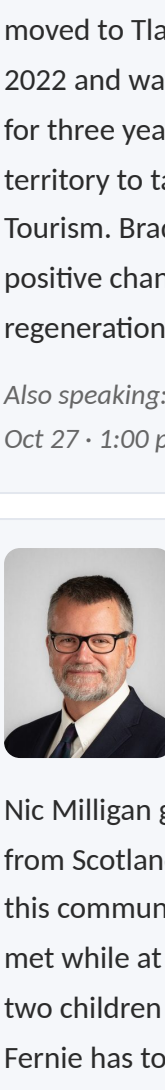


Kootenay Tourism Summit Speakers

October 27–28, 2026 · Best Western Plus Fernie Mountain Lodge, Fernie, BC

Welcome

Tue, Oct 27 · 12:30 pm



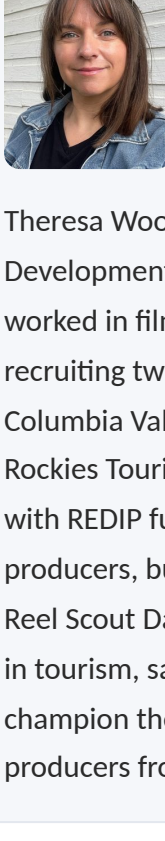
MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Brad Parsell

CEO, Kootenay Rockies Tourism

Brad Parsell was born in Aotearoa (New Zealand) and grew up in Brisbane, Australia. After graduating university with a double major in Management and Marketing, Brad spent almost a decade working in the music industry before switching careers into tourism around 2013. Brad was based in Fernie, BC for almost ten years where he held the role of General Manager at Fernie Lodging Company and later was the Executive Director for the Fernie Chamber of Commerce. Brad moved to Tla-o-qui-aht territory on Vancouver Island in 2022 and was the Executive Director of Tourism Tofino for three years. He recently moved back to Ktunaxa territory to take on the role of CEO of Kootenay Rockies Tourism. Brad is passionate about using tourism to drive positive change in social equity and environmental regeneration.

Also speaking: Destination Think Collective Presentation (Tue, Oct 27 · 1:00 pm) and Closing Remarks (Wed, Oct 28 · 3:30 pm)



SPEAKER

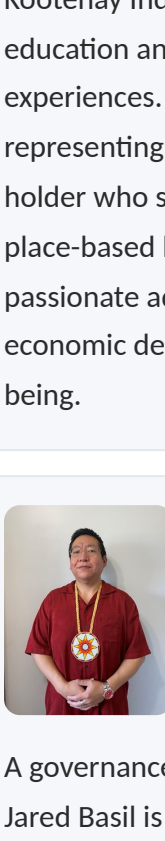
Nic Milligan

Former Mayor, City of Fernie

Nic Milligan grew up in Fernie when his family moved from Scotland when he was four. Nic is passionate about this community and its people. He and his wife Sylvia met while at the University of Victoria and raised their two children here. They continue to enjoy everything Fernie has to offer, all its events and activities and its many cultural and natural amenities. Fernie is defined by its friendly, helpful people and their sense of community. After a career in mining, Nic is proud to give back to Fernie and to serve its residents to support and enhance their quality of life.

Destination Think Collective Presentation

Tue, Oct 27 · 1:00 pm



PRESENTER

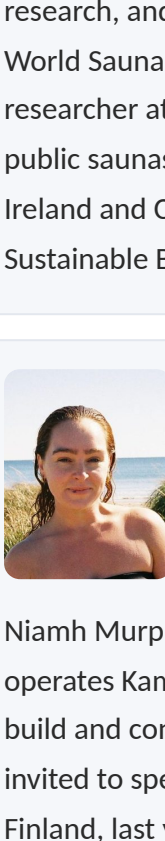
Rodney Payne

CEO, Destination Think

Rodney Payne is the CEO of Destination Think and has spent nearly two decades helping destinations around the world inspire sustainable travel and build tourism economies that work for local residents. With a background in environmental law, he began his career in investment banking before finding his purpose in travel. He believes that the travel industry can only continue to thrive by using its privilege to positively transform society and preserve a well-functioning Earth system. He is a Founding Partner of CDL Climate at Creative Destruction Lab and an advisor to AirMiners, supporting innovations that address urgent climate challenges.

