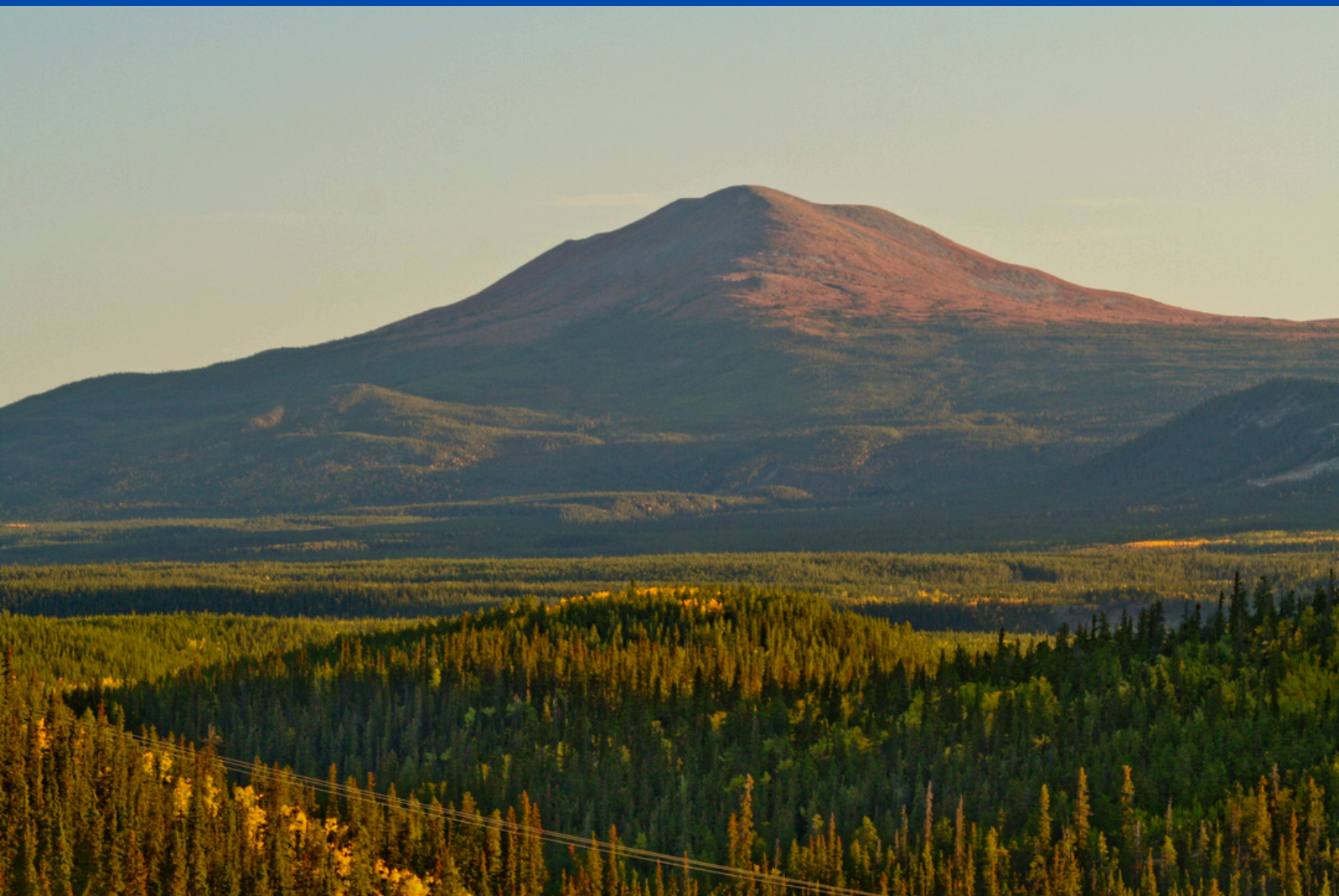


NORTHERN DIALOGUES: REMOTENESS AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN RURAL AND NORTHERN CANADA



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**YUKON UNIVERSITY,
WHITEHORSE, YUKON
MAY 21 - 24, 2024**

WELCOME!

Dear Conference Delegates,

On behalf of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, I am pleased to welcome you to Whitehorse, Yukon, and the Northern Dialogues Conference! Over the coming days, you'll hear diverse presentations from both our plenary and breakout speakers about the opportunities and challenges for sustainable livelihoods in rural, remote, and northern Canada. From our presenters and audience, there will be a mix of researchers, practitioners, and policy makers, all seeking to make rural and northern Canada stronger, more welcoming, and more resilient.

I look forward to spending the next three days with you. I would like to make a point of thanking our cohost, Yukon University, and all of our partners, sponsors, the conference organizing committee, staff, and volunteers at CRRF. We would not be gathered here if it was not for your unwavering support and tenacity to plan and implement such an event.

Sincerely,



Joshua Barrett
President
Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation/
Fondation canadienne pour la revitalisation rurale.
crrf.ca



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WELCOME!

Dear Conference Delegates,

On behalf of Whitehorse City Council, I'm pleased to welcome delegates of the Northern Dialogues Conference to Whitehorse, which is situated on the traditional territories of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council.

Exploring the challenges and opportunities facing Indigenous, northern and rural communities is increasingly important as we look to build sustainable communities in the face of a growing number of issues, from transportation and housing availability to technological innovation and climate change.

