# Day 3 Transcript: Panel Discussion

**Alison:** Welcome back everyone. Our next session is a panel discussion on the conference theme - what are innovative solutions to improve park accessibility for people with disabilities. On our panel today we have Carinna Kenigsberg, Tanelle Bolt, Patrick Lord, Jamie McCulloch and Noah Papatsie. Carinna is the Director of Programs and Impact at Power to Be, a British Columbia based charity that removes barriers for people living with disabilities and supports them accessing the nature. Tanelle is the Founder of RAD - Recreational Adaptive Society whose mission is to expand the inventory of outdoor adaptive equipment available for short-term rental. Patrick leads the Outdoor Research Program at Prospect Human Services which provides access to the outdoors for individuals with developmental disabilities in Alberta. Jamie is the Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Adaptive, a non-profit organization that makes mountain sports and recreation accessible for everyone. Noah you may remember from yesterday was born and raised in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Noah has a rich career in broadcasting, advocacy work, and local politics. So welcome everyone. I'll start with a round of introductions. Uh Carinna, would you like to go first?

**Carinna:** Sure. Hello everyone, uh thank you for having me today. I am uh with dirty blonde curly hair and blue eyes wearing a black clothing and coming to you from British Columbia and specifically want to recognize the traditional territory of the WSÁNEĆ Nations that I live nearby and get to enjoy work and play on. Thank you for having me. Thank you, Tanelle.

**Tanelle:** My name is Tanelle, I am similar to Carinna, dirty blonde but straight hair, Caucasian with blue eyes and I am also on the same territory as Carinna and I am the founder of RAD society for short and I'm just very very honored to be part of this awesome panel today. Thank you, Patrick.

**Patrick:** Hi everyone, uh very happy to be here. I am a white male with blue eyes, brown hair, a little bit more gray than I like to see these days but and wearing a black button-up shirt. Prospect and myself are located on what we call Alberta and is the traditional and ancestral territory of many Indigenous First Nations uh Inuit and Metis people. So we would like to make this an acknowledgement as an act of reconciliation and gratitude to those territories that we reside on and are visiting. So thank you very much and very happy to be here. Thank you, Jamie.

**Jamie:** Thank you very much again and yes super happy to be here and part of this fantastic panel today. Um yeah we come and are very privileged to play and recreate on the traditional lands of the Treaty seven uh territory territory uh which is shared with uh the Metis and nation of Alberta region three. Um and yeah I'm the Co-founder and Executive Director of Rocky Mountain Adaptive based in the Rocky mountains making all mountain sport and recreation accessible. Thank you and Noah.

**Noah:** Thank you everybody for the introduction. I appreciate it uh my name is Noah Papatsie. I'm a blind user here in Nunavut, born and raised here. Uh I'm a full-time advocate after my accident. So it's been a challenging and great advocacy, all around. Also I sit on numerous organizations and former city councilor, so it's great to meet everyone. Looking forward to the conversation. Nice to meet everybody.

**Alison:** Wonderful, thank you. Alright, so let's dive right in. Let's start off by talking about adaptive equipment. Adaptive equipment such as all-terrain wheelchairs, hippocamp, buoyancy chairs and audio guides are invaluable at providing access to areas that might not otherwise be accessible but there are a lot of challenges with providing adaptive equipment at parks such as storage, access to electricity to charge the equipment, and securing personal equipment while using the park equipment. So what are some ways that parks can overcome these challenges and successfully provide adaptive equipment for use of the parks? Tanelle, I know your work with RAD society is trying to address these challenges, so let's have you start off this discussion.

