

STANDING BESIDE ARCTIC COMMUNITIES

PHOTO: WILLIAN JUSTEN DE VASCONCELLOS

“Whether it’s plastic pollution, chemical pollution, climate change or biodiversity loss, Arctic communities bear a disproportionate burden of damage.”

Sabaa Khan, Director, Climate and Quebec

On May 12 and 13, climate director Sabaa Khan and respirologist Faiz Ahmad Khan presented research at the Institut Nordique du Québec’s annual symposium, this year on the theme of health-climate-environment.

The Arctic has long been viewed as a space for competition and resource exploitation. This has left deep scars in the region’s social, cultural and environmental fabric.

Poverty rates are significantly higher than in the rest of Canada, housing is often overcrowded and inadequate and access to drinking water remains unequal. Inuit women have significantly higher levels than southern populations of toxic PFAS in their breast milk — one

example of how industrial chemical contamination choices impose a burden on people who have nothing to do with them.

For decades, Inuit communities have been alerting world governments to the existential threats they face that also have global implications. Thanks to their efforts and others, laws are changing and more, diverse voices are being heard at decision-making tables.

Donors like you helped land Canada’s first law on environmental justice and enshrine the right to a healthy environment in the Canadian Environmental Protection Act. These provide ways to demand environmental policies that consider Arctic peoples’ unique living conditions, the persistent contaminants that threaten their health and protection of the ecosystems on which their way of life depends.

To read the full article: dsfdn.org/protect-the-arctic

VISUALIZING THE SCIENCE OF BIODIVERSITY



PHOTO: AMBRE GIOVANNI

You supported Root for Nature, an 80-minute exhibition we produced in collaboration with the National Geographic Society. In June, it won the prestigious Numix Prize in the international in situ experience category.

Inspired by the COP15 agreement on biodiversity signed in Montreal in December 2022, Root for Nature

opened in February 2024. It immerses people in Earth’s ecosystems, showing how each element forms an essential part of the web of life.

The Numix Awards recognize excellence in digital creativity in Quebec, celebrating innovative projects that push the boundaries of imagination and technology.

PROVING CANADA MUST SEE THE FORESTS AND NOT JUST THE TREES

Canada has 10 per cent of the planet’s forests. We’re also the world’s largest net exporter of wood products.

Research you made possible shows that to fulfill its international commitments to halt and reverse forest degradation by 2030, Canada must first admit it has a problem.

Key findings show that current forest management practices throughout Canada:

- **Fragment primary forests.** Roads linked to logging and other industrial development disrupt predator-prey relationships, increase wildlife deaths from road collisions and lead to overexploitation of fish and wildlife.

- **Destroy old-growth.** Logging has led to a higher proportion of younger forest stands than would be expected with natural disturbance. This leads to poorer habitats for species such as caribou, American marten, flying squirrels and boreal chickadees.

- **Degrade habitats.** Boreal caribou continue to sharply decline. Logging has also led to local extinction of the spotted owl in British Columbia and to losses of mature-forest bird communities in Canada’s boreal forests. Sediment from logging roads negatively affects fish habitats.

- **Diminish climate resiliency.** Clearcut logging unearths carbon stored in forest soils and increases the risk

of extreme flooding. Wildfires were shown to start more often in forests with more area recently harvested and start less frequently in forests that had recent fires.

Read the report here: dsfdn.org/forest-degradation-report



PHOTO: TWIGYMULEFORD VIA ISTOCK

UNDRESSING FAST FASHION



An alarming number of discarded clothing items — usually made from synthetic materials that don’t biodegrade — end up in landfills.

The planet is paying the price for a fashion industry driven to keep costs low and keep up with changing trends. Excessive production and consumption, poor-quality clothing and inadequate recycling are all contributing to a major environmental crisis.

- An item of clothing is only worn seven to 10 times on average before being thrown away.
- The fashion industry produces more greenhouse gas emissions than international flights and shipping combined.
- Through all the stages of production until it lands on a person’s body, a single piece of clothing can travel 40,000 kilometres — the equivalent of travelling around the world!