As the leading site of knowledge and research in the North, Yukon University is an excellent place to host the Northern Dialogues Conference. I am excited about the possibilities that will come from having so many people with diverse backgrounds together to focus on sustainable livelihoods in remote areas at this conference. You will also get a firsthand experience of the northern hospitality and beautiful surroundings of our wilderness city.

In addition to the discussions happening throughout the conference at YukonU, I encourage each of you to take in the afternoon excursions offered during the conference. Whitehorse is a vibrant city with an active arts and cultural scene, a rich variety of culinary offerings and plentiful access to nature through our extensive network of trails and parks. You can also meet local farmers and artisans at the Outdoor Fireweed Community Market at Shipyards Park.

All the best for a productive conference and enlightening discussions.



A blue ink handwritten signature of Laura Cabott.

Laura Cabott
Mayor of Whitehorse
whitehorse.ca



CONFERENCE THEME

REMOTENESS AND SUSTAINABLE LIVELIHOODS IN RURAL AND NORTHERN CANADA

Northern and rural communities are experiencing intensified effects of global crises related to health, climate, and the economy. Turbulence, uncertainty, and transitions caused by these crises are felt in particular ways that exacerbate these issues in rural socio-cultural, ecological, and economic systems. In this context, remoteness is a factor that influences processes of social and economic development.

The conference addresses the intersection of remoteness and sustainable livelihoods framed across three interrelated themes:

- 1) Innovation and community development
- 2) Education, health, and social systems;
- 3) Culture, heritage, and wellbeing.

Through the event and other outreach activities, we will generate discussions on policy and development practice in and for communities by leveraging the insights of researchers, policy makers, practitioners, Indigenous leaders, and community members who live in the provincial and territorial north. We hope that the dialogue generated is informative, thought-provoking, and useful for your work.

Check out details of all the outreach activities here, or by scanning below.



THANK YOU TO PROGRAM SUPPORTORS AND ORGANIZERS!

Kyle Rich

Brock University

Amanda Graham

Yukon University

Kristin Catherwood Mantta

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

Patrick Brouder

Thompson Rivers University

Joelena Leader

University of Saskatchewan

Audrey Giles

University of Ottawa

Agnieszka Pawłowska- Mainville

University of Northern British Columbia



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THANK YOU TO LOCAL SUPPORTERS

Yukon Conference Planners

Suzanne de la Barre
Conference Coordinator
Conference Program Support

Michele Genest – The Boreal Gourmet
Catering Coordinator – McBride Reception and KDCC Banquet
<https://www.borealgourmet.com/about>

Amanda Graham
Yukon University



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THANK YOU TO LOCAL SUPPORTERS

The conference coordinators and CRRF Northern Dialogues is grateful to the following service providers for their dedication to making the CRRF 2024 a great Yukon experience:

Luke Legault – Wandering Bison
McBride Reception Caterer
www.thewanderingbison.ca

Yukon First Nations Culture and
Tourism Association
[Walk with Us Guidelines](#)

Scott and Jackie Dickson – Takhini River
Ranch
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<https://localfarm.online>

[Tara Kolla](#) – The Wish Factory
Venue Decorator, Reception and
Banquet

Teena Dickson – Who What Where Tours
Excursions
<https://www.whitehorsetours.com/why-us/>

Rendez-Vous Society – NGO Fundraiser
Banquet Bar Volunteers

Yukon University Food Services
Lunch and Refreshment Breaks Caterer

F.H. Collins School– Dry Grad
Fundraiser
Reception Volunteers

We also wish to thank the following:

McBride Museum - Reception Venue

Kwanlin Dün Cultural Centre - Banquet Venue

Yukon University Northlight Centre - New Researcher Forum

La Petite Maison Crêperie - New Researcher Forum Refreshments

The Sternwheeler Hotel - Conference Accommodations

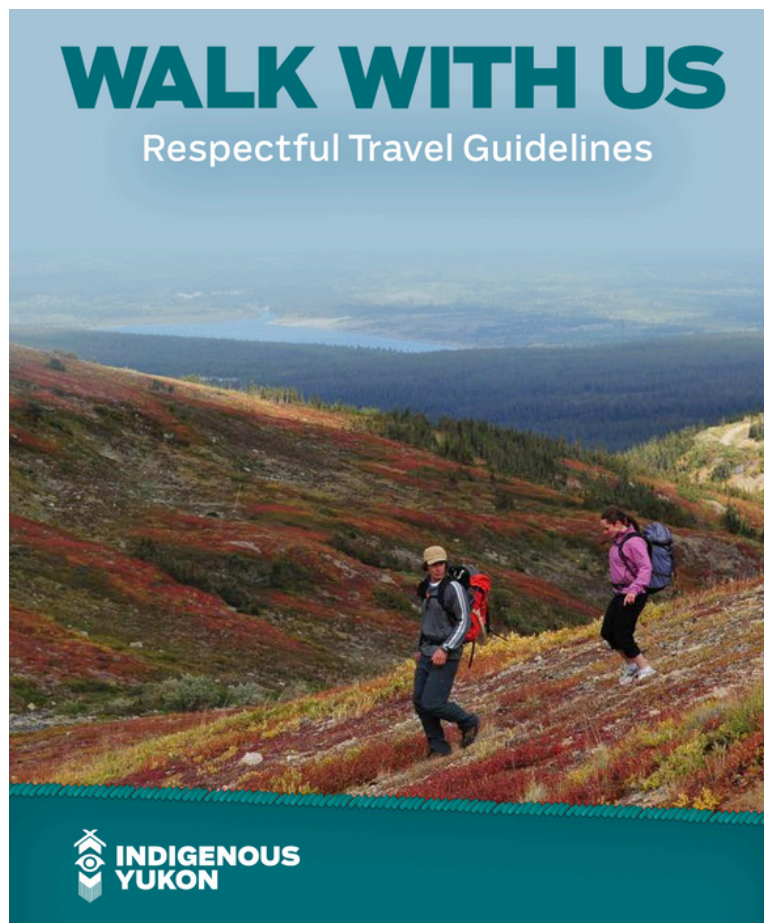
Standard Bus Company - Conference Shuttle