**Tanelle:** So RAD society came up with a brilliant idea three years ago that we have called the RAD gearbox and this is a shipping container idea where it is renovated into an adaptive rental hub for equipment that people can share and take out for short-term use when they come to a certain place. So implementing that in parks would maybe look like a small container 16 to 20 feet. It's fully wheelchair accessible. It is solar powered, off the grid and full of a variety of different pieces of equipment. So equipment that resides on Vancouver Island would look much different than the equipment that shows up in Nunavut but it would be provided in the same way. I am currently, RAD is currently launching the first prototype of this in Langford, British Columbia on Vancouver Island with their parks and rec department to start, to see the feasibility of a product like this to be delivered everywhere. And we help everybody with mobility challenges. I have yet to I don't think I'll go into somebody else's expertise and field of providing way finding for somebody with a visual impairment so much but for anybody living with a physical mobility challenge from you know the small kids who had a disability from a vaccine when they were three to the 88 year old gentleman who had a stent put in his brain and was losing the ability to golf and is now able to move around and be supported by adaptive equipment. And it's that same piece of adaptive equipment for all ages in between. So this is the program that we came up with three years ago and we're finally starting to see some some fruition happen on that.

**Alison:** Amazing yeah I really love this idea in more ways than one and I think it has so much potential. Uh Jamie I know that you know Rocky Mountain Adaptive that's one of the things they do as well as really helping people access uh equipment. So what are your thoughts on this.

**Jamie:** Um indeed um we being able to provide services in this industry, we are incredibly lucky. Over the last uh five five years in the recent history with the evolution of design of adaptive sports equipment um the variety of stuff that's becoming on the market and available um albeit while being fairly expensive um is really opening up the opportunities to be able to not only just have an experience in parks but be able to do that on an individual's own turn, relative to their own uniqueness, around their mobility or cognitive functioning levels. So the solutions are coming there um. In the past challenges that I found as well is that equipment can be used on and but with some of the designs of equipment that are coming out that in itself is curing some of the inaccessibility problems and making the trail systems and infrastructure around parks accessible due to the nature of the design of that equipment. So with that being there and also the development of organizations like the RAD society, Power to BE, CRIS uh over in kelowna, a adaptive there's so many coming up. So with the availability of that equipment, the organizations doing it um collaborations with parks to kind of bring everyone together um I'm really excited for the potential moving forward and the solutions we have to maximize participation in parks for individuals of all abilities and most importantly on the individual's own terms and relative to their goals and aspirations for being being in the parks.

**Alison:** Absolutely absolutely uh Carinna I can see you nodding along. Do you want to add.

**Carinna:** Uh yeah I definitely agree with what's being said I think something to um think about that was quite creative that BC parks did was they looked at their operational budget. So instead of looking at just equipment budgets or ways to modify some of their sites, they started to look at some of the infrastructure and operational budgets and started to see how they could be purchasing some adaptive equipment in potentially more remote locations. So there was a region of BC parks in up in the north in Prince George and they were able to purchase the trail rider by using this kind of model. So it's just a creative model to look at some pre-existing budgets you have because trail riders is an example which is a very useful tool but doesn't offer the same independence but they range around ten thousand dollars. So uh for the park sector to really think about how to utilize their budgets creatively and see maybe different areas within their budget that actually help support access and ties into infrastructure might be an angle that people would be able to start to purchase some of these equipments where you're not able to do things as independently or potentially have the benefit of you know a product or an opportunity like Tanelle is trying to do as well.

**Alison:** Absolutely I think that's some fantastic uh advice and suggestions of ways that we can be learning from what some organizations are already doing. Uh Noah do you have any thoughts on somebody like adaptive equipment that's available in in the North.

**Noah:** Uh thank you everybody. Uh great comments, questions. I appreciate it uh. In reality, no. Again that'll be the truth but uh at the same time uh it's good to hear there's some adjustments. At the same time uh where you know there's a building where you can you know borrow some equipment. Now uh it's finally we have that in place today which is great awesome that's a beginning of the story and more of the story too is as well uh. A lot of it needs to be upgraded uh especially especially through the beginning of the phase where we all can you know connect together uh you know where individuals and workforces you know use these places and most importantly safety is number one uh safety's always a priority. So in remote places uh there's uh animals around and at the same time we need to work around the animals or be respectful to the land and as well as work with the land really. If we work with the land, how to be more environmentally friendly, taking care of it then we'll all work together be great.

