its five anchor attractions: Fundy National Park, Poley Mountain Resort and the three provincial parks of Cape Enrage, Fundy Trail Parkway and Hopewell Rocks. Our region is host to two UNESCO designated sites - The Fundy Biosphere Region and Stonehammer Global Geopark.

Here in the Upper Bay of Fundy, our environment is our economy, which is why in 2021 a small volunteer group of entrepreneurs, local government officials and non-profit directors came together for a two-year research and community engagement project (the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy Destination Development Project, RDD for short) to consider how to help our rural communities, residents and operators thrive in the destination economy.

We are not alone. The new Federal Tourism Growth Strategy states; “many of our most admired and best-known attractions require enhancements and upgrades, as well as support to digitize services and make physical attractions more sustainable and resilient to climate change.”

For rural regions such as the Upper Bay of Fundy, the lack of adequate investment and infrastructure upgrades is further compounded by a lack of organizational capacity, which in rural communities has traditionally been done by volunteers. As one business owner told us: “Everybody is struggling for staff and so your community leaders are, you know, chief cook and bottle washer now. They don't have time for the volunteering as they did in the past.”

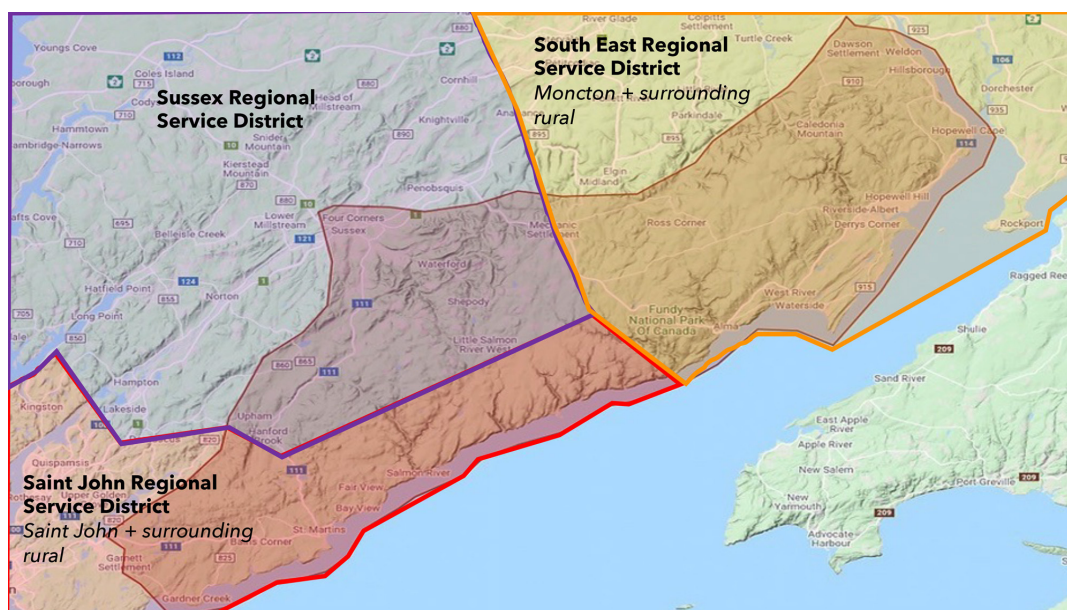
Building capacity in our local, rural communities sits at the heart of this year's Fundy Connects! Summit. Over the next three days, we're going to explore community-led solutions that sustain and steward our communities.

Thanks for joining the conversation.



# WE ARE HERE

The Upper Bay of Fundy is an ecological zone that stretches from Gardner Creek in the west through to Hillsborough in the east and Sussex at its northward point. With the completion of the Fundy Trail Parkway, visitors and residents can now travel through this region, along the longest stretch of undeveloped coastline on North America's eastern seaboard.