Plenary

WALK WITH US - RESPECTFUL TRAVEL GUIDELINES

The Yukon is home to 14 distinct First Nations and 8 language groups. These guidelines have been shared by First Nations Knowledge Keepers to teach all people about how to show respect when travelling through the Yukon. Our land is beautiful and our water is clean. Our land is everything. We are the stewards of this land and we all have a responsibility to care for this land for future generations. We honour our ancestors who shared their teachings with us so that we can now share them with you. We care for this land — the plants, water, air and animals — by showing it respect and treating it as an equal. As you travel through our beautiful homelands, we invite you to Ná t'sin t'ra "hold everything up in respect" - Northern Tutchone.

Yukon First Nations Culture and Tourism Association



Plenary

State of Rural Canada 5: Inclusive and Sustainable Futures for Rural and Northern Communities

The State of Rural Canada, now in its fifth iteration, is a nationwide report on the most pertinent issues facing rural, remote, and northern Canada. With contributions from every province and territory, the report continues to be a source of knowledge from sea to sea to sea. Each chapter shares the rural context in the region included before elaborating on specific rural themes of particular relevance to the region. In this session, speakers will share an overview of the State of Rural Canada report before hearing insights from a few of the chapter authors contributing to the fifth State of Rural Canada report.



Sarah Breen | Sarah is the Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development at Selkirk College and an Adjunct Professor with the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at University of Guelph. Her research interests include economic development, infrastructure and services, natural resource management, resilience, and policy – all with a rural lens. Sarah's work ranges from applied projects with a range of community partners in the Kootenay region of SE BC to national projects with colleagues across Canada.



Sean Markey | Sean is a professor and certified planner with the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University. Sean's research concerns issues of local and regional economic development, rural and small-town development, nature-first planning, and sustainable infrastructure. He has published widely in academic journals and has co-authored/edited numerous books. Sean continues to work with municipalities, non-profit organizations, Indigenous communities, and the business community to promote and develop sustainable forms of community and regional development.



Dr. Heather Hall | Heather is an Associate Professor and the Academic Director of the Master of Economic Development and Innovation program at the University of Waterloo. She holds a PhD in Geography and specializes in economic development and technology impacts in rural and Northern areas. Her work influences policies in Canada and internationally, and she leads significant research projects such as Remote Controlled. Heather also co-authored *Planning Canadian Regions*, 2nd Edition, and chairs the Northern Policy Institute's Research Advisory Board.



Amanda Graham | Amanda is the Chair of the School of Liberal Arts at Yukon University. She was the first graduate of Yukon College's Northern Studies Diploma and then embarked on a Masters in Northern History at Lakehead. In 1992, while still working on her thesis, she joined Yukon College as the second managing editor of *The Northern Review*, the first Canadian multidisciplinary journal of the arts and social sciences of the North published north of 60. She became a senior editor of the Northern Review in 2002.

Plenary

Becoming: The Story of YukonU, Canada's First University North of 60.

This session will feature YukonU's transition from a community college to a university through the lens of reconciliation, as one way to re-imagine research and program development. In particular, it will highlight how the university's plan for reconciliation through re-education draws from Indigenous pedagogical practices and is designed to honour and uphold the dream of Yukon First Nations leaders for "a university in the Yukon," Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow, 1973. The panelists will address the university's efforts to align Yukon University's Research Centre into the faculties, develop a culture of ethical research more broadly, and the university's path to build new degrees.



Dr. Shelagh Rowles

Provost and Vice-President Academic
Yukon University



Gàgala-łiłətko Nadia Joe

Associate Vice-President, Reconciliation
Yukon University



Dr. Fiona Schmiegelow

Dean, Applied Science and Management
Yukon University



Moderator: Kyle Rich

Associate Professor,
Brock University

DETAILED CONFERENCE PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND - MORNING SESSIONS I

9:00 – 9:45 AM	PLENARY SESSION – WALK WITH US - RESPECTFUL TRAVE; GUIDELINES YUKON FIRST NATIONS CULTURE AND TOURISM ASSOCIATION
9:50 AM – 10:10 AM	BRAIDING FOOD SYSTEMS: CO-CONSTRUCTING SUSTAINABLE SEED SYSTEMS WITH NORTHERN ONTARIO FIRST NATIONS CHARLOTTE POTTER, SILVIA SARAPURA, PAUL BENALCAZAR, ANNETTE PELTIER-FLAMAND AND CORINA THOMPSON
10:15 AM – 10:35 AM	TELEMEDICINE BENEFITS AND CHALLENGES IN RURAL AND REMOTE PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY VANESSA DE COPPI, NANCY LIGHTFOOT, AND EMILY DONATO
10:40 AM - 11:00 AM	CO-DESIGNING ACCESSIBLE SPORT, RECREATION, AND LEISURE OPPORTUNITIES WITH UGPI'GANJIG AND THE TOWN OF HERON BAY, NEW BRUNSWICK: LESSONS FROM THE RECREAPLEX JULIA FRIGAULT, COLLEEN GAUVIN, AND JACKIE ONCESCU