**Alison:** Absolutely no thank you that's there's some fantastic thoughts. Uh Patrick do you have any thoughts on adaptive equipment and sort of overcoming some of these challenges?

**Patrick:** Yeah, I mean the the other panelists are definitely the experts uh in this area for sure. I mean the clients and participants that we work with don't necessarily need as many uh adaptive equipments but some of the clients that we are able to take on and things like that might definitely uh need some of that equipment as well. So it's really great to see so many new and well maybe not as new but upcoming um organizations that are being able to provide that for people to allow them to have that experience and and to learn and enjoy the amazing parks that we have because I think it's really really essential for our community, especially now to be able to get out and really have that accessibility. So um yeah.

**Alison:** Absolutely well I think quite a few guys have touched on uh. Oh Jamie yeah let's hear from you again.

**Jamie:** Yeah just one thing regarding the adaptive equipment and the relationship to the usage and promotion uh within our park system um is yeah the the regulators of the park something we need to look at doing is around the policies around the equipment usage and having clarity and education and awareness around specific adaptive equipment. And as I've talked about the great evolution in design and the impact that that can have but yeah there needs to be clarity on what can be used, how a certain bit of equipment is qualified as someone's mobility device um and so when someone has the access to that equipment and can use it they're not necessarily finding people confronting them on the trail as to why you're using this, it's just a hiking trail and having to adjust it. This is what I need to be able to enjoy this trail in a hiking environment, so not only clarity around the policies and procedures from parks around that usage, the education and awareness to the general public as a whole as to what is being um provided and um yeah the social aspects as to why.

**Alison:** Absolutely, absolutely um that was some things that definitely came up in yesterday's conversations as well and i think quite a few of you have touched on this idea of organizations and how organizations are playing a role and that kind of leads me to this next question. That you know they're already in existence are a number of organizations and agencies that help make the outdoor activities more accessible for people with disabilities, you know through equipment, through training, through um you know assistive help and things like this and having the staff. So you know what do you think uh is the role for potentially for government and parks to take on stronger partnerships with these non-profit agencies to help make parks more more accessible. So Carinna, given your role in Power to Be, let's have you start off this discussion.

**Carinna:** Sure I think the big thing to think about is the life experience of the person and so uh when people start out as children and move through different stages of life they also experience different experiences from you know going to parks, going to camps, going to rec centers, being a part of their community. So a big effort that we all need to do is break the mold of those silos and really start to see where we can align in our practices around those attitudes, those approaches, and those adaptations. So work that we've done that you know Tanelle and I have done as well as Jamie and I is really trying to look at how do we break that sector component and look at all of those different aspects and try and create a collaboration that not only educates around the practice side but also where those people are going to. So we have a philosophy around people, place and practice and by hitting those three elements it really does create that optimal training opportunity. So an example is our work with BC parks and Parks Canada and we brought in two other non-for-profits alongside us who have specialties around working with people with Autism as well as newcomers uh as well. So to really give a holistic perspective of what inclusion could look like and all five six of our organizations co-created a workshop together where we were really targeting how do we build on that people, place and practice components. What are those training pieces that the staff are needing to facilitate optimal experiences. What are those gaps in the training components, the gear components and then also how do we leverage those partnerships to be able to access equipment to find new terrain to look at. Language being a little bit altered to create more inclusive language to really support those populations and then we tailored scenarios to focus on uh true life situations that those park sector organizations were facing with the expertise from these other service providers. And the main thing that was really helpful too was meeting them later on to check in on how those sessions were working and how they're being implemented so that we could offer that coaching support in real life time where people could alter those practices. So I think it's really again just moving away from that silo and seeing opportunities to enhance those people, places and practices.

**Alison:** Absolutely that's that's fantastic and really exciting work to be able to do those those partner training programs. Uh Tanelle, do you have anything to add with that.

