

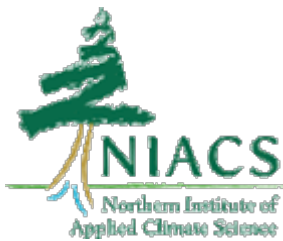
3rd Shifting Seasons Summit

Sharing Adaptation and Resilience Knowledge
Across Indigenous Communities

Participant Feedback and Event Evaluation

K. Malulani Castro

Shifting Seasons 2021 Partnerships



Introduction

This document summarizes the results of the session evaluation surveys (Appendix A.) and exit evaluation surveys collected during the 3rd Shifting Seasons Summit. The virtual summit was held from April 19th to April 21st, 2021 with a special Earth Day Event on April 22nd. The theme for the summit was *Sharing Adaptation and Resilience Knowledge Across Indigenous Communities*. Specifically, the summit focused on the topics and goals provided below:

- **Climate adaptation training sessions tailored to tribes**
- **Development of case studies on current adaptation work in the Northeast**
- **Continued network building around relevant tribal climate change initiatives**

This document was created in collaboration with the coordinators and planners of Shifting Seasons.

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Who was evaluated?

Three hundred and sixty-seven people registered for the summit. Of those, 41 participants submitted session surveys and 51 submitted exit surveys. Electronic copies of the session survey were provided via a Google Forms link shared at the end of each session. Similarly, a link to the exit survey was at the end of the workshop. One email reminder was sent out the week following the workshop. The data presented in the following sections comes from the completed surveys.

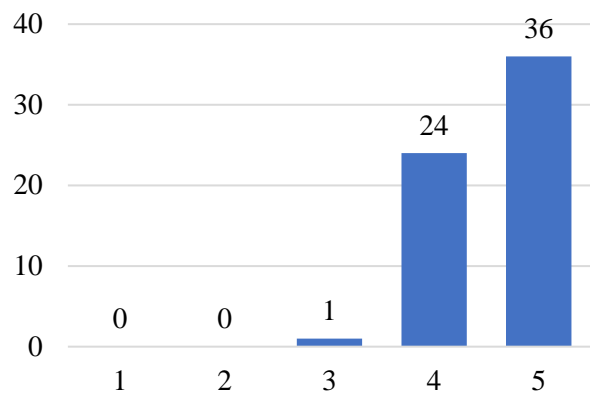
How were the sessions?

Survey Feedback

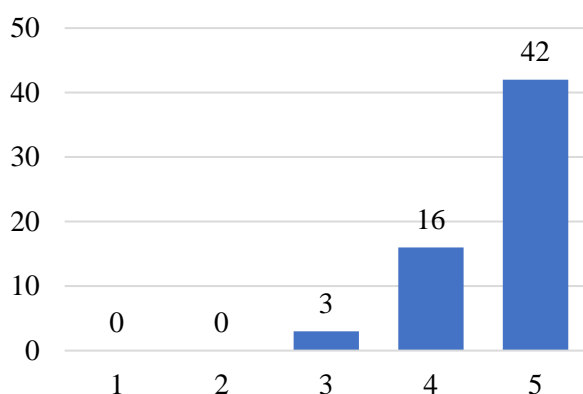
Summit attendees were asked to evaluate the quality of the breakout sessions they participated in. Surveys were provided by the facilitator directly after the completion of each session. Surveys included three Likert scale questions that asked that attendees to assess the session across three main areas: *facilitation*, *content*, and *technical quality*. Data from these questions are reviewed and reflected on in the current section. Given the high variability in the number of surveys submitted per breakout session understanding the average quality of the breakout sessions is limited. Moreover, the low number of surveys turned in for some sessions has made analyzing the quality sessions in comparison with each other similarly limited. Instead, the data provided by these surveys should be understood as purely descriptive in nature; providing a point of context for evaluating the quality of the breakout sessions in addition to the written feedback.

Attendees evaluated all breakout sessions highly on each criterion. The bar graphs provided below show the number of attendees who rated the breakout sessions on each question at each level of magnitude (1 = *Greatly below expectations*; 5 = *Greatly above expectations*). The average rating on each question are as follows: *content* ($M = 4.64$, $SD = 0.58$); *facilitation* ($M = 4.57$, $SD = 0.53$); and *technical quality* ($M = 4.49$, $SD = 0.62$). Overall, these averages and the frequency of high ratings describe breakout sessions that were highly effective and of good quality.