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND - MORNING SESSIONS II

11:30 AM – 11:50 AM	INUIT COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE SHARING IN RECREATION LEILA KELLEHER, QUMANGAAPIK ARNATSIAQ AND SHERRI BRANSCOMBE
11:50 AM – 12:10 PM	MULTIPLE LOGICS IN RURAL MUNICIPAL RECREATION: THE CASE OF COCHRANE AND TIMISKAMING DISTRICTS TAMMY BORGENT-FLOOD AND KYLE RICH

12:10 PM – 12:30 PM	<p>CLOSING THE GAP: HOW 2+1 ROADS CAN SAVE TIME, LIVES, AND MONEY</p> <p>WILLIAM DUNSTAN</p>
12:30 PM - 1:30 PM	<p><u>VIRTUAL ATTENDEE MEET & GREET</u></p> <p>HTTPS://US06WEB.ZOOM.US/J/89241686299? PWD=X7EiIlA5WGDRMWQV4UTTBJI7R98R7L1</p>

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD - MORNING SESSIONS I

9:00 - 10:00 AM	<p>PLENARY SESSION - STATE OF RURAL CANADA 5</p>
10:10 AM – 10:30 AM	<p>EMPOWERING MANITOBA: COMMUNITY BROADBAND INITIATIVES, DIGITAL ADOPTION, AND PRIORITIES FOR DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION IN ALL CORNERS OF THE PROVINCE.</p> <p>WAYNE KELLY, JOEL TEMPLEMAN, FALLON BROOKS, AND KALIN CONTOIS</p>
10:30 AM – 10:50 AM	<p>“EEYOUU ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ MEECHUM IS EVERYTHING” FINDING ᑭᑦ ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ MIYO PIMÂTISIWIN ᑭᑦᑭᑦᑭ MEECHUM: THE GOOD LIFE OF FOOD IN EEYOUUCH WAYS OF KNOWING</p> <p>STEPHEN PENNER</p>

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD - MORNING SESSIONS II

11:30 AM – 11:50 AM	<p>REFLECTING RURAL REALITIES IN FEDERAL PROGRAMS AND POLICIES: THE CENTRE FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AT INNOVATION, SCIENCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CANADA</p> <p>DARROCH HARROP</p>
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11:50 AM – 12:10 PM	<p>A COMMUNITY-BASED RESILIENCY ASSESSMENT FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN THE YUKON</p> <p>AJA MASON, YUKON STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL; SARA MCPHEE-KNOWLES, YUKON UNIVERSITY; JORDAN ASLETT, YUKON UNIVERSITY; AND LISA KANARY, YUKON UNIVERSITY</p>
12:10 PM – 12:30 PM	<p>CO-DESIGNING COMMUNITY SPORT AND RECREATION PROVISIONS IN RURAL AND REMOTE NEW BRUNSWICK</p> <p>JACKIE ONCESCU AND JULIA FRIGAULT</p>
<p>THURSDAY, MAY 23RD - AFTERNOON SESSIONS I</p>	
1:30 PM – 1:50 PM	<p>FIRST NATION PEOPLE ON INDIAN (ACT) RESERVES FACE BARRIERS FROM DIFFERENT EDUCATION ACCESS</p> <p>SHIRLEY THOMPSON</p>
1:50 PM – 2:10 PM	<p>VITAMIN D IN THE NORTH</p> <p>DR. ANDY ROEBUCK</p>
<p>FRIDAY, MAY 23RD - MORNING SESSIONS I</p>	
9:00 AM - 9:20 AM	<p>NAVIGATING HEALTHCARE ACCESS IN NORTHERN BRITISH COLUMBIA: A SCOPING REVIEW FOR REMOTE, RURAL, AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES</p> <p>JULIA CAMPOS CLIMACO</p>
9:20 AM - 9:40 AM	<p>EXPLORING FOOD HUBS AS A VEHICLE FOR BUILDING RESILIENT LOCAL FOOD SYSTEMS</p> <p>SARAH BREEN, LINDSAY HARRIS, AND DAMON CHOUINARD</p>
9:40 AM - 10:00 AM	<p>INDIGENIZING AND DECOLONIZING DATA COLLECTION ON HOUSELESSNESS</p> <p>LINDA BERNICKI</p>

10:00 AM – 10:20 AM

COMPARISON OF RURAL TOWNS WITH AND WITHOUT RAILWAY
LINES

PRESCOTT C. ENSIGN

FRIDAY, MAY 23RD - MORNING SESSIONS II

10:50 AM – 11:10 AM

BUILDING CAPACITY IN NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN THROUGH
HIGHER EDUCATION AND GLOBAL PARTNERSHIPS

EMMY STAVOSTRAND NEULS

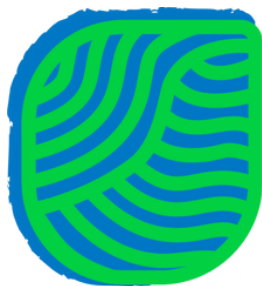
11:10 AM - 12:10 PM
(WORKSHOP)