**Tanelle:** It's really tough to put an accessibility lens on say like management plans that have already been written for the next 10 years. I find my experiences with parks is they like to plan a long time in the future and 10 years ago they weren't planning for accessibility. So we are not in the management plan that is currently in existence. There's an environmental lens and there's an Indigenous engagement lens and the accessibility lens we are trying to interject without it actually having been a thought five or ten years ago. So funding is a huge huge issue for adaptive recreation because these places and spaces don't have the accessibility that they should at this moment. Therefore, the people that are wanting to be there are not there and when we go to apply for funding, we get asked well how many people are you actually helping? How many people are in these parks right now? They're not there right now. You have to put your money where your mouth is and then they will start to come but currently funding is just a great big barrier. It's nice for you know for me to check a box as I'm adaptive, I'm a wheelchair user, and I'm there but to actually see that program delivery and exactly what Carinna is saying that education and that you know changing the mindset and like Jamie said changing the culture behind it, these are huge barriers and these management plans are just coming out now for the next 10 years and accessibility is still not a lens on them. So a hurdle is trying to figure out how to stick ourselves in there.

**Alison:** Absolutely yeah that is that is a major barrier. Uh Patrick I could see you nodding along at one point.

**Patrick:** Yeah I think uh both of the other panelists they mentioned a lot of the things that we are we struggle with and I think the funding is definitely a large portion of it um. I mean we're very fortunate with the transportation aspect and we're able to support our clients in transporting them to areas within Southern Alberta which again we're very fortunate but I know that a lot of people are not able to experience different parks and locations due to that area. Like if for example if you're living in Calgary and getting out to Banff or Canmore area, you're not going to be able to be exposed to those areas if you're in a lower economic area right. Or if you're a lower economic individual so having the the funding to be able to have organizations and provide transportation to those individuals to get out to those areas and then when you finally do get out to the area be with some types of professionals that are going to be able to teach you about the area and help you and guide you through navigating the parks and navigating the trail systems that you might be involved in.

**Alison:** Absolutely Jamie I know you your organization works primarily within a provincial and a national park so do you feel like there's a an opportunity there for parks to have a stronger collaboration with organizations

**Jamie:** Sorry take myself off mute. Um I mean I have to declare my conflict of interest here being the leader of a nonprofit organization looking to expand our outreach. Um but uh yeah, within this iIm trying to structure the best way of putting this um politically um we're in a great stage where we are like the the awareness and education around uh inclusion, um accessibility and for kind of a lot of people on our panel in the recreation format um is evolving um with the passing of the Accessible Act or Accessible Canada Act. Um that's definitely going to help things within national park and hopefully bridge that planning process that kind of to now brought up and make it more relevant as we move forward. Um but to achieve those targets and the lofty ambitions and like trying to incorporate all the great things that we've heard over the last three days, we're going to achieve that through collaboration and making sure that everyone that is interested in meeting these gaps and creating a truly accessible park system um where we can recognize everyone's strengths, the resources we have while being cognizant of our own areas of improvement that we need to evolve and what we need to elevate that with. Whether that's funding, education, awareness or whatever. Through that collaboration piece we can achieve incredible things um and I'll just probably finish my little talk here with uh a positive example um and yeah being based in Canmore and Banff. Um we do have the the great um luxury and privilege of being able to you know recreate on a lot of Alberta Park lands and uh Banff uh Banff National Park. We also do programming up in Jasper National Park as well. And through the recent history we are developing very good relationships and developing partnerships um with these organizations and already in that short time how that's been able to increase um yeah the participation of people of all abilities in our parks has been huge. Um and that has to be a continued way forward because yeah there's a lot of people with the passions and skill sets that can contribute to this and create great environments moving forward.

**Alison:** Absolutely. Uh Noah are you seeing partnerships uh in Nunavut where organizations and parks are sort of collaborating to improve accessibility?