Thanks to you, communications and engagement specialist Laurence Bolduc led a workshop to teach youth about fast fashion’s environmental, social and economic issues and empower them to make informed, sustainable choices.

Her presentation on April 22, 2025, “Towards zero waste in fashion and textiles,” addressed overconsumption, working conditions in the textile industry and clothing’s ecological footprint. The event was part of a week of Earth Day–related activities, during which the students ran a thrift store open to the public.

MAPPING CITIES TO BOOST CLIMATE RESILIENCE

To adapt to climate change, cities must reconsider their planning. Instead of traditional grey infrastructure (roads, buildings, sewers, etc.), they need to incorporate more green spaces, trees and waterways that help regulate temperature, reduce floods and improve air quality.

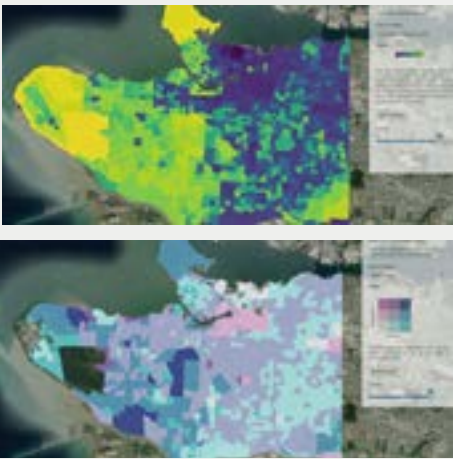
But first they need data.

You made it possible for us to partner with environmental solutions platform developer Habitat to review and graph ecosystem services in five pilot cities: Gatineau, Ottawa, Quebec City, Saskatoon and Vancouver.

Habitat produced easy-to-use interactive maps showing the health of urban natural assets, threats they face and their advantages to residents. Map layers show parks, wetlands, woodlands and canopy cover, and public access to open spaces such as cemeteries and golf courses.

In February, we demonstrated the project to local government representatives. This tool is designed to help them recognize, prioritize and protect natural systems that have significant — and often overlooked or misunderstood — community benefits.

Learn more here: dsfdn.org/natural-infrastructure



IMAGES: HABITAT

Natural infrastructure can be especially valuable for lower-income communities with limited access. Yellow map areas on the top show maximum ecological value (trees, woods and wetlands) in the City of Vancouver, grading to dark purple with minimum benefit. The map on the bottom presents the same benefits, overlaid with socio-economic indicators such as median household income. This helps identify neighbourhoods with lower median incomes and limited benefits (shown in white), allowing for targeted intervention and prioritization.

SEEDING LONG-TERM CHANGE

Bees, butterflies and other pollinators keep Earth alive by maintaining biodiversity and supporting ecosystem health. But now they must navigate habitat loss, pollution and climate disruption.

Thanks to you, the Butterflyway Project’s 2,000 volunteer Rangers have planted more than 116,500 native wildflowers and grasses and about 3,150 trees and shrubs throughout Canada since its launch in 2017. They’ve established 7,400 habitat gardens and 139 Butterflyways (12 or more habitat gardens in close proximity).

Here are two of their amazing projects:



IMAGE: HELGA JAKOBSON

Each 250-metre hexagon on this map of Helga Jakobson’s Glenelg neighbourhood in Winnipeg represents the minimum foraging range for native bees. The pink ones are Butterflyway gardens. Helga started as a Ranger in 2024. Within three weeks, 30 residents had registered their lawns to take part — almost a fully pollinator-friendly neighbourhood!



PHOTO: ALEXIS ASHWORTH

Tryna McLean leads workshops and native planting events in Comox, British Columbia. In 2021, she launched the Gone to Seed Little Library — now almost 1,000 members strong! She’s partnered with local wildlife rescue habitat stewards to teach collecting, cleaning and sowing of native plants and has held two workshops on weaving with invasive plants, encouraging stewardship while creating a functional product.

A CLIMATE-SAFE FUTURE DEMANDS THE DEFEAT OF IGNORANCE

Politicians who understood the climate and biodiversity crises would be doing everything possible to ramp up solutions such as renewable energy and storage, better power grids, protection and restoration of lands and waters and a shift away from wasteful consumer capitalism.