USING COMMUNITY DATA TO TELL LOCAL STORIES ABOUT RURAL
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

MICHEL FROJMOVIC, JAYME JONES, RACHEL LEWIS, AND WILLIAM
DUNSTAN

12:20 PM – 1:00 PM

PLENARY
BECOMING: THE STORY OF YUKONU, CANADA'S FIRST UNIVERSITY
NORTH OF 60



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PRESENTATION ABSTRACTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND - MORNING SESSIONS I

Time: 9:50 am –10:10 am

Title: Braiding Food Systems: Co-Constructing Sustainable Seed Systems with Northern Ontario First Nations

Presenters: Charlotte Potter, University of Guelph; Silvia Sarapura, University of Guelph; Paul Benalcazar, University of Guelph; Annette PeltierFlamand; and Corina Thompson

Cold weather and harsh northern climates combined with colonial oppression, racism and marginalization experienced by Indigenous communities in Canada have limited the capacity and presence of food growing in Northern Ontario First Nations. Climate and land-use change and natural resource exploitation threaten local food systems (hunting, fishing, gathering), while rising food and transport costs impact access to purchased foods in northern communities. Responding to calls from First Nations leaders for greater support for food production to complement existing food systems, Braiding Food Systems is a three-year collaborative research project (University of Guelph, Wiikwemikong Unceded Territory, Nokiwin Tribal Council, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs). Four Ontario communities (Pic Mobert, Fort Williams, Rocky Bay, Wiikwemikong) will collaborate to 'rematriate' Indigenous seeds and food growing practices while learning through action to build capacity and strengthen Indigenous food sovereignty and food security. This presentation outlines activities, progress and outcomes from year-one of this research project, describing the relationship building process and actions taken to ensure equity and collaboration in research. We will present our workplan and strategy for year 2 and 3, proposed approach to data collection, capacity strengthening, and sustainability; and key considerations for collaborative research.

Time: 10:15 am –10:35 am

Title: Telemedicine Benefits and Challenges in Rural and Remote Pediatric Cardiology

Presenters: Vanessa De Coppi, Laurentian University; Nancy Lightfoot, Laurentian University; and Emily Donato, Laurentian University

Canadian pediatric cardiology patients living in rural and remote areas face significant barriers to accessing healthcare services that are disproportionately greater than those in urban areas. Such barriers to care result in delayed diagnoses and treatment, unnecessary transportation, inferior healthcare outcomes, financial strain, and separation from family. Telecardiology has the potential to improve access to care for these patients. The goal of this research was to understand the impacts of telecardiology on (a) access to care, and (b) health outcomes for pediatric patients in rural and remote areas of Canada, including patient and caregiver perceptions and experiences, as well as social, financial, and health system outcomes. Whittlemore and Knaf's (2005) integrative review methodology was used to synthesize a diverse range of existing literature about the application of pediatric telecardiology in rural and remote settings. The theory of access proposed by Penchansky and Thomas (1981) guided this study to understand the degree of fit between patients and their caregivers, and telecardiology. The results of this research indicated that telecardiology improved access to specialist services for pediatric patients living in rural and remote underserved areas. By reducing the need to travel for specialist services, telecardiology allowed for timely diagnoses and treatment decisions, better health outcomes, and reduced direct and indirect costs for patients and their families. There was a high upfront financial investment required for the technology and specialized equipment used in telecardiology. Over time, telecardiology can result in reduced hospitalization rates and more effective use of healthcare resources. Barriers to its integration into the healthcare system include insufficient technological infrastructure in rural and remote areas, high initial telemedicine program costs, lack of health literacy, provider licensure challenges, and billing and reimbursement issues. Future policies must prioritize investments in rural healthcare infrastructure and address regulatory challenges to ensure equitable access to telecardiology.

Time: 10:40 am –11:00 am

Title: Co-designing Accessible Sport, Recreation, and Leisure Opportunities with Ugpi'ganjig and the Town of Heron Bay, New Brunswick: Lessons from the Recreaplex

Presenters: Julia Frigault, University of New Brunswick; Jackie Oncescu, University of New Brunswick; and Colleen Gauvin, Mi'gmaq Elder, Ugpi'ganjig

Research suggests that sport, recreation, and leisure (SRL) has historically and currently been sites of inequality, racism, and colonialism in Indigenous peoples being unable to participate in predominantly Eurocentric SRL opportunities. The Mi'gmaq community members of Ugpi'ganjig (Eel River Bar First Nation) are no exception and have experienced barriers that prevent them from participating in SRL in northern New Brunswick (NB). The most noted constraints were unwelcoming SRL facilities, fear of judgment, and a lack of information on available programs/services. To confront these challenges, the Reimagining Access to Sport, Recreation, and Leisure (RASRL) team used human-centred design and community-based participatory action research to bring together Ugpi'ganjig Elders and staff from the Town of Heron's Bay Recreaplex to co-create solutions to address the barriers that prevented Elders from accessing and participating in the Recreaplex's programs. Through a collaborative co-design experience, a Mi'gmaq Elder and Recreaplex staff organized a bus trip to the Recreaplex to connect Elders and staff while learning about SRL opportunities available at the facility. This presentation aims to share the findings of this co-designed process and how it can support a sense of belonging and dignified access to community recreation facilities for Indigenous peoples in northern NB.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22ND - MORNING SESSIONS II