**Noah:** Thank you for the question. Thank you for the answers everybody, very interesting. Yes uh you know I feel the good connection where you know it's good that there's communication where we can again really finally connect even through you know telephone um it's good that uh you know I can be safe on my own where I can connect with anybody but in reality too as we're talking along um again people doesn't have all these technologies uh there's different ways of uh using uh technology that we use and can be analog where we can use our own way of uh navigating ourselves and uh sometimes um you know as for me I'm lucky like I've learned uh the way of the parks already before I got blind and what actually happened was I needed to get back what I needed to go back to which is my route. So it's very important that you know respecting the people individuals within each community in remote places. Uh it's more importantly that we communicate better because uh you know up here we use what we use and what we have and at the same time there's a lot of room for improvement. If we listen to each other loudly we can connect better and help each other and create a more accessible inclusive parks.

**Alison:** Absolutely I agree fully with this um I think we'll move on to the next question. Now so in many instances making a particular park location either the entire park itself or just a component of the park making it accessible is overwhelmingly challenging due to environmental or historical preservation requirements and this can include you know remoteness and terrain challenges or preservation of animal habitats and so in these cases like how do you think the parks could go about designing and creating an equivalent meaningful experience either through um you know virtual reality or three you know 360 degree cameras all of this sort of technology or even you know exhibits located in more accessible areas? And what are some of the core components uh that you think would go into creating this equivalent meaningful experience? So Noah, let's start off with your thoughts on this.

**Noah:** Ah thank you thank you for the question. I appreciate it. Oh exciting or anyway uh as in remote places uh more exciting I think you know. Uh mobile units can be so useful up here um you know there's different kinds of transportation today that's being shown especially that can be used for disability purposes. Uh as and for emergency use and as for as well as for the parks uh there's all-terrain vehicles that can be used across you know each park where it can be used where they can go further in a safer manner. Uh there's equipment within that off-terrain vehicle that can be used and learn upon where we can learn about the environment. Where we can learn especially from each other really, educate each other, how we can adventure and enjoy the parks together and in respectful manner and understanding our languages really and that really helps uh learning along the way. And listening to each other loudly that way challenges will not be barriers when we get to that point of direction where inclusive is important and especially you know planning planning is important not just for a year maybe 10 to 20 years. It's great.

**Alison:** Thank you absolutely. I think those are some fantastic points. Uh Patrick do you have any thoughts on on this idea of equivalent meaningful experiences and how parks can go about creating that for people?

**Patrick:** Yeah absolutely and I think that Noah made a really great point about including that the informational piece around those areas if it's a historic or preservation area the more people know and the more people are informed about why that is a historical area or preservation type area the more that they are going to allow themselves to take part in the experience and and learn more about it. So that they can become part of that community which helps to preserve that area and and within that you start to look at the the core components about why people want to get out there right. Like why do people want to go out to the mountains and go hiking or or go in any areas of the park and go hiking or do whatever they would like to do. And what makes that meaningful right. You want to be able to have that connection and experience that and and especially now over the past two years where there's so much screen time. Um people want to get out and feel adventurous and and have that experience with the wild and and sort of feel the the wind on their face so to speak and that type of thing. So I think it's really important that in the development of new parks and areas and things like that it's it's really um important to institute those core surroundings of of sort of all involving all of this the senses when you are um building these types of areas because um if somebody might not have the ability to see or something like that we should have uh an application or a description of what that area looks like. Or um and or something like that like there's there's one trail that I went on it's called Johnson Canyon in Banff and there's so many people that travel on that trail right and so to in the middle of the summer if it's a beautiful day, you're going to be wall-to-wall with people and and just navigating through people as an able-bodied person, that's hard enough let alone if you have some type of restriction or something like that so being able to have maybe specific times where individuals can go and experience those types of trails where they can hear the rushing water from the waterfall or get actually get close enough to the waterfall rather than navigating through 100 people. So that they can feel the the water splashing off the rocks and things like that and allowing those accessible times. So that everybody can feel included and allow them to feel those experiences I think is really important. So yeah the large education piece is going to build that sense of community and build that sense of wilderness community. And then also being able to develop your experience around all of the senses so that people can feel the earth under their feet or whatever they might be doing um that kind of a thing. There was a there was a an individual that was on yesterday that I was listening to or maybe the day before and he explained that there was a trail that was an accessible trail and they got halfway through the trail and um it turned into a non-accessible trail and so it felt them wanting more and they didn't they weren't able to feel that sense of accomplishment which I think is a large portion of when people experience the parks as they want to, feel accomplished in completing that trail or something like that. So yeah I think if something is going to be labeled an accessible trail or allow that trail to be completed as it's advertised if it's a three kilometer trail and only one or half of it fifty percent of it is accessible then um that's selling it short you know. So being able to develop that area so that everybody can experience it the way that it's meant to be experienced.

