



WCPA
WORLD COMMISSION
ON PROTECTED AREAS

Celebrating Love of Nature

A 10-Step Guide To Hosting a #NatureForAll Event



Image Credit: Biswajit De



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Canada

Parcs
Canada



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INITIATIVE**

80-4000

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**PROJECT
LEARNING
TREE**



AIPH

“ In the end we will
conserve only what we
love; we will love only
what we understand;
and we will understand
only what we are taught. ”

Baba Dioum



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Foreword

The [#NatureForAll](#) movement invites organisations, individuals, schools, and partners around the world to host local, regional, national and international celebrations of love of nature.

This guide is designed to help you create and organise an event or activity that celebrates love of nature. It is inspired by the experience of numerous [#NatureForAll](#) partners in organising activities and events that celebrate people's efforts to help others connect with nature and be inspired to take action to conserve nature.

We call these celebrations Love Fests, but the name you choose does not matter. What matters is that your event unites your community, inspires greater environmental awareness and promotes individual and collective engagement with our natural environment. Whatever the name of your celebration, we'd love to highlight them on [#NatureForAll](#) platforms and with the global [#NatureForAll](#) community.

Ready-made templates and design guidelines for posters, social media GIFs, banners and other materials are available in the [#NatureForAll seedbox](#) to help the organisers prepare their event. Building on existing resources and our experiences, the guide consolidates and provides **practice-oriented steps and tools** to support your efforts.

While the approaches presented here have been developed with a view to supporting the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), we hope they will also be useful for anyone who wants to improve their events that help people connect with nature.

The guide draws on the experience of the main authors, who have designed, run, and evaluated dozens of events and celebrations at the local, national, regional and global levels. The guide has also been deeply enriched by substantive insights, feedback, stories, examples and tools provided by the wonderful members of the IUCN Commission on Education and Communication (CEC) and the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA). The authors offer their deepest gratitude for this engagement and sharing. The acknowledgement section of the guide reflects the depth of input provided. We deeply appreciate their contributions and wisdom without which this document would not be the rich and living tool you find it.

We invite you to use this guide as you see fit and to provide us with your feedback, suggestions, and experiences – so we can continue to learn together.

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Introduction

A #NatureForAll event is an opportunity to celebrate your community's efforts to inspire love of nature, develop connections with nature, and act for nature.

Each celebration is different and has its own origin, vision, leaders, activities, features and outcomes, but there are many common elements in the design and organisation of these events that can support greater outcomes. But above all, they all share a common goal: a belief that, united by love and respect for nature, we can create a more conscious movement committed to preserving our planet for future generations.

Combined, #NatureForAll events showcase the great efforts happening around the world, create connections between one another and amplify and grow the #NatureForAll community.

Your event can be its own activity or incorporated into a larger event, such as a forum or multi-day conference. It can be a one-time event, or a recurring, yearly one aimed at providing continuity and a legacy, along with the opportunity for continuous promotion/lasting partnerships. It can be a small, local neighbourhood event; a city-wide event; or even a large, international event.

This distinction will affect the types of things you will need to consider (i.e., in selecting a venue, promoting the event, etc.).

As you begin your planning process, the steps outlined below will become intertwined and may not occur in the order laid out. For example, if you want to host a photo or art exhibit, you may already have thought of photographers or artists to partner with. If you want to organise a school event, you'll already have thought about your audience – school-aged children and potentially their parents. Or the type of event you choose will likely be based on the amount of funds you have available, and vice-versa, so you'll need to be thinking of your budget. The location and audience for your event will impact how much funding you require, which will in turn impact who you may want to partner with.

As such, the steps below aren't necessarily in order of timing or priority, but are meant to help you organise, plan and host your event, no matter the scale, scope, budget or timeline.



Why host a #NatureForAll Event

#NatureForAll is a global partnership the IUCN launched in 2016 comprising of 600+ organisations. The initiative aims to inspire a love of nature to deepen and foster action for nature. Given the collective's commitment to inspiring love of and action for nature, it was natural for the #NatureForAll community to seek ways for individuals and organisations to celebrate their connection with nature.