Kootenay Radness: Kootenay Film Commission Presentation

Tue, Oct 27 · 2:30 pm



PRESENTER

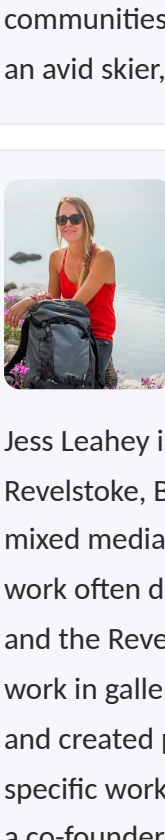
Theresa Wood

Economic Development Officer, Columbia Valley

Theresa Wood is contracted as the Economic Development Officer for the Columbia Valley. She has worked in film attraction since 2022, successfully recruiting two independent feature films to the Columbia Valley. She has worked closely with Kootenay Rockies Tourism and The Kootenay Film Commission with REDIP funding to host FAM tours, meet with producers, build the crew base, and add locations to the Reel Scout Database. Theresa has used her background in tourism, sales, and economic development to champion the Kootenays as a film destination for producers from around the world.

Indigenous Tourism Panel

Tue, Oct 27 · 3:00 pm

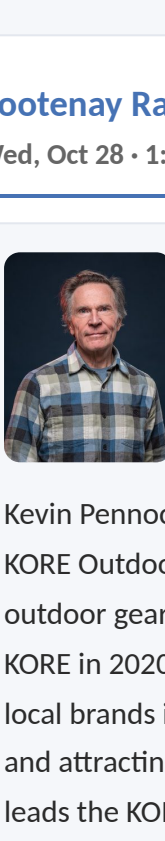


MODERATOR

Paula Amos

Chief Marketing & Development Officer, Indigenous Tourism BC

Paula Amos is of Hesquiaht and Squamish Nation descent, born and raised in Nuu-chah-nulth territory on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. For over 20 years, she has worked with the Indigenous Tourism Association of BC, driving experience development, partnerships, and marketing that give Indigenous tourism a voice and space. Paula sat on the steering committee for the Aboriginal Tourism Blueprint Strategy, launched in 2006, which helped the industry grow by over 80%. She sees Indigenous tourism as a driver of economic opportunity, cultural pride, and reconciliation, and has been named to the BC500 list three times.



PANELIST

Leanna Gravelle

Director of Programming & Operations, Ktunaxa Interpretive Centre

Leanna Gravelle is a member of the Yaq̓it ʔa-knuq̓it First Nation of the Ktunaxa Nation and lives in her home community. She is Director of Programming and Operations for the ʔamni̓n̓tik Childrens Truth and Reconciliation Society, which operates the Ktunaxa Interpretive Centre at St. Eugene Resort, the former Kootenay Indian Residential School, blending truth, education and cultural tourism into transformative guest experiences. With over 26 years of board leadership representing her community, Leanna is a knowledge holder who shares Ktunaxa stories, land stewardship and place-based learning regionally and nationally. She is a passionate advocate for Ktunaxa language and culture, economic development, tourism and community well-being.



PANELIST

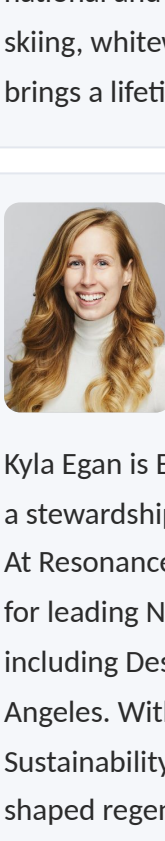
Jared Basil

Founder, Eagle Eye Group · Yaqan Nukiy First Nation

A governance leader occupying many public boards, Jared Basil is the founder of Eagle Eye Group and a respected Cultural Framework Educator. Jared designs and delivers cultural safety and humility training, presentations, and educational workshops. Jared works with health partners, educational institutions, and government organizations to build safe, respectful learning environments. Through Eagle Eye Group, he supports organizations and communities on the journey toward reconciliation.