**Alison:** Amazing thank you for those thoughts. Carinna, I could see you nodding along do you want to add to this?

**Carinna:** Yeah I definitely echo a lot what Patrick is saying. The the sensory component is so valuable and sometimes I think that the park staff don't remember how talented they are at interpretation and at all the different ways that they already build knowledge around local flora and fauna, the indigenous cultures and really thinking how do you take the things that you do through those educational means at maybe booths or other interpretive programs and bring them into those spaces that maybe don't have full universal accessibility. And one of our colleagues that I work with you know she she lives in a chair and she's reminded me several times that not every place needs to be completely accessible. It's really about those landmarks of experiences and so by having you know information on the local flora and fauna or to Patrick's point finding those times that are a little quieter. BC parks Foundation created some space for participants for from Power to Be in another organization called Canucks Autism where they gave them the quiet hour so they were able to access the park when it wasn't super busy and that gave the chance for that interpretation to go a little bit deeper. So by looking at those innovative strategies, to really think about again can you have tactile things that people can touch, feel, smell, listen to, and I would say the experts are the ones that are the park staff doing that incredible interpretation programs. And how do you bring those into the places that have that natural heritage that maybe they can't go up to the top of the lighthouse but they may be able to experience what the rope feels like uh or potentially the smell of the ocean or other components that are connected to those natural spaces and places.

**Alison:** Amazing thank you. Uh Jamie do you have any thoughts on equivalent accessible experiences where you know maybe the the mountain is just really really not accessible or safe for someone?

**Jamie:** Um, yeah I mean first of all um just we're always this conference has created a great base for learning and just within this panel discussion I want to recognize my own learning and give thanks to Noah who at the beginning of every question is giving thanks to the question and the opportunity to answer. So thank you Noah for giving me that appreciation of that time, to appreciate the environment, I'm in and the contributions I can make. And to our amazing uh interpreters that are doing a phenomenal job uh interpreting as we go along. So thank you. There um for our for where we are operating like the natural environment provides so much um should we say like environmental challenges. Uh just with the landscape of the mountainous regions um and we've kind of talked about the the different aspects around some of the solutions that are already there to be able to do it but even within the most challenging environments um there's different places. There's the valley floor that can be more accessible. There's different ways of accessing higher viewpoints and speaking I think to a point that Patrick made um, we just need to be able to audit those and do proper awareness around what's available and how that can be accessed to people of all abilities. Um and that's one of the misinformations at the moment. Um but again always trying to be the the optimist around things um and through my own experience of in the field that we've done as as human beings, we're only limited by our own creativity. And we only need to look back at the challenging environment that the pandemic for us and the amazing amount of innovation that came out just through dealing with that. Um so something that parks can look at is as we're trying to find solutions um it's not just us or people similar to working on this panel right now um but the more we can open up to find solutions like open up uh. Whether it's competitions, engagements, engaging different social enterprise in coming together to recognize the gap and what we're trying to achieve and yeah broaden the reach to to find those solutions and they will come. Yeah I think there's so much there to learn from other areas as well. And our you know solutions that would be very applicable in parks if you just take a really creative viewpoint at it.