## For visitors, this is a singular destination that includes:

- A year-round national park – Fundy National Park
- Three provincial parks – Hopewell Rocks, Cape Enrage & Fundy Trail Parkway
- A year-round adventure resort – Poley Mountain Resort

## For residents, this destination contains a number of government jurisdictions:

- Three regional service commissions (RSCs), two of which are urban-based in Moncton and Saint John
- Three rural municipalities – Fundy-St. Martins, Sussex & Fundy-Albert
- Three rural districts



# OUR PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

Our goal in all our work is to create safe, welcoming and inclusive spaces and experiences for everyone regardless of gender, age, sexual orientation, visible or hidden ability, physical appearance, race, religion, or creed. To do that we have some ground rules for all of us to follow.



## Lead with Empathy

Appreciate others as people with abundant experiences & perspectives.



## Value Diverse Perspectives

Honour the unique experiences each of us brings to our conversations.



## Move Up, Move Back

Move up to share your perspective and move back to listen to others' contributions.



## Stay Judgment Free

Of others and of yourself.



## Practice Radical Inclusion

Make sure everyone, especially those historically at the margins, feels truly included.



## Advocate for Your Emotional Wellbeing

Take care of yourself & your team; speak up when you feel overwhelmed.



## Get Comfortable with Uncomfortable Questions

Stretch yourself to consider new ways of looking at how we work, interact and support each other, and how we can collaborate to address shared challenges and opportunities.



# DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT & THE UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are a set of 17 integrated and interrelated goals to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that humanity enjoys peace and prosperity by 2030.




The Partnership's mission and work is informed by the UN SDGs and regenerative development practices, including work on systemic challenges such as infrastructure, housing, social inclusion, transportation, and community well-being.



# OUR PRIORITY SDGS

The UN has identified 169 targets across 17 SDGs. While all are important and interrelated, some will be more relevant to your organization. We have identified five priority SDGs for the new destination development network.

<p><b>8</b> DECENT WORK AND ECONOMIC GROWTH</p> 	<p><b>#8 Decent Work &amp; Economic Growth</b></p> <p>Tourism, as services trade, is one of the top four export earners globally, currently providing one in ten jobs worldwide. Decent work opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, and policies that favour better diversification through tourism value chains can enhance tourism positive socio-economic impacts.</p>
<p><b>11</b> SUSTAINABLE CITIES AND COMMUNITIES</p> 	<p><b>#11 Sustainable Cities &amp; Communities</b></p> <p>Tourism can advance urban infrastructure and accessibility, promote regeneration and preserve cultural and natural heritage, assets on which tourism depends. Investment in green infrastructure (efficient transportation, potable water) should result in smarter and greener communities for not only residents but also tourists.</p>
<p><b>12</b> RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION AND PRODUCTION</p> 	<p><b>#12 Responsible Consumption &amp; Production</b></p> <p>The tourism sector needs to adopt sustainable consumption and production (SCP) modes, accelerating the shift towards sustainability. Tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for tourism including for energy, water, waste, biodiversity and job creation will result in enhanced economic, social and environmental outcomes.</p>
<p><b>14</b> LIFE BELOW WATER</p> 	<p><b>#14 Life Below Water</b></p> <p>Coastal and maritime tourism rely on healthy marine ecosystems. Tourism development must be a part of Integrated Coastal Zone Management in order to help conserve and preserve fragile marine ecosystems and serve as a vehicle to promote a blue economy, contributing to the sustainable use of marine resources.</p>
<p><b>15</b> LIFE ON LAND</p> 	<p><b>#15 Life On Land</b></p> <p>Rich biodiversity and natural heritage are often the main reasons why tourists visit a destination. Tourism can play a major role if sustainably managed in fragile zones, not only in conserving and preserving biodiversity, but also in generating revenue as an alternative livelihood to local communities.</p>



# OUR APPROACH

The Partnership uses a four-pronged approach in its work.



