



HWI Symposium Breakout Rooms Summary

March 14, 2023

During the Symposium, participants were provided several opportunities to engage with each other in smaller group conversations. There were two afternoon breakout sessions, each with concurrent conversations that participants could choose to be part of.

Breakout Session 1 (1:40-2:30) | Connecting with Others in Thematic Sessions

Choose from three concurrent thematic sessions:

- 1. Advancing UNDRIP in your work (420 Strategy Room)**
Take a deeper dive on how to implement UNDRIP in your work with Tara Marsden
- 2. Technique Talks – the big, the small and the innovations (ICBC Concourse)**
An opportunity for project teams to connect and learn from each other about a variety of technique topics including monitoring, restoration, and planning.
- 3. Incorporating Intergenerational Learning in Your Watershed Projects (470 Hamber Foundation Boardroom)**
Hear from an intergenerational panel and discuss learnings and practices on engaging across generations.

Breakout Session 2 (2:45-3:45) | Connecting with Your Watershed Peers

Gather with attendees from your watershed. These regionally focused discussions will center learning from each other about the conditions in your watershed, successes, and challenges in your HWI work, and sharing current and future priorities for watershed security.

Breakout Session One: Connecting with Others in Thematic Sessions



ADVANCING UNDRIP IN YOUR WORK

This session was led by Tara Marsden, former Senior Indigenous Advisor on the Health Watersheds Initiative (HWI), with Leanne Sexsmith, Co-Director of the HWI. Tara provided an overview of UNDRIP and the articles relevant to HWI as well as the B.C. [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act \(DRIPA\)](#), and the Crown interpretation of UNDRIP. While UNDRIP is aspirational, DRIPA is about bringing in minimum standards of practice to the implementation of UNDRIP in B.C. This represents a significant culture shift, although changes in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and government has been happening slowly with different provincial ministries having different interpretations and understandings of its implementation. The need for Indigenous decision-making authority was highlighted along with the concept of “nothing about us without us”.

Participants were eager to learn more and they identified that continuing to share resources about UNDRIP implementation would be helpful for project teams as they continue to try and improve their work. Participants shared how they were working to advance UNDRIP; examples included using traditional names for bodies of water on signage (as opposed to colonial names), building relationships with the First Nations on who's traditional territory they were working on, identifying and protecting culturally significant plants and animals. There was an acknowledgement that there is a long way to go and the attendees were grateful to learn from Tara and others.