Because #NatureForAll is a movement, it can act as the unifier, convener and facilitator that brings people and organisations together. With guiding principles including diversity, inclusivity, cooperation, and community, #NatureForAll offers a strong platform to foster enabling environments to reduce barriers and connect people with nature around the world.

By organising a #NatureForAll event, you are tapping into a global collective of action for nature. Your event is no longer an isolated one, but part of a larger, more connected effort at conserving nature.

Through this movement, you'll be able to access tools and templates to help you design, plan, host and publicise your event. You'll have established online platforms to promote your event to a global audience, with the ability to tap into the full #NatureForall community and the initiative's social media platforms.



STEP 1. Identify the why... and how

So you want to celebrate love and action for nature, but where do you start? It's important to clearly state your goal(s) – the why and what the desired outcome of your event is – as well as identify the objectives, the specific actions and accomplishments that lead to the goal – the how.

Start by clearly articulating a vision/mission/goal for why you want to host an event dedicated to nature, and identifying what that opportunity is. Start by answering one (or more) of the following questions, keeping in mind that you'll want to be able to measure whether you were successful in achieving your goal.

What do you want your event to achieve?

Examples: I want to encourage 150 people to come and clean up a beach or a park. I want my whole school to spend more time out in nature. We will submit a petition with 1,000 names to city council to create a new park.

Why are you hosting this event?

Examples: I want to shine the spotlight on the endangered pangolin. I want my community to learn about the various birds that can be found in our area. I want to join the World Wetlands Day/Earth Hour/World Wildlife Day celebrations.








Once you have your goal you'll want to create your objectives, the actions that are going to be your step-by-step guide to reaching your goal. These will also be useful when you want to measure the success of your event.

This will form the basis of a plan, which will help you focus your efforts and will help you as you go through the following steps. Make sure you identify who will benefit from this event, as that will help inform your audience later on.

It can be best to start small, achieve success and build over time, rather than set lofty goals that become overwhelming and ultimately don't work out as planned.

TIP: Keep your goals, three at the most, broad and general, but follow the SMART approach: goals should be specific, measurable, achievable/attainable, realistic/relevant and timely.

S	M	A	R	T
SPECIFIC	MEASURABLE	ATTAINABLE	RELEVANT	TIME-BASED
				
Make goals clear and specific	Define measurable assets	Confirm your goals are attainable	Verify your goals are relevant	Set up a time-based plan



TIP: Use this example/template to ensure your objectives align with your goals, as well as to measure your event's success.

STEP 2. Identify the opportunity

The IUCN Commission on Education and Communication and the World Commission on Protected Areas, along with key partners, organise a yearly #NatureForAll Love Fest in February. This celebration brings together a variety of events and activities into one global celebration of love of nature.

You are invited to align your event with this one. However, maybe there's a better time for you to organise an event, one that aligns with your community's needs and activities. Answering these questions can help you identify the best opportunity for your "love fest".

Are you involved in organising a conference or forum focused on nature conservation?

Is there an opportunity within that to host an event celebrating love of nature?

Is there a larger festival or event, locally, nationally or even internationally, that you could align with or participate in, like the Children & Nature Network's [Vitamin N Challenge](#)?

Does your work align well with an internationally recognised day, like [World Wildlife Day](#), [Earth Day](#) or [World Tiger Day](#) for example? Check out the [UN calendar](#) for ideas.



Image Credit: Anthony Ochieng Onyango

Identifying the opportunity and the timing of your event well in advance will be a driving determinant of success. It takes time and effort to organise a successful celebration, so getting the timing right is important. In addition, the sooner you identify the opportunity, the more time you'll have to prepare and incorporate the next steps. It's also a good idea to start thinking about who you are going to invite, and why, as that will impact other steps in this guide.



TIP: Look at what else is happening around your proposed timeline, and whether you'll be competing with something similar and therefore having a hard time finding support, or whether you are able to leverage an opportunity to reach more people.