## Prototyping Community Solutions

Solving complex systemic challenges comes with a common problem: who is responsible for incubating innovative solutions? The Partnership fills this gap by coordinating community-designed prototypes and processes that support operators and organizations that want to co-design and test regenerative development practices, and, facilitate collaborative approaches that bring together local and external stakeholders to solve systemic challenges.



## Community Building, Facilitation and Engagement

The Partnership facilitates exchanges of information, ideas and expertise to develop community-led solutions that sustain and steward rural communities and ecological zones. This includes meeting with local organizations, government officials and external partners to explore opportunities that produce shared benefits.



## Partnership Learning Events

The Partnership designs and hosts in-person events to facilitate and accelerate the development of community-led solutions to systemic challenges. This includes the annual Fundy Connects! Summit and Community Innovation Days.



## Research and Evaluation

The Partnership focuses on gathering baseline data and conducting gap analyses to determine how to align the organization and region with the UN SDGs and sustainable development practices.





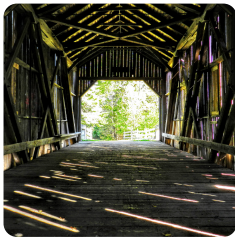
# OUR CORE VALUES

The purpose of the Rural Upper Fundy Network is to bring people together to share expertise, knowledge, resources and information so we can co-create community-led solutions and maximize opportunities for the people who call the Upper Bay of Fundy home around three values.



## Local Economies First

Local residents, operators and investors want to work together to coordinate, collaborate and co-create how they want to develop their home region for the enjoyment of residents and guests alike.



## Shared Regional Benefits

The region will develop, promote and invest in uniquely rural experiences that create shared regional benefits that deepen connections and understanding between rural and urban communities.



## Regenerative Year-Round Destination

The completion of the connection road between the Fundy Trail Parkway and Fundy National Park changes everything. Through destination development & stewardship, tourism can contribute to the wealth and wellbeing of the communities that make up the Rural Upper Bay of Fundy.



# AGENDA – DAY 1

Wednesday, November 1st

## PART 1 – WHO WE ARE & WHAT WE DO

- 9:00 am Registration
- 10:00 am Welcome
- 10:15 am. Outline of the Day
- 10:20 am Our Pathway to Destination Development & Stewardship
- 10:25 am Why We Are Here – Community Stakeholder Panel
- 10:50 am. Q&A
- 11:00 am Break
- 11:10 am. Measuring What Matters:  
The Power and Possibility of the Partnership – Jamie Gamble
- 11:35 am. Q&A
- 11:50 am What Comes Next
- 12:00 pm Lunch

## PART 2 – COMMUNITY-LED PROJECTS

- 1:00 pm Framing the Work and Role of the Rural Upper Fundy Partnership
- 1:05 pm Our Community Approach to Tackling Big Issues:  
Community Stakeholder Discussion – Moderated by Jamie Gamble
- 2:00 pm Break
- 2:10 pm Experiences Elsewhere in the World
- 2:20 pm How We Sustain Our Ecosystem
- 3:30 pm. Day 1 Review

## PART 3 – TASTE OF PLACE

- 4:00 pm Taste of Place Reception
- 6:30 pm Supper & Entertainment



# AGENDA – DAY 2

Thursday, November 2nd

## PART 4 – OUR ENVIRONMENT IS OUR ECONOMY

9:00 am Breakfast

10:00 am Welcome

10:05 am How We Operationalize Our Values

10:20 am InSpired Regenerative Visitor Experiences – Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms

11:10 am. Break

11:20 am. Stewardship Through Destination Development – Jonathan Foster, GMIST

11:50 am. Morning Review

12:00 pm Lunch

## PART 5 – OUR PROPOSED MODEL: SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

1:00 pm Introduction to Afternoon Agenda

1:05 pm How Social Enterprise Bolsters Community Economies - Vanessa Paesani, PDC