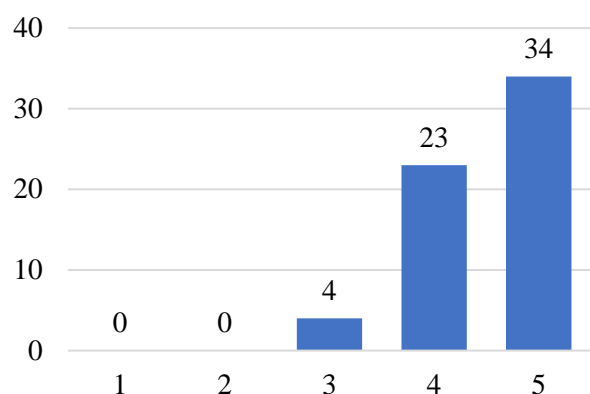
Please rate the facilitation:



Please rate the quality of the content:



Please rate the technical quality:



Written Feedback

Two open-ended questions were included to solicit qualitative feedback. The first question solicited attendee feedback on, and experiences with, the facilitators for the breakout session. The second question solicited feedback on how Shifting Seasons could improve future virtual sessions. The data from those questions will be reviewed in the following section. Consistent themes emerged in the responses for each question and will be explored within each section. Overall, the written feedback on the breakout sessions was incredibly positive.

Please provide any feedback you have for the facilitators:

All respondents spoke highly of the facilitation of all breakout sessions. For example, one respondent wrote, *“Wonderful session! The presenters were fascinating and inspiring.”* Similar praise was shared among most respondents; with many respondents speaking about how great it was to participate in these breakouts and how thankful they were for them. Three consistent themes emerged among the positive feedback: *expert facilitation, great panelists, and positive impacts.*

“Great session. I am very grateful to the facilitators and speakers for taking the time to share their ancestral knowledge and current practices - adapting to and attempting to mitigate climate change's effects on food production.”

Expert Facilitation. Several respondents spoke on how expert the facilitators were in managing the virtual breakout sessions and engaging the attendees. For example, one attendee noted, *“Great time management, keep us on time! Very professional!”* Another attendee reflected on the quality of facilitators as knowledge holders, *“I liked that the facilitator jumped in with answers to questions too, as they were clearly knowledgeable along with the presenters.”* Having facilitators who were both content experts and able to effectively manage attendee participation and panelist engagement virtually combined for highly effective and meaningful breakout sessions.

“I appreciated how you asked people to introduce themselves in the chat at the beginning of the talk. The session flowed well even with so many presenters.”

“I thought that the three panelists worked so well in conversation with each other. They came from different yet complimentary background experiences (i.e. different types of employers and different regions) and could play off each others' responses well. Such deeply knowledgeable folx, it was great to share space.”

Great Panelists. Respondents also consistently spoke on the quality of the panelists. Respondents spoke on how inspiring and innovative the panelists were/ For example, one attendee wrote, *“I wish I had been as vibrant and driven as the panelists are when I was their age. Impressive! I am hopeful for the future.”* Attendees also spoke on how the selection of panelists indicated that planners chose expert knowledge holders while also including a diversity of perspectives on each topic. Panelists also are displayed competence in engaging attendee responses and conversing with the other panelists.

Positive Impacts. Lastly, respondents discussed the ways in which the breakout sessions positively impacted them. Respondents noted that panelists provided new insights in how to do their work. For example, one respondent wrote, *“I had never considered using games to share culture, language and the understanding of indigenous knowledge. Thanks Dr. Sierra! It was a great idea to get a new take on journalistic endeavors in the digital age. This age offers the ability to share more perspectives on climate activism.”* Other respondents indicated that they appreciated learning how to implement climate adaptation work from an intercultural context and from a diversity of perspectives.

Please provide any feedback you have on how we could improve virtual sessions:

Overall, respondents spoke highly about the virtual sessions. A few attendees indicated that they felt like nothing needed to be changed with the breakout sessions. For example, one attendee exclaimed, *“These are working well. I like the mix between webinar and interactive zoom meetings. it was actually great have these short sessions over the week. i've SO looked forward to them!”* Others provided some valuable feedback. Three consistent themes emerged among the positive feedback: *facilitation improvements, content improvements, and technical issues.*

Facilitation improvements. Several respondents wrote about a need to increase the time for Q&A as those times were where they learned uniquely valuable pieces of knowledge. For example, *“The session could have been longer but the variety of speakers brought together to talk about different expertise regarding the topic was great!! All of them were appreciated! Maybe just a wee bit more time for Q/A as I learned so much out of the rich questions and responses.”* One other piece of feedback in this theme was the need for a consistent introduction protocol across facilitation spaces to improve networking. One participant wrote, *“Maybe when we start the meetings we should go around and just say our name, tribe and with a quick video of ourselves.”*

Content improvements. A few participants spoke about issues with the content of the breakout sessions and a need to provide recordings. One attendee wrote, *“If sessions could be transcribed (at a later date) and made available that would be helpful in terms of filling in the gaps of my notes. Recordings work too.”*

“Some of the content of one of the presenters felt almost out of place and there wasn't a lot of passion to it. Not all that connected.”