**Alison:** Um Patrick I saw your hand up and then we'll give Tanelle a chance as well.

**Patrick:** So yeah yeah I just wanted to add that uh I mean, Jamie from the the knowledge that I have about your organization and I'm not sure who else is watching but uh they do an excellent job at ensuring that there is no mountain or area that is too high or anything like that. So they work very diligently to be able to allow that and allow people to experience and those types of things. So it's amazing that the work that Jamie and the other panelists are doing with the accessibility especially on the physical side of that um. So that is very excellent to see because um like I was saying before like the experience of being out in the outdoors and experiencing the parks um should be for everyone and they do an excellent job at doing that. So just wanted to acknowledge them in that space.

**Alison:** Absolutely thank you for that. Uh Tanelle, do you have any thoughts on this this idea of equivalent experiences?

**Tanelle:** Not really any new ones but I will just sort of recap stakeholder engagement is so key to providing these experiences to people and seeing where they truly want to go. And stakeholder engagement to acknowledge what Noah had said previously has to start historically with the people who have been there forever in the experiences that they have had and how they see the land that they are on developing in the future to offer these same experiences to just such a diverse group of people that has never had the opportunity to get there. The equivalent accessible experiences like Carinna said, you talk to some individuals in a wheelchair I want to go for kilometers somebody is really okay going 400 meters and having that similar experience in their own way, in a safe environment, that is really you know that is being included to them. Where I like to hang out with Jamie and get to the tops of the mountains and there are individuals that really just want to get to the shoreline on the beach. So doing the iconic experiences and talking to the the Indigenous people that have been there historically and not just Indigenous as as you know the color of our skin but the people who have really been there the longest um. Asking what what are the individual desires of people. And parks I know from experience has really lost their um their social sciences department in outreach and engagement with the people that are in the parks right now and the people and the Canadians that want to get to the parks. Um like Patrick said in the or Carinna in the quiet hour when it's not you know 12 tour buses and you're having to navigate an inaccessible bus on inaccessible trails and then when you finally get there you have six rows of people in front of your wheelchair and all you get to look at is the back side of a human. So yeah all of these things put together everybody's got very good points and being more mindful to to that stakeholder engagement and talking to the people and networking and seeing what do you really want. We can come up with ideas all day long I can tell you you know 10 million dollars and we're going to go and and try and do things our way but it doesn't that doesn't actually address everybody's needs.

**Alison:** No absolutely I think that's it engaging people in these designing like the design process and the planning process and stuff is really goes a long way. Um oh my gosh you guys again we're like running out of time I feel like these are conversations that could just we could have all day long and still have so much to talk about but um I wanted to fit in one last question. You know the primary mandate of this conference was to gather people together that have a shared interest in improving national and provincial park accessibility and to learn from the advancements others have been making as well. So in that vein, is there a park or a park experience you can speak to that really nailed accessibility? Like they had a fantastic accessible resource, they had great equipment rental or like an amazing multi-sensory trail you know? If you can share kind of an example of where you've seen accessibility really really be successful I think that would be amazing for everyone to learn from uh so now let's throw it back to you to start with and then we'll go around.

**Tanelle:** I don't know in my dreams. I would say you know Rocky Mountain Adaptive, Jamie in Canmore, he is, they are the ones. He is the one that provides the most independent access to the places that I wanted to reach after my spinal cord injury. I found RMA very early on. Full disclosure, Jamie was my downhill ski coach for a while and the very first person that ever let me take a hand cycle away from him and use it. So the inception of the RAD idea did come from RMA and yeah it's in my dreams. If somebody else knows of of anywhere I will go there and visit it.

**Alison:** Absolutely well let's uh let's hear from Noah next if you've had an experience you felt really nailed accessibility?