Time: 11:30 am –11:50 am

Title: Inuit Community Knowledge Sharing in Recreation

Presenters: Leila Kelleher, Parsons School of Design; Qumangaapik Arnatsiaq, Recreation Director, Hamlet of Igloodik (Nunavut); Sherri Branscombe, Humber College (Ontario)

The 25 Inuit communities of Nunavut exclusively rely on fly-in access, limiting opportunities for knowledge and skill-sharing in recreation. One exception is the Recreation and Parks Association of Nunavut (RPAN) yearly training conference with participants from across the Territory. Based on our involvement in previous conferences, we observed a desire to exchange knowledge and experiences that embraced an Inuit-specific approach that could be applied to recreation in the North. The recreation leaders observed that practices and trainings from southern Canada may not always be applicable in the unique context of Nunavut. In 2019, we facilitated the process to share Inuit- and Nunavut-specific practices and traditions for planning recreation events and sports tournaments. In this presentation we will discuss the process we used to facilitate identification and synthesis of best-practices in Nunavut recreation. We produced a physical resource that could be used in the planning of events and tournaments in the North. The resource was offered in four languages, and designed with artwork that was conceptualized by the Indigenous leaders. The decks were distributed to the leaders and training on how to use the cards was delivered at the 2022 RPAN conference. In this presentation, we will discuss the process of creating, developing, and using the card decks in day to day work as a recreation leader.

Time: 11:30 am –11:50 am

Title: Multiple Logics in Rural Municipal Recreation: The Case of Cochrane and Timiskaming Districts

Presenters: Tammy Borgen-Flood, Brock University; and Kyle Rich, Brock University

Despite the recognized benefits of municipal parks and recreation services, research on their delivery in rural and northern areas remains scarce. Given the challenges faced by rural municipal governments in attempting to provide these essential services with less resources, understanding the factors that influence the delivery and policy of municipal recreation is vital for enhancing citizens' quality of life. In this research, we draw from a case study of Cochrane and Timiskaming Districts. Data were collected through document analysis and analyzed using a deductive analysis process informed by institutional theory. The research explored the logics (i.e., beliefs and assumptions related to policy) that underpin decision-making regarding recreation service delivery in Northeastern Ontario. The findings highlighted that multiple logics drive field-level practices within municipal recreation. We suggest that policymakers strategically align their ways of operating with these logics to gain resources required to develop and implement programs. In conclusion, we highlight a need for municipal recreation organizations to develop policy that is aligned with their respective municipal governments. We will offer both practical and theoretical implications of our work.

Time: 12:10 am –12:30 am

Title: Closing the Gap: How 2+1 Roads can Save Time, Lives, and Money

Presenters: William Dunstan, Northern Policy Institute

In 2023, Northern Policy Institute published a report concluding that 2+1 roads offer a more cost-effective approach to upgrading major highways in Northern Ontario than highway twinning. 2+1 roads are three-lane roads with one lane in each direction and a passing lane alternating direction every few kilometres, along with a median barrier separating the two directions of traffic. The 2+1 model offers similar safety benefits to highway twinning but is less expensive because it does not require the construction of a second, parallel road. By offering more frequent and safer passing opportunities and reducing the number of road closures due to collisions, 2+1 roads can also improve traffic flow on transportation routes that are critical for rural and northern communities and national supply chains. Tested and proven internationally, 2+1 roads can represent the ideal road configuration on highways across rural and northern Canada where traffic levels are too high for a two-lane road but too low to justify the cost of a divided, four-lane highway. Drawing on the NPI publication, this presentation will discuss how 2+1 roads work, their advantages over alternative road configurations, and the locations where they tend to work best.

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD - MORNING SESSIONS I

Time: 10:10 am –10:30 am

Title: Empowering Manitoba: Community Broadband Initiatives, Digital Adoption, and Priorities for Digital Transformation in all corners of the Province.

Presenters: Wayne Kelly, Rural Development Institute (Brandon University); Joel Templeman, Fallon Brooks; and Kalin Contois, Rural Development Institute (Brandon University)

Digital technologies are critical to sustainable livelihoods in rural, northern and remote Canada. The Rural Development Institute (RDI) and Internet Society Manitoba Chapter (ISOC MB) are partnering on an initiative that explores digital challenges related to connectivity and digital development in rural, northern and remote Manitoba. Our study employs a multifaceted approach, investigating digital infrastructure, community broadband initiatives, digital adoption, and digital capacity-building practices. Within rural, northern and remote contexts, our objectives include identifying and learning from successful and unsuccessful community-based connectivity initiatives and establishing an inventory of digital services in underserved areas. Integral to our project is the creation of a podcast series that amplifies the voices from all corners of Manitoba, showcasing their digital journey. This platform allows community members, policymakers, and digital service providers to share experiences, challenges, and successes, contributing to a rich digital transformation narrative across the province. Our presentation will discuss the challenges and opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and knowledge sharing in addressing the digital divide and potential within rural, northern and remote communities.