2:10 pm Break

2:20 pm Learning Carousel

3:30 pm Day 2 Review

4:00 pm Post-event Reception

# AGENDA - DAY 3

Friday, November 3rd

## PART 6 – SPECIAL SESSION FOR OPERATORS

9:00 am Closed Session for Operators



# OUR FEATURED PARTICIPANTS



## Javid Brown, Manager, Hopewell Rocks

Javid is a native of Jamaica and has made Canada his second home. Before moving to Canada, he had a successful career in the hospitality industry working for some of the world's leading all inclusive resorts. Javid has a broad appreciation for operations management as he has worked at both the management- upper and lower and at the line level in almost all areas within a hotel. Javid remains committed to one of his passions, that of sharing knowledge and is an adjunct lecturer with Northern Caribbean University where he lectures Sustainable Tourism Management. Javid believes hospitality is the one industry that has the ability to make every person happy, no matter their budget!



## Celes Davar, Earth Rhythms Inc.

Celes Davar is a tourism operator, facilitator, practitioner, and experiential tourism coach, creating innovative experiences with community partners to surprise and delight travellers. He loves working with local folks to help them create high-value, high-yield experiences. His passion and purpose are aligned around the things he cares most about - local stories, nutritious food, cultural traditions, climate change, art, live music, and nature. A smile comes to his face each time he is involved in the creative process of working with others to create a new experience that guests love. It's community economic development through tourism, which he shares as part of his facilitated workshops for tourism professionals throughout Canada.



## Rach Derrah, graphic facilitator

Rach Derrah is a facilitator, graphic recorder, and illustrator. With deep listening and co-creation at the core, she supports clients with strategic processes to have challenging conversations and propel visions forward. Rach is used to working across sectors and across communities in highly collaborative environments. Her formal education is in Community Design at Dalhousie University. Her studies and practice continued in the Art of Hosting, Social Innovation and Anti-Oppression frameworks. She was a co-founder of Brave Space Social Innovation where she learned and developed internationally recognized graphic recording expertise. Rachel is a settler, born and raised on Wolastoqiyik territory. She is of British, Irish and Scottish descent. Currently she lives in Kijipuktuk.



# OUR FEATURED PARTICIPANTS



## Jonathan Foster, Executive Director, Gros Morne

Executive Director of the Gros Morne Institute for Sustainable Tourism. Jonathan has been involved in the tourism industry as both an operator and advocate having worked in the private sector, government and university settings over the past 25 years. Having studied and worked across Canada and New Zealand, Jonathan has been exposed to many destinations and ways of doing business. It is this exposure that has helped shape his understanding and passion regarding community-centred development. This passion has led him to become heavily involved regionally working with communities and businesses to help facilitate and grow their sustainable tourism experiences. Jonathan strongly believes that by utilizing the talents and skills of people within communities that businesses and destinations can flourish in a very globally competitive marketplace.



## Jamie Gamble, Principal, Imprint Consulting

Jamie has an extensive background in designing and delivering consulting projects in a variety of areas including strategy, evaluation and organizational change. A talented writer, excellent facilitator and effective researcher, Jamie has earned acclaim from the many groups he has worked with. Jamie holds a Masters of Management Degree from McGill University in Montreal, Quebec where he graduated from the highly-regarded McGill-McConnell Program.



## Jamie Hare, General Manager, Poley Mountain

Jamie started with Poley Mountain in 1993 on the Ski Patrol. Moving through many roles while attending UNB and NBCC Mechanical Engineering. Jamie became a leader in the industry throughout the years. He currently sits on the Board of Directors of the Canadian Ski Council since 2019 and also sits on the Board of Directors for Atlantic Snow Resorts as the Director of Finance. Jamie became the General Manager of Poley Mountain Resorts June 2019. In 2021 Jamie joined the Upper Bay of Fundy Partnership. Jamie resides in Saint John, he is a father of three and enjoys skiing, travelling, boating and outdoor adventure with his wife Marlise.