Step 3: Identify your audience



Image Credit: Sean Southey

You can plan an amazing event, but if no one shows up, it is not going to be a success. Identifying who you want to reach, both to participate as a co-host/partner and to attend, is an important aspect of planning.

Are you planning on inviting just your network? Are you organising a school-based event? Is it a city-wide event, a global event? Are you hoping to target youth, families?

If you are hoping to invite speakers, for example your mayor or another high-level government representative, that can take time to set-up given their schedules, and needs to be well-thought through. It also needs to be collated into a well-designed programme that makes sense to the audience.

Examples of audiences also include Institutions, public-private sector, governments, NGOs, Civil Societies, academicians, professionals and students. Think carefully of who will be interested in your activity or event, so that you can tailor your message to them.

The steps above will help inform who your audience is, but clearly articulating and being more specific than “the general public,” will help determine how you proceed with the next steps. It can even lead to identifying potential partners who wish to join into the planning process.



TIP: If you are organising an event for the first time, target an audience that will be receptive to your idea, but also ensure you make it inclusive, so that everyone feels welcome to participate.

STEP 4. Recruit partners

You and your organisation might be able to organise a celebration yourselves, but it might be worth looking around your networks and community to see who you could approach who might be interested and able to help you.

It can be difficult organising events on your own, let alone funding one. Working with other #NatureForAll partners can help spread the workload, stretch your financial impact and bring more people to your event. You can also explore what other organisations or groups located in your community are doing, and whether they want to collaborate. Having a shared purpose and collaborating with one or more other partners can create great synergies and positive results. Planning the event itself can lead to positive results and new opportunities.

Starting to think about your audience (step 5) here can also help in identifying potential partners.

Don't limit yourself to environmental organisations or not-for profits either.



Image Credit: Cristián Andrés Vásquez Bermúdez

- Can your various levels of governments offer funding?
- Are there businesses you could approach that would be interested in participating, or even provide incentive prizes? If you are approaching businesses, make sure to provide them with a strong “what’s in it for me” initiative. Will they be able to sell things, promote their wares or their brand? How will they benefit from partnering with you? Are they willing to provide funding support?
- Can you leverage partnership with organisations that have institutional and infrastructure capacities who can assist in upscaling the event to wider stakeholders?
- Is your event going to be inclusive and accessible? Are there organisations that can help you if you need it?
- Can you turn your event into a fundraiser itself? Hosting a ‘circular sale’ or ‘clothing/item swap’ can be a great way to reduce impacts on the environment, tell the stories of the items you have loved and then let them go on to be a part of someone else's story - without adding to landfill!

That said, the quality of the partnerships will be directly correlated to the quality of the event. It is worth selecting partners who are well-aligned in your vision and can make a real and tangible contribution to the event– one which specifically plays on and leverages their unique offering/strengths while complementing your own.



TIP: Tap into the #NatureForAll community, which numbers more than 600 partners from more than 80 countries from around the world. There may be other organisations that are interested in supporting your efforts.

TIP: If you need staff support, look at partnering with community-based organisations – like churches, service organisations or even schools – which might have a strong volunteer base that you can recruit.

TIP: Engage youth! Recreational or school action youth groups can offer a wealth of energy, ideas and time to support a project to fulfilment.



STEP 5. Budget and secure funding

Are you planning on organising an event that won't cost you any money, only your time? If so, you can probably skip this step.

However, as you identify your activity(ies), your venue, your audience, and your promotional needs, you may need to allocate some funds to achieve your goals. If you do need funds, can you and your organisation cover all of them, or will you need support or seed funding?

A detailed budget will help you stay organised and on top of your costs. It can help you identify where partners and funders can provide support, or if you need to look at different options (for example a free venue).

With a detailed budget, you can prepare pitches to local business partners who might be able and willing to cover some costs (see Step 3 above). In addition, various government levels and foundations in your community might offer grants or contributions to support community efforts. In any event, it is possible that a significant amount of fundraising and sponsorship may be needed. If that's the case, the sooner you identify your opportunity and start fundraising, the more chances your event will be a success.