**Noah:** Uh sorry on uh what I experienced here now then before uh in reality um you know I've been to the west, uh Calgary, Alberta those area. I really you know again I really enjoyed the accessibility information. Challenges as well. I'm being on my own and and bringing here uh has created a positive impact for everybody not just for it's good to learn from each other. More positive we think the better and uh you know. It's good to connect with Rocky Mountain and more the better and further they go uh more re-engage the better. I think it's the challenge is uh how we can educate each other. So it's great and more importantly to work with educators such as young users, youth challenges and as well as adults. So thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

**Alison:** Thank you Noah uh Jamie yeah.

**Jamie:** Um again looking at the interpretation of the order providing an answer in the most optimistic way I very much look forward to the 10th annual version of this conference and being asked the same question and being able to reel off um lots of examples of the perfect experience due to the application and learnings that have been implemented from such conferences like this uh the best I can do at the moment is just give snippets of little parks which if all came together everywhere would create incredible environments. Um but I remember traveling just nothing to do with an adaptive realm but just on a family holiday over to Vancouver Island and I was at Tribune Bay Provincial Park on Hornby Island um and uh yeah there was nice gravel hard packed pathway down to this incredible beautiful beach. And went to use the washroom after traveling there um there was four washroom options. Every single one was except the only options were accessible washrooms done to universal design and it was out houses and like that was perfect. I was like this is amazing like it's not that there's just a little afterthought or one little option for everyone like that was all that was on offer. That was fantastic um. I have to give a massive shout out to um Alberta Parks and for their investment in a place William Watson Lodge which is down in one of their provincial parks which provides incredible fully inclusive and accessible accommodations um in a completely outstanding wilderness setting um. It's yeah. I'll let someone else speak but that's fantastic.

**Alison:** That is that's fantastic to hear that. There's there's you know things going well somewhere. Uh Carinna, let's hear from you.

**Carinna:** Sure I mean I would definitely echo what's been spoken about and Jamie's example is great. BC parks has done an amazing job of some accessibility upgrades on Vancouver Island, a little bit north of Victoria in Wrath Trevor and Parksville and Loveland Bay and some upgrades around accessibility to the beach, the playgrounds, the bathrooms as well. There's ways to go and I would say an example I wanted to share too is a different one which BC parks Foundation did and that was really working with the traditional territory of the uh Secwépemc people and they did a story trail. And uh that story trail always made me think of a great way to bring innovation to parks that builds on the natural history and people could walk by posts or roll by posts and then you would scan it and you'd hear some traditional stories of the local First Nations that are there but it also made me think about ways that you could create integration in parks that creates again that universal perspective for different abilities, different cultures, different backgrounds, and really connect people to that land. And build on that sense of connection and belonging. So I think we can think broader than just the the modifications to make to the site and how to also deepen that connection through different ways of integration of different tools and services.

**Alison:** Amazing yeah fantastic. Thank you Carinna. And Patrick do you have any examples?

**Patrick:** Yeah I mean Jamie nailed it with the the William Watson lodge scenario. Like they have done a great job out there and many of our clients participate in that facility and even within our organization we do many uh hikes and and learning opportunities out there. Um I will also add that we based on our organization, we try to develop uh employment skills and part of that is through volunteerism and so there's many organizations within uh the provincial park system, within Calgary that have provided us the opportunity to go into the parks and participate in invasive species or invasive weed species or something like that. Recognition and polling and it allows our clients to develop those skills in volunteerism but also provide a service back to their community. So that they can grow that greater sense of community through the park system and through the natural environment. So having those collaborations and partnerships where people are allowed to get involved and allowed to be accessible and inclusive. Um it's just amazing and I think it just promotes a greater sense of community as a whole and then a greater sense of connection with the natural environment and wilderness. So that's always a great experience for us.

**Alison:** Amazing thank you so much for sharing that uh everyone. I cannot thank you enough for joining us today. This is a fantastic conversation and I know uh that we could go on for hours but uh. So I'd like to thank our panel: Carinna, Tanelle, Patrick, Jamie and Noah. Thank you so much for that wonderful discussion. Uh this brings us to the end of this hour. So we're gonna take a short break and our next session will start at 2 pm eastern standard time.

**Everybody:** Thank you. Thanks everybody. Thank you. Thank you