# OUR SPEAKERS



## Lisa Hrabluk, Principal, Wicked Ideas

Lisa Hrabluk is an award-winning journalist, strategist and increasingly impatient Canadian who knows that to be good, sometimes you gotta get wicked. Her work focuses on how massive technological and environmental change doesn't just change how we work and live, it changes what we value – and that is changing everything. Her consultancy Wicked Ideas supports mission-driven executive leaders and teams to address complex issues and build broad consensus across diverse stakeholder groups. Lisa's work has appeared in the *Globe and Mail*, *Time*, *the Halifax Herald*, and *New Brunswick Telegraph Journal*. She is a frequent guest on national radio and television. She is a leader in the North American BCorp movement, for-profit companies that meet the highest standards for social and environmental impact. She is currently the weekly cultural commentator for *CBC Radio's Information Morning in Saint John*.



## Vanessa Paesani, NouVentures

Vanessa Paesani is focused on creating systems change for a just economy. Her work is centered in equity. Vanessa is leading the Pond-Deshpande Centre's work in convening the social enterprise ecosystem in New Brunswick, and their work as a regional delivery partner of WIN-VC, a national collective focused on changing the system of less than 3% of venture capital going to women. In her current volunteer work, she is leading the transition committee of the Fundy Trail Parkway as they transition the non-profit into the provincial government, and has served on the board of Venture for Canada – a national charity dedicated to building entrepreneurial skills in young Canadians - for the last 7 years. She is deeply passionate about how governance practices lead to better outcomes for people and organizations, and how organizations can serve people instead of people serving organizations.

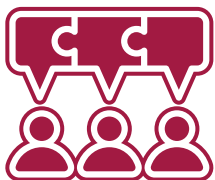


# Join the work of the Partnership

The Rural Upper Fundy Partnership is a network of individuals, organizations and non-profits that work together to develop solutions to long-standing challenges, test out innovative ideas and facilitate projects spearheaded by our members.

It is free to join.

There are three ways to get involved.



## Invite us to Facilitate a Community Conversation

If you're looking to tackle a long-standing challenge in your community, we can help by facilitating a series of community conversations to gauge interest, reframe the problem and determine how to proceed based on community capacity.



## Organize a Community Learning Event

Invite us to speak or facilitate a workshop in your community or organization to share information about the UN SDGs, regenerative business practices and financial and expert resources available.



## Stay Connected

Sign up for our mailing list or follow us on Facebook to keep up to date on events and happenings.

Mailing list – email at [community@friendsoffundy.com](mailto:community@friendsoffundy.com)

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/RuralFundyRegionDevelopment>

Website – <https://www.ruralfundyregiondevelopment.com/>



# WORKING GROUP AND PARTNERS

## Project Working Group

Mike Carpenter, Bay of Fundy Adventures, St. Martins

Janet Clouston, Albert County Historical Society and Museum, Hopewell Cape

Dr. Jennifer Dingman, Fundy Biosphere Region, Stonehammer Global Geopark

Micha Fardy, Friends of Fundy, Alma

Jamie Hare, Poley Mountain Resort, Waterford

Michelle Harvey-Larsen, Studio On the Marsh, Harvey (Fundy Tourism -ACTA)

Jordan Jamison, St. Martins & District Chamber of Commerce and Regional Tourism Association

Bob Rochon, Mayor, Village of Fundy-Albert

Phyllis Sutherland, Ponderosa Pines Campground, Lower Cape (Fundy Tourism - ACTA)

Jason Thorne, Community Services Director, Town of Sussex

## Government Funders



Atlantic Canada  
Opportunities  
Agency

Agence de  
promotion économique  
du Canada atlantique



## Summit Partners



**TRANS CANADA TRAIL**  
**SENTIER TRANSCANADIEN** TM/MC





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# Destination Development & the UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2019 the UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) released guidelines for effective destination management in the face of new and emerging challenges. Its purpose is to help local organizations focus on enhancing the competitiveness and sustainability of destinations while guaranteeing a harmonious relationship between residents and visitors. Using the UNWTO guidelines, we identified 20 issues of importance to residents and operators in the Upper Bay of Fundy, grouped across the three tenets.