Your budget will likely be closely linked to promotional efforts- the more an event is promoted and can demonstrate financial feasibility and a legacy of success, the more likely it is to attract sponsorship/funding. Similarly, the better your event is promoted, the more likely it is to be on the radar of funders/sponsors. You may wish to prepare a sponsorship brochure for your event which lays out the fundraising needs, according to your budget, and highlights the benefits to funders of providing financial support.

Planning for a yearly event can drastically increase the success, attendance and fundraising as the community gets to know and expect the event and sponsors gain interest and trust in the event. You can start small and grow the event each year. (So no one gets discouraged or intimidated).

Having a clear vision, purpose and desired outcomes, as outlined in step one, will help you articulate what benefit any funder/sponsor/partner will derive from contributing.



TIP: Download this [budgeting template](#) to get you started.



STEP 6. Choose activity(ies)

There are many ways to celebrate love of nature, and all of them are wonderful! Your event can be anything you want it to be, as long as it brings people together celebrating nature. Once you've identified the opportunity above, you'll want to figure out what exactly you will do. Your choice of partners will likely influence, or be influenced by, the activity you want to do.

The following are just some examples of activities you might want to organise on its own or during your larger celebration. Also check out previous [#NatureForAll Love Fests](#) to see what other organisations have done in the past.



Mark an **international day**, inviting people to take part and share their stories around that theme/topic. Examples from [Reverse The Red](#) and [Wildlife Jewels](#).



Photo or art festival/exhibit: Work with local photographers, artists, studios or even schools to host a nature-based photo/art exhibit. It could be a collaborative art piece or it's possible to organise something even bigger, like this example from the [Chiapas Birding Photo Festival](#).



Family event: Invite your community to an event of celebration, fun and activities focused on your work, like Paso Pacifico celebrating the ocean on [World Ocean Day](#).



Film screening/festival: Do you have access to one or some nature films? Have a film screening at a theatre, library or school assembly. Do you want to engage members of your community? Invite them to create nature films and then host an event highlighting the submissions. You can even award prizes! Example from [Green Film Net](#).



Music concert/dance party: Invite people to a party with songs inspired by nature and sustainability, or just decorate the venue in a nature theme. An evening social as part of a conference is a great opportunity to celebrate love of nature as a group. Example from [Take Me Outside](#), which organises an evening social as part of its yearly outdoor education conference.



Webinar/dialogue: Host an in-person or virtual discussion on a nature-based topic related to your work, incorporating love of nature in the conversation. Example from the [CEC and WCPA](#).



Story/poetry: Invite your network to share stories, or poems, about their connection with nature. You could host an in-person event in a local park and invite all members of the community to participate, open mic style, or set up a TedTalks-style event where speakers share their connection with/love of nature. Examples from [The Story Collider](#) and [The Starfish Canada](#).



Awards ceremony: Handing out awards is a celebration already! Highlight the amazing work people are doing and invite them to share their story of connecting with and falling in love with nature. Example from the [International Association of Horticultural Producers](#).



Outdoor activity: Host an activity like forest bathing, nature hike/walk, boat ride, bird watching, etc. Examples from [Red Oak Nature Centre](#) and [Families in Nature](#).



Webinar/online workshop: Host a webinar or online workshop which showcases how people are working with nature and nature-based solutions to common problems to inspire transformative change. Example from the [Outdoor Learning School & Store](#) and the [Children & Nature Network](#).



Host a **get together** for people to share their inspirational stories of connecting with/loving nature, like these events from the [Sunshine Coast Environmental Council](#).



Flash mob/party: Invite everyone to dress in red (color of love) or green (nature) or blue (ocean) or as their favourite nature thing (animal, insect, tree, plant, etc.). Example from the [Wildlife Clubs of Kenya](#).



Social media campaign: Organise a campaign around a specific environmental topic and encourage your followers to share their love for it. Example from [Eucalypt Australia](#) with their #LoveAGum campaign.



TIP: Combine some of these events and create a large, community fair, or choose one and incorporate your activities into an existing event or conference.