Technical issues. Several participants indicated technical issues with the breakout sessions. In particular, attendees indicated issues that they could not resolve on their end and could have been tied to the different applications/programs being used. One participant wrote, *“It could be a setting on my computer, but the website seemed a little broken. Graphics and pictures of presenters were replaced with the same picture icon at every location. I couldn't find anything about the app. Is that an android app?”* Another participant wrote, *“This may not be avoidable as I suspect it is on Pathable's end rather than the facilitators. Anyway, I think everything went really well and only noticed one issue, which was that attendees of sessions were sometimes not muted during speakers' presentations. This can be distracting and throw speakers off. Ideally attendees would be muted until Q&A time. Again, not sure if this is just a Pathable thing and possibly outside of our control.”*

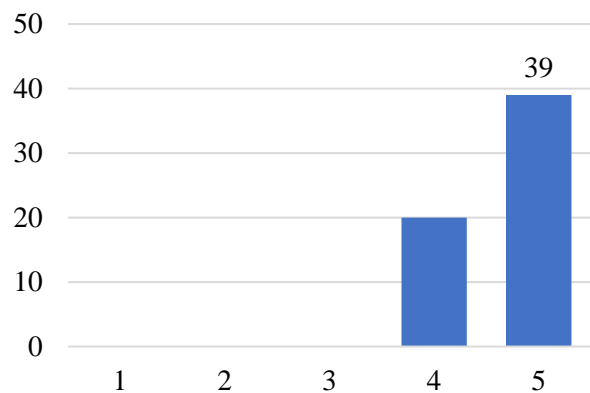
How was the summit?

Survey Feedback

Summit attendees were asked to evaluate the quality of the summit overall. Surveys were provided at the end of the summit. Reminder emails were sent out a week after the end of the summit to promote survey completion. The survey included one Likert scale question that asked attendees to rate the overall quality of the summit. Attendees were also asked to indicate the number of summit sessions they attended and which days of the summit they participated in. Data from these questions are reviewed and reflected on in the current section. Given the low number of surveys turned in, the data provided by this survey should be understood as purely descriptive in nature. The following reflections are to provide a point of context for evaluating the quality of the summit and understanding the written feedback.

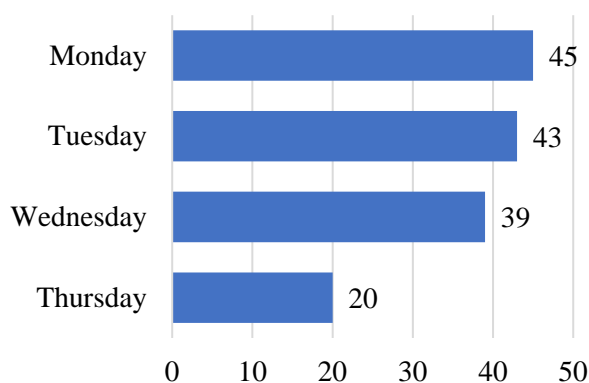
Attendees evaluated the overall quality of the summit highly as indicated by the bar graph provided. The bar graph provided shows the number of attendees who rated the summit on the Likert-scale question at each level of magnitude (1= *Greatly below expectations*; 5 = *Greatly above expectations*). The average rating was $M = 4.67$ with a standard deviation of $SD = 0.47$. This score indicates that attendees--in general--found the quality of the summit to be above their expectations.

Please rate the quality of the summit:

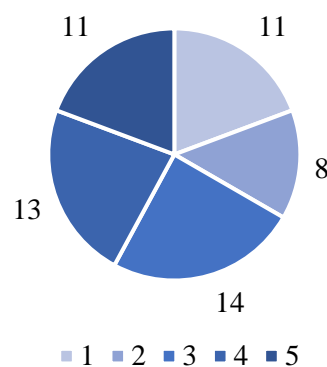


Two-thirds of respondents indicated that they attended three or more sessions during the summit; with an average of $M = 3.13$ ($SD = 1.38$) session attended among all respondents. Survey responses showed that Monday had the highest percentage (77.6%) of attendees with a steady decline in attendance to Thursday (34.5%). This data describes a highly engaged attendee sample; albeit focused on the first three days of the summit.