Time: 12:10 am –12:30 am

Title: Co-designing Community Sport and Recreation Provisions in Rural and Remote New Brunswick

Presenters: Jackie Oncescu, University of New Brunswick; and Julia Frigault, University of New Brunswick

Evidence suggests participation in community sport and recreation (CSR) can reduce the effects of poverty and improve the health and well-being of equity-owed residents. However, rural communities often face challenges associated with limited access to critical services, including healthcare and social infrastructure, scarcity of public transportation, larger distances to centralized service centres and limited broadband internet connections, further compounding the difficulties in enhancing participation in CSR for equity-owed rural residents. Rural CSR providers also encounter difficulties implementing and integrating sport and recreation policy goals, such as access and inclusion, due to a lack of knowledge, staff, developed and managed recreation resources and services, and funding. To confront these challenges, New Brunswick's Reimagining Access to Sport, Recreation and Leisure program used human-centred design and community-based participatory action research to bring together equity-owed rural residents, CSR providers and poverty reduction stakeholders to co-create design, implement and evaluate innovative community tactics meant to address barriers to participating in rural CSR. This presentation aims to share the findings of this co-designed collaborative process and the lessons learned when addressing social and economic inequities in rural and remote communities in New Brunswick.

THURSDAY, MAY 23RD - AFTERNOON SESSIONS I

Time: 1:30 pm –1:50 pm

Title: First Nation people on Indian (Act) reserves face barriers from different education access

Presenters: Shirley Thompson, Natural Resources Institute (University of Manitoba)

To resolve the housing crisis on reserves, educational opportunities are needed on Indian reserves to educate First Nations people to become skilled housebuilders, architects, engineers, designers, housing managers and emergency managers. Educational opportunities for housing education are limited on Indian reserves, starting in secondary school, without carpentry, welding, mechanic and other apprenticeship programs, which occur in most schools off-reserve. These on-reserve secondary school systems limited offerings impact postsecondary admission, often requiring students to wait until 21 years to be admitted as mature students. Low postsecondary participation rates for First Nations people on reserves indicate barriers to access. These reserves are under the Indian Act and under federal jurisdiction but public colleges and universities are subsidized by the province. Most Indian reserves are large distances from universities and colleges, but distance and remote learning provides possibilities for access. Manitoba recently in 2023/24 started four learning hubs on 63 Indian reserves- this provides limited access but shows the possibilities. Postsecondary education is also very expensive with in-person education cohort on-reserve costing twice or three times that of Canadian tuition rates, as public universities and colleges can charge cost-recovery and make profit on Indian reserves.

Time: 1:50 pm –2:10 pm

Title: Vitamin D in the North

Presenters: Dr. Andy Roebuck, Yukon University

There is considerable need for focused mental health and neuroscience research in the North. Research and approaches developed elsewhere often fail to consider or otherwise address the unique needs and resiliencies of Northern communities. This is particularly concerning as environmental, social, and cultural factors are known to contribute to overall mental wellness and neurological health. We're currently developing a research program to look at the impacts of vitamin D on mental wellness and neurological health in the North. Most individuals think of vitamin D in the context of bone health, however, there are also well-established connections between vitamin D and the health of the nervous system. As vitamin D is produced following exposure to sunlight, Northern communities are particularly at risk from deficiencies. This talk will briefly describe the connection between vitamin D and mental wellbeing and discuss areas of upcoming research.

FRIDAY, MAY 24TH - MORNING SESSIONS I

Time: 9:00 am –9:20 am

Title: Navigating Healthcare Access in Northern British Columbia: A Scoping Review for Remote, Rural, and Indigenous Communities

Presenters: Julia Campos Climaco, Northern Centre for Clinical Research (NCCR)

The ongoing scoping review investigates the medical journeys from remote, rural, and Indigenous communities in Northern British Columbia, focusing on barriers and facilitators people encounter and the present state of the literature. The central question is: What is known about the pathways and challenges to healthcare access for people from remote, rural, and Indigenous communities in Northern British Columbia, including barriers and facilitators to these medical journeys? The region is characterized by geographic, cultural, and systemic factors contributing to healthcare disparities. Preliminary findings highlight the complexities of healthcare delivery, notably the reliance on emergency services for primary care due to geographic and logistical challenges, inadequate integration of services and shortage of healthcare professionals. Regarding Indigenous populations, cultural and linguistic barriers and structural racism deepen the challenges and restrict healthcare services. As the scoping review advances, it will concentrate on determining gaps and identifying areas where further study is required to establish a comprehensive understanding of the documented pathways to healthcare access and the persistent challenges. This will inform future directions to explore innovative solutions and improvements in healthcare accessibility for remote, rural, and Indigenous communities in Northern British Columbia.

Time: 9:20 am –9:40 am

Title: Exploring Food Hubs as a vehicle for building resilient local food systems

Presenters: Sarah Breen, Selkirk College; Lindsay Harris, UBCO & Kamloops Food Policy Council; Damon Chouinard, Central Kootenay Food Policy Council

Food systems around the world face unprecedented threats from climate change to global distribution and supply chain issues. At the local level challenges range from the accessibility and affordability of local food to limited capacity for production, aggregation, and distribution. These challenges can be particularly acute in rural, remote, and northern communities. In the face of these threats and challenges, alternative food networks are emerging as an opportunity to build more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable local food systems. Across British Columbia, community food hubs have emerged as one form of alternative food networks. This presentation will summarize the first year of a project exploring the role(s) that food hubs play within local food systems, investigating BC's unique approach to food hubs and if and how food hubs contribute to food system resilience. Findings will include emerging patterns and trends from a provincial food hub community of practice, as well as an in-depth exploration of two case study regions - the Kootenays and Kamloops regions. While the research is taking place within British Columbia, the presentation will include food hub examples from other jurisdictions, and a discussion focused on potential applicability and transferability of findings to remote and northern communities.