Beyond Wildfires: Building Destination Resilience

Wed, Oct 28 · 9:45 am



PRESENTER

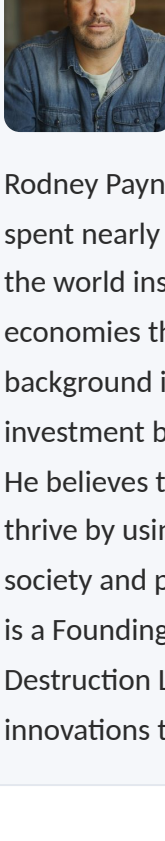
Corrine Bundschuh

Emergency Management Specialist, Kootenay Rockies Tourism

Corrine Bundschuh works with Kootenay Rockies Tourism on emergency management, crisis communications and destination resilience. Her work focuses on connecting regional knowledge, strengthening relationships and helping tourism partners understand and navigate disruptions. With a master's degree in Global Business Management and extensive experience in tourism, events and community collaboration, Corrine brings a strategic perspective to destination resilience. She is particularly interested in how everyday stewardship can strengthen the knowledge, relationships and networks that communities rely on during emergencies.

Riding the Sauna Wave: Global Wellness Trends and What They Mean for the Kootenays

Wed, Oct 28 · 10:45 am

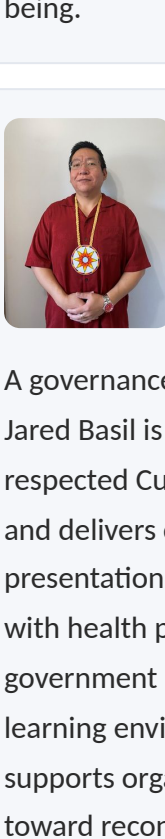


PRESENTER

Becky Pelkonen

Co-Founder, Kamu Sauna

Becky Pelkonen is a global speaker on sauna, thermal bathing and regenerative tourism. She co-founded Kamu Sauna and the movement Sauna for All, supports global sauna and spa organizations with market-based research, and is co-host and program developer of the World Sauna Forum in Finland. She is a doctoral researcher at the University of Eastern Finland, studying public saunas as third spaces across Finland, Norway, Ireland and Canada, on leave from her role in the Sustainable Business Programs at College of the Rockies.



PRESENTER

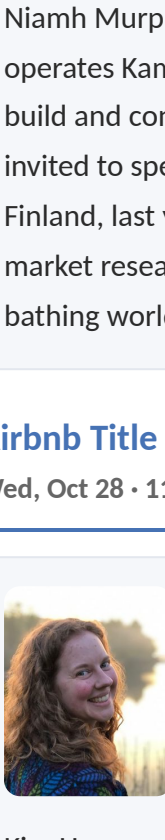
Niamh Murphy

Operations and Development, Kamu Sauna

Niamh Murphy is co-founder of Sauna for All and operates Kamu Sauna out of Fernie, supporting sauna build and consulting projects across Canada. She was invited to speak at the World Sauna Forum in Jyväskylä, Finland, last year and is involved in North American market research and trend projects across the sauna and bathing world.

Airbnb Title Sponsorship Presentation

Wed, Oct 28 · 11:15 am



PRESENTER

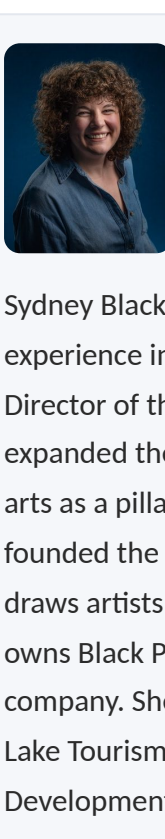
Kim Howson

Policy - Western Canada, Airbnb

Kim Howson leads policy and government relations for Airbnb across Western Canada. As a creative strategist with over 15 years of experience spanning the non-profit, public, and private sectors, she specializes in partnership development, stakeholder engagement, and philanthropy. She loves connecting people and projects across diverse groups and interests. Kim calls Vancouver Island home and is a voracious reader, avid traveler, and proud toddler mum.