## Strategic Leadership

**Regional Coordination/Collaboration:** This was a near universal sentiment; it is time for our small communities to work together to leverage our collective knowledge and expertise to create a shared vision and direction for our rural region.

**Sustainable/Regenerative Tourism:** Many of our operators and residents are here because they share a love of the Bay of Fundy ecosystem and want to protect it and are interested in aligning with the UN SDGs.

**Restoration/Conservation:** There are a number of historic, cultural and ecological sites of importance that require restorative work and then ongoing conservation to preserve and enhance these areas.

**Leverage UNESCO designations:** The merging of the Fundy Biosphere and Stonehammer under one management structure makes the Upper Bay of Fundy a leading region in the global UNESCO World Heritage program. This can be leveraged for marketing and conservation purposes.

**Capacity Building:** Our destination economy is dominated by small business owners and entrepreneurs and enhancing access to both training and shared services is of great interest to them.

**Seasonal Extension:** Operators are interested in learning how to extend their business seasons, a move that will enhance services for locals because of increased volume and revenue.

**Product and Experience Development:** Operators and investors are interested in learning how they can create or enhance existing products and experiences to increase revenue and market reach.

**Visitor Experience:** Developing the Upper Bay of Fundy into a premiere visitor destination is of primary importance to local operators, industry groups, and provincial and national tourism marketers and funders.

**Events/Programming:** The region has the capacity for more events, particularly events and programming that links the communities to create a regional map and calendar of activities.

**Trails:** Linking existing trails to create a unified regional trail system for diverse stakeholder groups in the non-motorized and motorized trail community will help extend the seasons and market the Upper Bay of Fundy as a year-round destination. Local groups lead the way on this and bringing them together will have many benefits.

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# Destination Development & the UN Sustainable Development Goals

**Interpretation:** During our stakeholder sessions, operators and residents identified training staff and employees of visitor information centres to speak knowledgeably about the region's ecosystem, culture and heritage will enhance the visitor experience, as will training interpreters to understand the stories of this place and recommend activities throughout the region.

**Indigenous Knowledge & Leadership:** Fundy National Park is the regional leader in integrating Indigenous knowledge and leadership into its practices and programming and can share its knowledge with the network.

## Effective Execution

**Land Use:** This is a fundamental issue for residents in our region and must be front and centre of any work moving forward. Open and transparent land management is an essential requirement for building and maintaining trust with Upper Bay of Fundy residents and operators.

**Infrastructure:** Deteriorating roads, unreliable Internet, and neglected buildings were the top complaints from residents and operators, stating it makes living and visiting the Upper Bay of Fundy a frustrating experience.

**Signage:** Operators told us better signage is required to help guide visitors through the region.

**Marketing:** Our emphasis will be digital marketing, particularly increasing operators' capacity and knowledge.

**Measurement & Evaluation:** This is essential to building trust with operators, investors, funders, and residents, and in providing the Network with data to analyze our work and make adjustments.

**Impact Assessments, Studies, and Research:** Work with research partners, such as our successful project with UNB, to analyze specific elements of the network's work and to determine how to support operators, local governments, industry associations, and other network members in achieving individual goals.

**Inclusive Stakeholder Participation:** At the heart of our engagement process lies a commitment to access and diversity. To achieve that we will cultivate broad community support for the process and the resulting strategy by practising open communication, and welcoming a diverse mix of perspectives, experiences and skillsets.

## Sustainable Governance

**Management & Implementation:** We will build out a management and implementation plan for the Upper Bay of Fundy Regional Destination Development Network, including a proposed management model, which will include governance and funding guidelines.