Time: 9:40 am –10:00 am

Title: Indigenizing and Decolonizing Data Collection on Houselessness

Presenters: Linda Bernicki, Rural Development Network (RDN)

RDN's presentation will provide participants with an insight into the co-creation of a culturally appropriate data collection tool that is community informed, built, and understands best practices to engage with Indigenous communities. We will share our journey about Indigenizing and decolonizing data collection on houselessness through co-creating a First Nations-focused and led, culturally informed, adaptable data tool that will estimate houselessness in communities. Our presentation will also discuss the historic and current state of displacement, inaccurate, misrepresented, and misinformed data collection surrounding Indigenous Peoples across Canada. We will discuss why current data collection tools do not resonate with Indigenous communities due to their largely colonial frameworks. We will provide insights and knowledge around transforming the way communities should collect and share data that includes Indigenous People - under the ethical framework of The Fundamentals of OCAP. Our team will share how our project has consulted with First Nations Peoples and communities across Canada to inform the co-creation of the data collection tool. Participants will gain an understanding of the importance of culturally appropriate data collection methodologies that resonate with First Nation Peoples and communities. As well as the importance of "By Indigenous, For Indigenous" projects.

Time: 10:00 am –10:20 am

Title: Comparison of Rural Towns With and Without Railway Lines

Presenters: Prescott C. Ensign, Wilfrid Laurier University

Prior to 1990 the Canadian National (CN) and Canadian Pacific (CP) railways owned and operated hundreds of short distanced branch lines that provided rural and northern communities across Canada with freight transport to and from there mainlines. However, changes in federal government policy permitted CN and CP to sell, salvage or abandon thousands of kilometers of unprofitable branch lines with no guarantee of continued service to these communities. Although this change would benefit CN and CP - eliminating the cost of serving shippers in low density areas that required federal subsidies – it would create economic hardship for the remote areas served by the branch lines. Over the past three decades what happened to these towns at the "end of the line"? How did some manage to keep running their short line railways? What happened to others that did not? Did it make a difference with or without rail service? This presentation offers some comparative case studies that suggest answers to these and other questions.

Time: 10:50 am –11:10 am

Title: Building Capacity in Northern Saskatchewan through Higher Education and Global Partnerships

Presenters: Emmy Stavostrand Neuls, Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy

The joint Master of Governance and Entrepreneurship in Northern and Indigenous Areas (GENI) was created with the intent to build capacity for northern and Indigenous communities with relevant programming and learning to encourage sustainable futures. The program is delivered through a partnership between Johnson Shoyama Graduate school of Public Policy at the University of Saskatchewan, and the Centre for Sami Studies at UiT the Arctic University of Norway. The GENI program was built with the lessons provided by the Master of Northern Governance and Development (MNGD) that had launched after wide consultation with Northern Saskatchewan Indigenous communities and northern stakeholders (Conference Board of Canada, 2016). The conversation with a wide range of stakeholders identified the core elements of the program and focussed on the opportunity to share between northern and Indigenous communities in effort to build local knowledge capacity to deal with northern challenges and opportunities. The GENI program provided a larger global programmatic scope and expanded the regional focus to include all the Circumpolar North. Learning is facilitated by providing comparative international lessons across the Northern region and among Indigenous communities, and through two intense in-person international community-based field schools (GENI Study Plan, 2020).

With the unique development, delivery and focus, the GENI program provides lessons for higher education institutions, governments and practitioners working to ensure the sustainability and wellbeing of northern communities. The paper will highlight three lessons from the GENI program and partnerships 1) relevant programming for local, remote, and northern communities, 2) building partnerships for improving program delivery and opportunities; and 3) embracing innovation in higher education to support Northern communities. Sharing lessons support the continued commitment to building thriving northern and Indigenous communities.

Time: 11:10 am –12:10 am

Title: Using Community Data to tell Local Stories About Rural Community Development

Presenters: Michel Frojmovic, Community Data Program, Canadian Community Economic Development Network; Jayme Jones, Researcher, Selkirk College, BC; Rachel Lewis, Data Analysis Coordinator, City of Kawartha Lakes; and William Dunstan, Lead Researcher, Northern Policy Institute.

Data has emerged as a key asset for informed decision-making in social planning and economic development. However, rural and small communities face unique challenges due to both limited availability of credible data and the capacity to use it.

This moderated panel will explore the role of the Community Data Program (CDP) in bridging this data gap. Hosted by the Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNet), the CDP focuses on acquiring data for Canada's smallest geographies and building local capacity to use data to track and report on community well-being. The CDP enables rural and small communities to better understand local demographics, collect insights on the characteristics of local employers; examine local labour force trends; and take stock of local housing markets. The breadth of credible and detailed data available at the community-level for rural and remote Canada may be surprising to some, but understanding the data needs of municipalities big and small has been the CDP's mandate for close to 15 years.

The panel is tailored towards community planners, policymakers and practitioners involved in social and economic development initiatives, interested in leveraging local-level data. Drawing on their experience of accessing and leveraging data available from the CDP, members of the panel will refer to specific data tables, maps, and infographics available from the CDP catalogue.

The panel will explain how to make better use of an existing membership in the CDP, or to understand the value of joining the largest non-profit membership-based initiative designed exclusively to address the data needs of Canadian municipal and community sector organisations.