Arts & Culture Panel

Wed, Oct 28 · 11:30 am



MODERATOR

Robyn Goldsmith

Executive Director, Arts Revelstoke

Robyn Goldsmith is a community leader and strategist with experience spanning arts and culture, tourism, destination management, and community development. As Executive Director of Arts Revelstoke, she leads cultural programming and initiatives that bring people together through arts and shared experiences. With years of varied professional experience, her journey includes studying and practicing law, destination management planning, working as an outdoor educator and guide, event production, and nonprofit governance. Robyn is particularly interested in how arts and culture can shape a community's identity, strengthen connections to place, and contribute to vibrant communities. She is a practicing artist, a mountain biker, an avid skier, and a sailor.

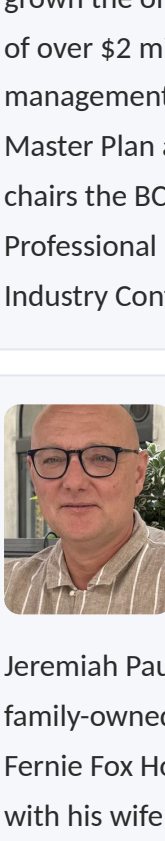


PANELIST

Jess Leahey

Co-Founder, Revelstoke Outdoor Art Movement (ROAM)

Jess Leahey is an artist and illustrator based in Revelstoke, BC, working across painting, illustration, mixed media, and installation. Her playful, imaginative work often draws inspiration from mountain life, skiing, and the Revelstoke community. Jess has exhibited her work in gallery shows, participated in artist residencies, and created permanent public art installations and site-specific works for festivals and community spaces. She is a co-founder of ROAM, the Revelstoke Outdoor Art Movement, at Revelstoke Mountain Resort.

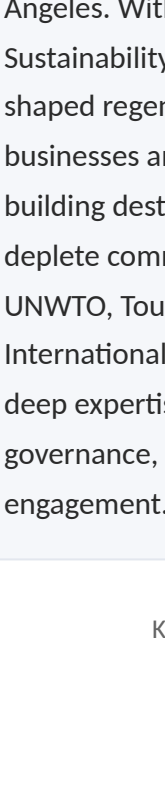


PANELIST

Sydney Black

Executive Director, Nelson & District Arts Council

Sydney Black is a non-profit leader with over a decade of experience in the arts and culture sector. As Executive Director of the Nelson & District Arts Council, she has expanded the organization's reach and championed the arts as a pillar of community well-being. Sydney co-founded the Nelson International Mural Festival, which draws artists and visitors from across the country, and owns Black Productions, a Broadway-style theatre company. She serves as treasurer of Nelson Kootenay Lake Tourism, chairs the City of Nelson's Cultural Development Committee, and sits on the boards of ArtsBC and Intercultural Kootenays.



PANELIST

Logan Turner

Executive & Artistic Director, Art Gallery of Golden-Kicking Horse Culture

Logan Turner is the Executive and Artistic Director of Kicking Horse Culture, where she leads multidisciplinary arts programming, cultural events and creative community development in Golden and Area A. A visual artist and musician, Logan is passionate about the role arts and culture play in building vibrant, connected communities and memorable visitor experiences. Before pursuing a career in the arts, she competed on the Alberta Alpine Ski Team, giving her a lifelong connection to mountain culture. Logan also serves as the East Kootenay Regional Representative on the Arts BC Board of Directors and currently lives in the boonies, Parson, BC.

Kootenay Radness: KORE ReHub Presentation

Wed, Oct 28 · 1:30 pm

PRESENTER

Kevin Pennock

Executive Director, KORE Outdoors

Kevin Pennock is co-founder and Executive Director of KORE Outdoors, a Kootenay non-profit supporting outdoor gear makers and designers. Since launching KORE in 2020, he has worked with its board to unite local brands into a network, providing resources to scale and attracting new companies to the region. He now leads the KORE ReHub, a circular initiative with the College of the Rockies aiming to make the Kootenays synonymous with outdoor gear circularity. A filmmaker and project manager, Kevin created the Ride Maker TV series and was Nordic Sport Manager for the Calgary 1988 Olympic Winter Games.