STEP 7. Identify location/secure venue(s)

Are you planning to host a virtual event, or a live one?

If virtual, ensure you are familiar with the platform (Teams, Zoom, Webex, etc.) that you plan to use, and hold one or more test runs before the day of the event. Identify at least one person who can act solely as a technical support to troubleshoot any potential issues, as opposed to trying to host and manage technical aspects on your own.

For a live event, your location will depend on several factors, including the type of activity you are planning as well as your budget (see Step 8).

When choosing your site, consider the following:

- Can you host the event in nature (i.e., in a public open space, urban park, green area, garden, national park etc.)? Do you need to secure permission to book this space? Do you need insurance, or first aid?
- If hosting in nature, is there a particularly impressive or inspiring natural feature (i.e., a green roof/green wall, waterfall) that can act as a backdrop for your event?
- Is there a green building/nature-positive building where attendees can be immersed in real-life demonstrations of the power of plants/nature?
- Is there a venue that offers views to nature, or easy access to nature for participants?
- Is the location easily accessible by your target audience? Can it be accessed via public transport by many?
- If making this part of, or complementary to, a global event or alongside another partner event (like [The Nature of Cities Festival](#) or a side event at a UN COP), are there considerations to take into account from those organisers?
- If wanting to align with a conference taking place in your city, are there any guidelines for a sanctioned side-event?
- Is there potential for on-the-ground support (i.e., from a local partner/event management company/support from the team at the venue etc.)?



TIP: *Online events or events where people can submit their own stories at their own pace can inspire wider and varied participation, but hosting a smaller in person event in nature can be very powerful, too. Do what feels right for your project.*

TIP: *If hosting an in-person event, especially one outdoors and involving physical activity, make sure you have drinking water and emergency supplies such as a first aid kit on hand, and a toilet nearby.*

STEP 8. Promote the event

Whether you want 50 people or 5,000 people to attend or engage with your #NatureForAll event, you'll want to promote it and spread the word. But keep in mind your audience from Step 5. Where do they get their information? How do you reach them in particular? What sort of language will resonate with them?

A social media campaign can be a great way to do this, and you can tag various partners and use specific hashtags to expand your reach and amplify your message. Make sure you have some attractive visual assets to accompany any such campaign, which you can share with partners well-enough in advance of the event that you can invite their support in spreading the news.

For local or small regional events, consider an “on the ground” campaign, which could include posters in high traffic areas, radio spots or even local newspaper ads or articles. If you are going to put up posters, make sure to remove them and dispose of them after the event. Or better yet, create posters that don't have any specific dates on them, so you can re-use them next year!

If you are hoping to engage members of your community from all age demographics, consider dropping off print materials at care facilities, youth centres, community centres or grocery store notice boards, which may be more successful than just online marketing.

Develop a range of promotional content options for you/your organisation and partners to use to promote the event through your/their networks and the channels at your/their disposal. These may include newsletters, dedicated mailers, webpages, web articles, press releases, etc.

You will also need to give some thought to invitations and send these out as far in advance as possible. Having a database of contacts or a mailing list of subscribers is useful in this regard. If you do not have one available to you, you may wish to consider building one through your invitation and expression of interest processes for your event. These will be useful if the event recurs annually, or bi-annually as you will have a network comprising your target audience.

If you are planning an in-school event, be sure to arrange it on a day that doesn't conflict with other events to maximise participation!

Use the #NatureForAll brand and available platforms, and seek out support from the whole community to help lift, support and promote your event. See the [#NatureForAll branding guidelines](#) for guidance about how and when to use the #NatureForAll logo.



TIP: Take advantage of the various communications platforms and tools #NatureForAll offers – website, social media networks and a newsletter list of more than 3,000 subscribers! Contact us through www.natureforall.global/contact to find out how.

TIP: The [#NatureForAll Seedbox](#) has some tools you can use, and adapt, to help you promote your event.

STEP 9. On the day

All the planning is done, and the big day has arrived. Now it's time to deliver your event.

What your day will look like will obviously depend on the activity you choose, who your partners are and who's coming.