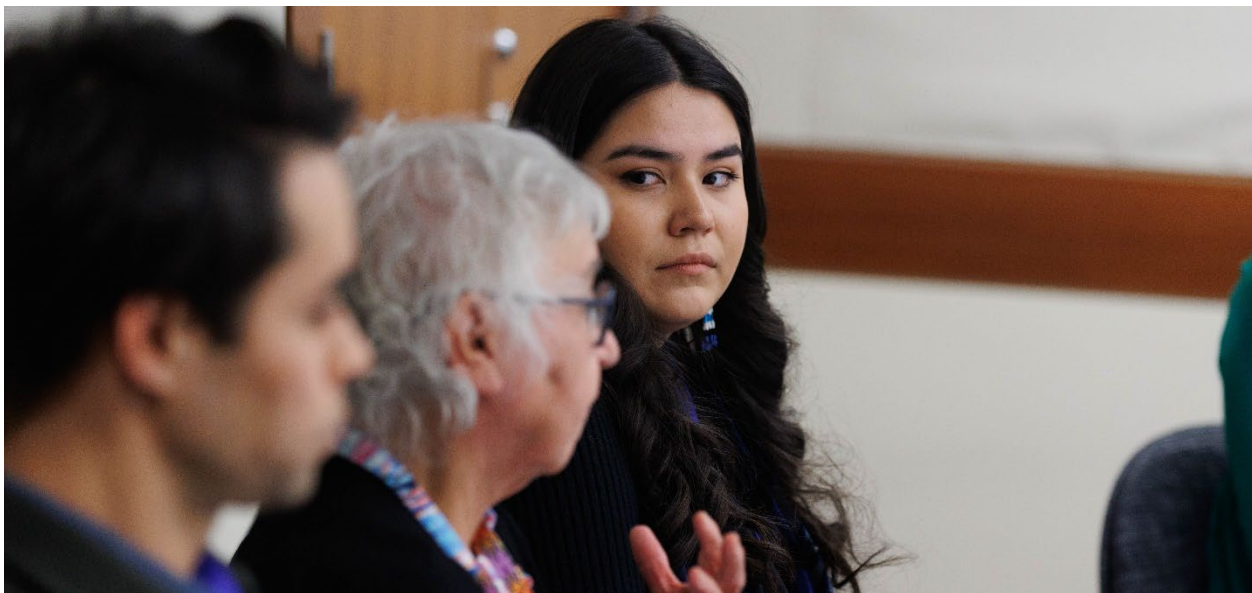


TALKING RESTORATION TECHNIQUES – THE BIG, THE SMALL AND THE INNOVATIONS

During the Technique Talks session, a small group connected over the nitty-gritty of addressing immediate watershed needs while staying aware of long-term or systemic challenges impacting their work. Participants came from small, on-the-ground teams, local governments, and larger organizations with

larger teams and projects across B.C. They shared background about their HWI projects and the challenges and successes of their work related to restoration, monitoring and planning. Key takeaways from the discussion included confirming that forums to connect with peers are critical to advancing the sector, and spent some time talking through what kind of format would be useful. Most agreed that topic-specific engagement would be most helpful. Both large and small organizations shared the challenge of securing funding to support both the planning (assessments, inventories, monitoring) and implementation of restoration work. The HWI requirement for shovel ready projects was recognized as a barrier to important “pre-shovel work”.

The group was appreciated of the opportunity to come together, learn about other work happening across the province, and swap contact information and resources. In fact, the group had such a good conversation, it continued long after the formal end of the session. It was a great conversation about “staying true to what the watershed needs”.



INCORPORATING INTERGENERATIONAL LEARNING INTO YOUR WATERSHED PROJECTS

This session was an opportunity for participants to hear from a panel on the importance of intergenerational learning and how the panelists incorporate this into their work. The panelists were: Mavis Underwood, Chair of the [Indigenous Leaders Advisory Circle](#) as well as the Chair of the Real Estate Foundation of B.C.'s board; Maiya Modeste, Project Coordinator of the P'hwulhp (Garry Oak) Restoration Project with the [Stqeeye' Learning Society](#); and George Van, a consultant who led youth engagement sessions for the Islands Trust [Freshwater Sustainability Strategy](#).

The panelists spoke about the importance of making meaningful connections between youth and elders and building a sense of belonging with community, family, language and history. This is especially important within Indigenous communities where those connections have been disrupted by colonization. Multigenerational learning benefits all ages: elders are happy and grateful to be able to pass on their knowledge and young people have the opportunity to learn in a safe, welcoming space from people who want to see them succeed. Getting out on the land and water can also contribute to having more informed discussions and open sharing while reconnecting to place. Some important protocols for doing this work

include sharing a meal together and providing fair, reciprocal compensation such as stipends, honoraria or gift cards.

Breakout Session 2: Connecting with Your Watershed Peers



CONNECTING WITH YOUR WATERSHED PEERS

The Regional breakout session was a chance for participants to connect with their peers from their regional watersheds. Tables were set up by major watershed basins for participant-led conversations. They used poster-sized maps of their watersheds to share where their HWI project took place and briefly describe their project. The participants had an opportunity to share significant barriers to project work, successes and identified if there were common threats to the health of their watersheds. The conversation also included a chance to brainstorm opportunities to collaborate or learn with others in the watershed, and build on the networking done throughout the HWI Symposium.

The session concluded with a brief share back of two key priorities for each of the regions. The Columbia-Okanagan group wanted to celebrate their “misunderstood beavers” and continue networking. The Skeena-Fraser group wanted to collaborate on a restoration database and strengthen consensus-based governance. The Pacific Coast group, which had the most members, suggested taking field trips to see each other’s work sites and connect again through a restoration-focused conference.