But the leader of the most powerful nation on Earth doesn't just reject the mountains of research, he doesn't care. Instead, it's "Drill, baby, drill."

The wealthy probably think their billions will save them from the fate most of the world faces: increasing temperatures, deadly heat waves, floods, droughts, water shortages, agricultural failures, catastrophic storms, wider disease spread and more.

Even under the current capitalist system, addressing climate change and rapid species extinction is economically beneficial, especially if reducing wealth inequality is part of the solution. A rational and just shift to cleaner energy and better economic systems could create excellent jobs, cleaner air, water and land, reduced health care costs, greater agricultural and food security, less reliance on volatile markets and rapacious corporations and so much more.

Life would be much improved even for those who live in "petrostates," including Alberta, where abundant wind and solar resources were sparking a renewable energy boom before the oil-and-gas-only government slammed on the brakes.

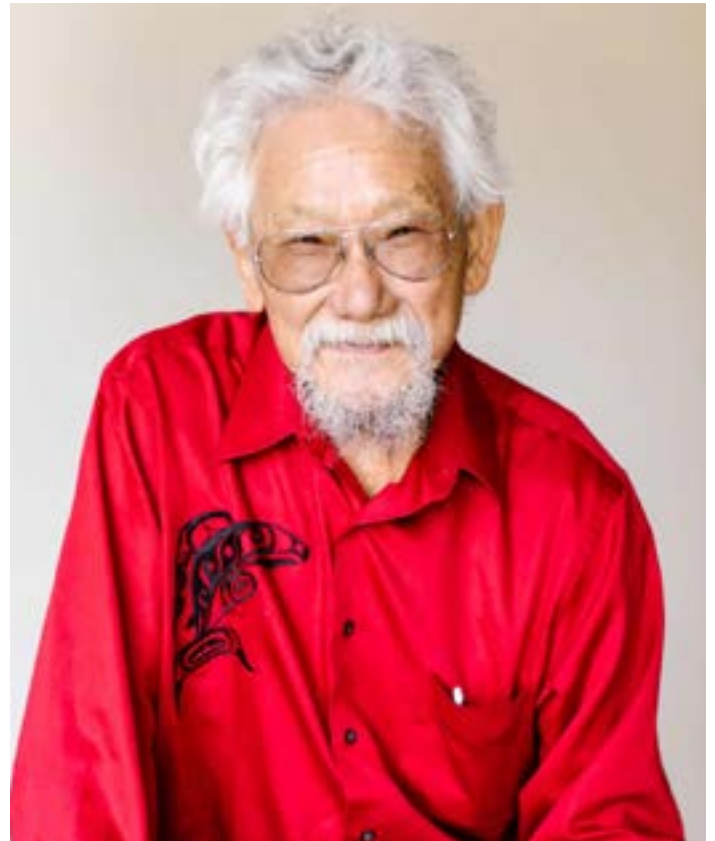


PHOTO: MARIEL NELMS

It would be terrible if Canada's more oil-oriented politicians led us down the same stupid path the U.S. is following — where outright climate science denial is facilitating a regressive future of ramped-up fossil fuel production, more pollution, lower health and safety standards and a climate system exceeding dangerous, life-threatening tipping points.

Let's take back our power, show politicians that they work for us and embrace progress and a better future for all.

WHEN CREATING OR UPDATING A WILL, DON'T FORGET YOUR FURRY FRIENDS!

When creating or updating a will, you'll likely include loved ones and favourite charities. But don't forget your pet.

In Canada, you can't list a pet directly as a beneficiary of your estate. But you can give it to a person of your choosing, which you would set up in a pet trust.

While most people in Canada consider pets as family members, few set up pet trusts to ensure they're properly cared for in the future. For more information on a "pet trust" visit dsfdn.org/creating-a-pet-trust or contact Siobhan Aspinall at legacy@davidsuzuki.org.



PHOTO: KRISTA MANGULSONE VIA UNSPLASH