However, by having a well-thought out and robust plan in place, while allowing flexibility for unexpected surprises (e.g. what happens if you've organised an outdoor event and it starts raining?), you'll be able to successfully host and enjoy your event.

Before the event starts, check to make sure everything is working properly. If you are hosting a virtual event, log in 30 minutes early with your presenters to go over any final items and make sure everyone's software is working properly.



Image Credit: Remy Rodden

If you are hosting an in-person event, double-check that you have everything in place, that your staff/partners/volunteers know their roles and responsibilities. Check in with them throughout the event to make sure everything is working smoothly.

Throughout the event, be attentive to what's working well, what people are saying and how people are behaving.



TIP: *Just because you organised the event doesn't mean you can't enjoy it.*

STEP 10. Assess, report and disclose

Was your event successful? What worked well? What didn't? Could you have done something different? Were people having fun? Was everyone, from children to their parents and grandparents, engaged?

You, and your partners and funders, will want to know how successful the event was, and whether you met your stated objectives. Assessing success/measuring performance is especially critical if you plan on turning your event into a yearly one so you can determine whether you need to revise or change your goals and objectives.

Design a feedback process, with a variety of methods, so event partners, funders and participants can share their thoughts. Consider using surveys, questionnaires, and event dialogues to gather input during the event and a few days after the event. Debrief discussions with key stakeholders and participants can serve as a useful and more organic way to gather insights, testimonials, recommendations and ensure a two-way communication between participants and organisers. Such sessions can also be recorded for reporting and references in the future.

Ensure any feedback mechanisms have closed and open-ended questions, allow scale evaluations and longer insights (e.g. takeaways, recommendations for improvement etc.), while reflecting on different aspects of the event (e.g. the program content and design, specific sessions, venue, food etc.).

Such assessment can be done with the help of numerous digital tools, many of which are free of charge. Why not use a fun and interactive poll (e.g. Mentimeter) directly during the event and a more extensive survey (e.g. Google form) after it concludes?



Reporting and disclosure show accountability. It's also an opportunity to provide lessons learned from your efforts so that you can create a better event next year, and so others can learn from you. As a community, we rely on each other to learn.

By having identified your goals and objectives (your why and how) as well as what you want to measure beforehand (like attendance/ticket sales, social media hits, on-site sales, etc.), you'll be able to clearly identify what information you want to gain from these groups. For example, if one of your goals is to encourage youth to get outside, knowing how many participated in your event will be important. If one of your tactics was to buy social media ads, knowing how many people saw it and, more importantly, clicked on it, will let you know whether the investment was worthwhile.

This will provide you with data you can share with partners and funders. Keeping a log or feedback form can also help you compare from year to year and highlight your success rate, or help you adjust your objectives for the following year. You may also need to analyse the data to compare it to your stated goals and objectives, as well as your anticipated results.

It also provides a nice bookend to your event, and a critical review of the process can lead to some important lessons learned for your own future efforts, extremely helpful if you plan on doing this on a yearly basis.

Your level of reporting and disclosure will likely be tied to who you partnered with, what your funders (if any) expect in return for their support, and how you want to continue connecting with the participants. It will also depend on the data you receive and the types of tools you used to gather the data. You can prepare basic information sheets or full reports that allow you to communicate information differently to wider stakeholders.

Once you've compiled data, make it visible and accessible to your stakeholder groups. You may also consider extending the report by topping the findings of the participants' assessment of the event with general facts and figures to present on the overall outcome. Your impact data, testimonials, stories and photos of people experiencing the joys of nature can make great promotional materials and advertisements to future event sponsors, funders and partners!



TIP: Use the report as another opportunity to engage with your community, partners, sponsors and even media. It's worth the investment of time and staff effort. Do you have a small local print or radio outlet that would like to hear your good news event story?



Acknowledgments

We appreciate the many people who have contributed to this guide and the development of the #NatureForAll Love Fest concept on which this guide is built. Thank you for all you do!