Which days did you attend:



Number of sessions attended:



Written Feedback

Three open-ended questions were included to solicit qualitative feedback on the summit. The first question solicited attendee feedback on how the summit met their expectations going into it. The second question solicited feedback on how Shifting Seasons impacted them and what they would take with them from the summit. The third question solicited attendee feedback on what other kinds of programming and services Shifting Seasons could provide to those in its network. The data from those questions will be reviewed in the following section. Consistent themes emerged in the responses for each question and will be explored within each section. Overall, the written feedback on the summit was incredibly positive.

Please describe how the summit did (or did not) meet your expectations:

All respondents spoke highly of the summit. For example, one attendee wrote, *“It began with an excellent agenda and followed through with crisp delivery and transitions.”* Another participant wrote, *“extremely worth my time, the info provided by the speakers gave me quite the insight.”* Respondents consistently shared how the content and format of the summit exceeded their expectations. Three consistent themes emerged among the positive feedback: *multiple perspectives, summit format, and virtual content.*

“You all provided a wonderful group of speakers, and I think you all did a great job making the summit an enjoyable and useful virtual experience.”

Multiple perspectives. Several respondents spoke about how much they appreciated the inclusion of several perspectives during the summit. One attendee shared, *“I thought it was amazing. rich conversations and content from a range of perspectives”!* While many participants noted that the summit had a strong focus on Indigenous views, they noted how the inclusion of multiple Indigenous perspectives and ally non-Indigenous views allowed for a more intersectional and holistic discussion on the topics provided. For example, one attendee wrote, *“A more holistic perspective on the intersection of food sovereignty, climate change, and interaction between human and non-human animals/landscape. Connections to increase partnership on grants and educational opportunities.”*

“Our potential capacity for future virtual summits, but it emphasized the fact we are a land based people and institution. We need face to face when discussing these types of topics.”

Summit format. Attendees consistently positively noted how the structure of the summit helped facilitate their engagement with it. One attendee wrote, *“The summit was good for understanding the work and knowledge being shared with Tribal Nations and outside entities (e.g., academia, government, private sector, etc.) I enjoyed the facilitation of each session, and the keynote speakers help set the tone for the day.”* Attendees wrote about how the quality of speakers provided combined with the expert facilitation helped exceed their expectations. Several respondents also noted the effort put in by the coordinating partners—like CMN—to make sure the different events and technical efforts worked well.

Virtual Content. While respondents shared sadness and frustration with the summit being virtual this year, they more consistently spoke about how the quality of the virtual content exceeded their expectations. For example, one attendee wrote, *“The online format was great, especially the welcome, virtual tours, and running footage in between.”* Specifically, attendees

applauded the ease of the platform used to implement the summit. One attendee shared, *“delivery of sessions was simple and efficient. The Virtual platform was very intuitive and easy to navigate.”*

What will you take away from the summit?

Several respondents spoke about how the summit positively impacted them. Respondents indicated that the summit provided an opportunity to learn, recharge, and connect. The lessons, energy, and relationships shared and developed during the summit were all cited as things the participants would take with them into their lives and work. For example, one attendee wrote, *“each of the speakers got me thinking about my own work writing about food sovereignty, in new and refreshing ways. I’ve been logging on to sooo many of these zoom meetings and presentations that I’m just screen fried, but this was somehow different-- the discussions and presentations were really genuine and the speaker were so passionate about their work. It was refreshing instead of exhausting.”* Another participant wrote, *“Being together and celebrating what people are doing to take care of their communities.”* Respondents consistently echoed the sentiments shared in the previous two quotes. Four consistent themes emerged among the positive impacts described: *work inspiration, connections, leadership of Tribal Nation, and conceptual insights.*

“The vibrancy of dialogue and how the message that was shared so well by so many people - that society both needs to and seems to be increasingly open to a shift in perspective around our relationship with each other and the greater network of life and relationships of which we are a part. This gives me optimism and fills me with thanks for the wisdom being shared now in a time of great need.”

Work Inspiration. Several respondents spoke on how the summit inspired them to improve, change, or continue their future work. For example, one respondent wrote, *“The thoughts shared and topics discussed are a great source of inspiration in continuing in climate resilience work.”* In particular, respondents spoke about how the summit inspired them to incorporate more traditional knowledge and Indigenous knowledge into their work. One respondent indicated, *“This opened an opportunity to learn about a wide range of research and I hope to incorporate that into the classroom at UVM-- inviting more guest speakers with traditional knowledge.”*

“Renewed commitment to integrate indigenous knowledge into my work and greater respect for how much I need to learn on how to do this in a good way!”

