



Speakers Bureau of Canada

Bureau d'orateurs du Canada

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William Gagnon

Changemaker and Innovation Facilitator

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Language Spoken

English French

Travel's From

Yellowknife, Northwest
Territories

Speaker Biography:

William Gagnon is green buildings specialist and decarbonization expert. He completed a building engineering degree (Concordia University), grad-level studies in Sustainable Carbon Management (Université du Québec à Chicoutimi) and a Climate Fellowship from Cornell University (Ithaca, New York)

William is passionate about social engineering to accelerate decarbonization; in parallel to his work, he has been hosting an ecoanxiety workshop series with different groups in Canada and abroad. In 2018, he received the Corporate Knight's Top 30 under 30 Sustainability Award, and was shortlisted for the Eco Canada Impact Award.

An innovator, his most recent work includes the creation of a strategy for the Northern Building Retrofit Economy: he demonstrated that retrofitting all buildings in the Northwest Territories to zero carbon would create a return on investment of 9%, in addition to unleashing savings of \$20M per year, and create more than 120 direct and indirect jobs for the Territory. He holds two LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) professional accreditation and the Living Future Accreditation..

William now sits with CDETNO where he works on accelerating the creation of green jobs and circular economy through innovation. He is a trained UNLEASH Innovation Lab facilitator.

He lives, works and plays on Chief Drygeese Territory of the Yellowknives Dene; he is an advocate for LGBTQ2+, and is a "northern vegetarian" (eats happy meat, once in a while). William is a carbon-neutral individual and cross-country skis as much as possible.

William sits on the board of the Northern Council for Global Cooperation where he promotes the Sustainable Development Goals across the three Canadian Territories, and on the board of the Green Party of Canada.

William was invited to speak at conferences in Yellowknife, Whitehorse, Montreal, Toronto, Anchorage, Seattle, Norway, Sweden, the Netherlands, China and Spain.

Topic Presentations

KEYNOTE INNOVATION, CIRCULAR ECONOMY & SCANDINAVIAN INSPIRATION

// SCANDINAVIAN INSPIRATION

What's being done elsewhere: stories from site visits of electric planes in Norway, carbon-negative district energy systems in Finland, carbon farmers in Sweden, and other climate solutions and their engineering and financing mechanisms. Explanations on their applicability in the North, and why Canada needs to jump on that.

/// CARBON PRICING AND INNOVATION

Carbon markets and carbon pricing; how the north could benefit from a price on carbon that would incentivize innovation and push for more « low-tech-high-tech » technologies. I believe that engineers and designers will be one of the most in-demand professions in the low-carbon economy.

/// NORTHERN BUILDING RETROFIT ECONOMY

Retrofitting all buildings in Canada to carbon-neutrality will create jobs and bring economic savings to our communities. The Northern Building Retrofit Economy presents market opportunities for retrofitting buildings that are financially viable for both designers and homeowners; providing a 9% ROI, \$20M annual savings for the Territory, a much-needed incentive to retrofit the building stock crippling with energy losses and health condition issues.

WORKSHOP ECOANXIETY: How can we transform ecoanxiety into meaningful work on climate solutions?

It gets harder to float through the days without expressing deep worries about our future on this planet. Eco-anxiety, eco-anger, eco-grief, or eco-paralysis — these feelings are normal. It's okay to have them. It's a healthy reaction to what is happening around us. How can we better channel and use them as fuel for climate action work?

/// WHAT TO EXPECT

Participants will experience an interactive presentation about key concepts and terms on climate emotions, their underlying mechanisms, and they will deepen their understanding about why these thoughts are normal. This workshop is an invitation to normalize, destigmatize and share climate emotions, transforming them into meaningful climate action.

Three-quarters of Canadians feel really anxious or increasingly worried about the climate crisis*

/// ABOUT ECO-ANXIOUS STORIES

Eco-Anxious Stories is a community of storytellers channelling worry and fear about the climate crisis into courageous, compassionate action. Included among our collaborators are climate and mental health professionals who help us design tools to support healthy, long-term relationships with our eco-anxieties. Join us today at ecoanxious.ca.

Only 12 percent of Canadians feel that climate change is not something that people should be concerned about.*

Testimonials

“William’s lived experiences of transforming eco-anxiety into climate action speaks louder than words. His vision for an innovative, circular economy is evidence-based and inclusive. William is a passionate, witty and energetic changemaker. He brings to engineering a fresh perspective of social marketing, education, awareness, and consensus-building. This is what Canada needs at this time.”

-The Honourable Rosa Galvez, Ph.D., P.Eng. (QC), FEC, FCSCE, Independent Senator, The Senate of Canada

“William was a speaker at NAPEG’s (Northwest Territories and Nunavut Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists) 2020 annual Professional Development Symposium. The 2020 theme was ‘Climate Change: Infrastructure, Adaptation and Professional Practice’. William’s passion not only for reduction and mitigation of climate change but engaging others to do the same brought additional dynamic to the symposium and discussion.

William was a dynamic presenter, challenging attendees. I would recommend him for the speakers bureau as an energetic and knowledgeable addition.“ ”

-Philip Lewis,[Text Wrapping Break]P.Eng., Councilor, Northwest Territories and Nunavut Association of Professional Engineers (NAPEG)

“William puts himself on the edge of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time and manages to present these topics with optimistic energy. William was a key speaker at the ‘Out of the Blue’ event in Oslo in 2019. The event was in partnership with the Oslo European Green Capital 2019 event calendar, and invited speakers from around the world to present the challenges that ‘blue’ climate change poses in different context. I highly recommend William Gagnon to the Speakers Bureau. He will undoubtedly inspire a call to action.”

-Rebekah Schaberg, Architect and Urban Designer White arkitekter Oslo. Oslo, Norway

“William Gagnon’s workshop entitled EcoAnxiety, engages youth of all ages on the topic of climate change. This workshop provides a very necessary platform to youth so that they can identify the many emotions that one feels about climate change. Youth around the world are frightened by climate change and they face a very uncertain future. William’s workshop helps participants to identify a plethora of reasonable emotions that are genuinely felt about climate change: anxiety, anger, helplessness, despair, etc. and enables youth to transform these very real emotions into meaningful action. Youth come up with tangible and effective solutions in their everyday lives. This is a very confusing and desperate time for many youth around the world and William’s EcoAnxiety workshop can provide our youth with positive tools to engage and connect with their community and to contribute to solutions for a cleaner, greener future.”

-Meera Sarin, Teacher, F.H. Collins High School, Whitehorse, Yukon, Canada –

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