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Resources

[#NatureForAll branding guidelines](#)
[#NatureForAll Seedbox](#)
[Goal and objectives table](#)
[Budgeting template](#)



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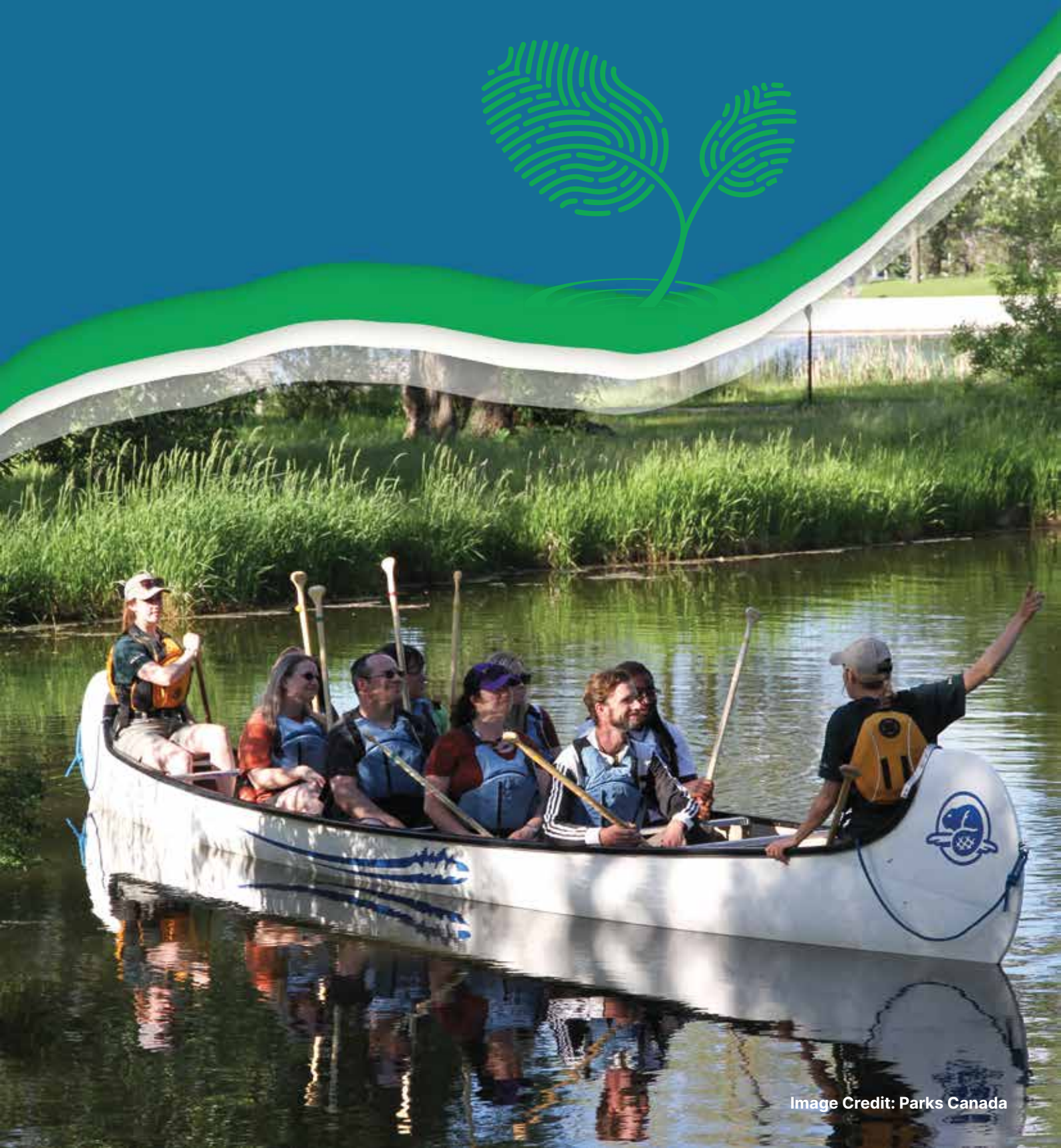


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