Connections. For several respondents, the summit provided them a space to learn about and develop the connections. A few respondents noted how the summit modeled how different cultural views can be properly integrated and put into conversations with each other. For example, one respondent wrote, *“I am still working on learning how to appropriately engage with tribal nations, and I think this summit helped expand my perspectives.”* Participant reflections on the connections developed and discussed at the summit included relationships with the land and nonhuman kin. In addition to learning about connections and how to develop them, several respondents spoke about how participating in the summit led to them developing connections that they wanted to pursue in the future. One participant wrote, *“Too much to name. I am excited to pursue some of the connections I made, in order to create partnerships moving forward.”*

Leadership of Tribal Nations. Several respondents highlighted how the summit effectively centered the leadership of Tribal Nations in climate resilience and sustainability. For example, one respondent wrote, *“Many Tribes are doing great adaptation work and planning. Good opportunities to partner.”* Respondents specifically spoke on learning about the different, management, collaborative, and cultural practices Tribal Nations have implemented in their resiliency strategies. A few respondents identified the prominence of the College of Menominee Nation in leading the world on climate change and sustainability.

Conceptual Insights. Lastly, respondents shared conceptual insights and lessons that they learned from participating in the summit. These insights were described as conceptual shifts in how the participants different components of their worldviews or paradigms. One participant wrote, *“Lots of insights - “learning through respectful observation” - that part of what we are meant to do is ‘just’ watch, witness (Hannah). The idea of conflict resolution and building cooperatives as climate resilience (Lea). Bazile’s framework, putting US Agencies (my orgs) in the child role - love it.”* Several respondents wrote about Dr. Kimmerer’s keynote as a specific moment where they experienced a shift in how they understood the world. For example, one respondent share, *“I was deeply moved by Dr. Kimmerer’s keynote. Particularly her thoughts on how capitalist forces aim to make us think of ourselves as consumers, and that it is an act of resistance to see ourselves as givers.”*

What other kinds of activities or services could Shifting Seasons provide to support you in your work?

Lastly, respondents shared several activities or services that they would like the Shifting Seasons network to provide. Several respondents spoke about a desire for there to be more virtual content and support provided by Shifting Seasons. This virtual content and support include ongoing webinars/discussion series, an official website that can support networking, recordings of summits and breakout groups, and digital learning/educational materials. In addition, respondents were interested in more hands-on or applied workshops. Specific workshop requests included training on how to do daily field work respectfully and modelling integrating Indigenous and Western knowledge systems. A few respondents indicated a need for training opportunities for students and mentoring resources.

Conclusion

Summary

The 3rd Shifting Seasons Summit was successful in providing a comforting and engaging (virtual) space where Indigenous communities could share their knowledge on climate adaptation and resilience. Survey feedback suggests that most attendees had a positive experience participating in the summit. Attendees rated the quality of the content, facilitation, and overall summit highly. Open-ended questions provided further context for the positive ratings on the surveys. Review of written survey feedback provided an array of themes that spoke to the success of the 3rd Shifting Seasons Summit. Specifically, respondents spoke to the quality of the facilitation, the depth of content, and the integration of multiple perspectives as key to the success of the summit. Given the complexity of the goals and content of Shifting Seasons, the future success of the summit will require a maintained level of commitment to providing quality events while incorporating relevant participant feedback.

Next Steps

Several suggestions for improving the Shifting Seasons Summit emerge from the evaluation. First, attendees identified the need for more sustained programming. Specifically, attendees noted how this virtual summit exceeded their experiences with other virtual events. The quality of this summit led many attendees to suggest that Shifting Seasons expand its virtual and digital presence. Attendees reported a need for consistent virtual workshops/conferences, digital resources, and a more robust website for Shifting Seasons. Future exploration into funding opportunities by Shifting Seasons might focus on including possible funding for digital media and information technologies support. Funding technical and digital support would provide Shifting Seasons a means to improve on what made the 3rd Shifting Seasons Summit a success without stretching the labor of the planning committee and staff.

Applied and skills-based workshops emerged as a second area of development for Shifting Seasons. Attendees identified how the summit exceeded their expectations in presenting and integrating multiple perspectives on climate adaptation and resilience, however, they noted a need to be exposed examples of how to do this work in practice. Specifically, attendees asked for examples of integrating Indigenous knowledge systems, doing field work in a good way, and the basics of developing an ethical and just collaboration. Developing these types of activities may benefit Shifting Seasons in achieving its goal of facilitating sharing among Indigenous communities. Moreover, these activities might draw attendees beyond those normally reached who work for communities.