PRESENTER

Michael Crowe

President & CEO, College of the Rockies

Michael Crowe is President and CEO of College of the Rockies, where he champions innovative partnerships that connect education, industry, and regional economic development. Under his leadership, the College is advancing new approaches to workforce development, applied learning, and industry collaboration. Through its partnership with KORE and the development of the new Institute for Outdoor Recreation, the College is strengthening the talent, skills, and innovation that will shape the future of the Outdoor Recreation and Mountain Hospitality sectors.

Destination Stewardship in Action Panel

Wed, Oct 28 · 2:00 pm

MODERATOR

Chris McCurry

Director of Destination Stewardship, Kootenay Rockies Tourism

Chris McCurry's career spans hospitality, resort operations, Indigenous economic development and climate action. He spent ten years in Banff and Canmore before moving to Kimberley in 2007, where he met his wife, Shannon, and is raising their children. In the Kootenays, he worked with Kimberley Alpine, Fernie Alpine and St. Eugene resorts, served as CEO of ʔaɁam Community Enterprises and led climate work with the Community Energy Association. Today, as Director of Destination Stewardship at Kootenay Rockies Tourism, he brings communities and partners together to grow sustainable tourism.

PANELIST

Jikke Gyorki

Executive Officer, Tourism Fernie

Jikke Gyorki has worked in the tourism and hospitality sector for over 35 years. Her experience spans front-line to executive roles across rural and urban settings and the private, non-profit, and government sectors. As Executive Officer of Tourism Fernie since 2010, she has grown the organization from 2 staff to 11 with a budget of over \$2 million, expanding its focus to destination management and development through a Tourism Master Plan and Sustainable Tourism Strategy. Jikke chairs the BC DMO Association and received the DMO Professional Excellence Award at the BC Tourism Industry Conference.

PANELIST

Jeremiah Pauw

Owner, Peacock Hospitality Group

Jeremiah Pauw owns and operates Peacock Hospitality, a family-owned company in Fernie, BC, that runs the Fernie Fox Hotel and Evergreen Apartments. Together with his wife Marina, he has invested in practical sustainability projects across their properties, including solar energy, heat pumps, energy monitoring, electrification, and waste reduction. Jeremiah believes environmental responsibility and a successful tourism business go hand in hand. He brings an owner-operator perspective to destination stewardship: start with achievable projects, measure the results, keep improving, and show that even a small independent hotel can make a meaningful difference.

PANELIST

Lyle Wilson

Owner, Nipika Mountain Resort

Born in Winnipeg, Lyle Wilson is the founder and president of Nipika Mountain Resort, established in 1979, and founder and chair of the Columbia Valley Greenways Trails Alliance. In 1971, Lyle founded the outdoor retailer Fresh Air Experience, growing it to 13 stores across Canada. He coached Canada's National Ski Team and the Olympic cross-country ski team at the 1988 Calgary and 1992 Albertville Games, and is a founding member and past president of CANSI. A national and international competitor in cross-country skiing, whitewater paddling, and adventure racing, Lyle brings a lifetime of stories from the trail.

PANELIST

Kyla Egan

Executive Director, Tourism Revelstoke

Kyla Egan is Executive Director at Tourism Revelstoke and a stewardship-focused destination strategy consultant. At Resonance Consultancy, Kyla led destination strategy for leading North American tourism organizations, including Destination Canada and the City of Los Angeles. With prior leadership as Director of Sustainability at Tourism Vancouver Island, she has shaped regenerative tourism practice across 200+ businesses and 50 destinations. Her work centers on building destinations that strengthen rather than deplete communities and landscapes. Recognized by the UNWTO, Tourism Industry Association of Canada and the International Regenerative Travel Award, Kyla brings deep expertise in stakeholder alignment, community-led governance, and sustainable tourism policy to every engagement.