

One Conservancy Science Gathering

IMPACT REPORT



November 2024 | Mexico City, Mexico



Bringing Science Together:

A Summary of Gathering Highlights and Impact

The 2024 One Conservancy Science Gathering (OCSG) in Mexico City was attended by 508 science and conservation staff from 32 countries and 75 business units (BUs). OCS travel stipends supported 56 junior to senior staff from 22 countries, ensuring participation across all regions.

The Gathering featured a packed schedule of plenary talks, presentations, posters and professional development workshops. A total of 120 science presentations were delivered in 25 separate sessions that addressed a broad range of topics, from Indigenous knowledge and conservation planning to climate adaptation and the use of AI in biodiversity science. Participants were also inspired by thought-provoking panels from TNC leadership, energized by flash mentoring sessions, and encouraged to connect at nightly networking events.

Two important themes emerged during the Gathering. First, there is a rapidly growing mountain of evidence that TNC science is impacting conservation and climate strategies both within the organization and beyond. Second, a shared belief that love powers all our work—love for places, people, and nature—was a unifying thread throughout discussions.

At the Gathering, two important new initiatives were announced: a joint TNC-Smithsonian Institute Sustainability Fellowship that will fund six TNC post-doctoral research fellows, thanks to a \$2.7 million gift from Denise O’Leary

and Kent Thiry, and the Senator Bill and Tracy Frist Initiative for Planetary and Human Health, kicked off by a \$1 million gift from the Frists.

Feedback from Gathering participants underscored the value of this event in encouraging attendees to build professional networks, explore new interdisciplinary collaborations, and advance TNC’s 2030 goals. For example, **over 90% of participants felt the event was worthwhile**, with engaging speakers, useful sessions, and the opportunities to share their opinions and make new connections.

This report summarizes the Gathering’s main themes and highlights the key scientific insights, opportunities, and innovations that emerged from this global event. It also distills learnings on strengthening collaboration within our scientific community and organizing future Gatherings. By capturing these insights, the report aims to inform TNC’s One Conservancy Science (OCS) program and enhance TNC’s collective scientific impact.

“I was aware that TNC was a science-based organization, but I only truly grasped its richness during this OCSG.”

Why the Gathering Matters:

Goals and Vision

Beginning in 1995, TNC's Science Gathering has provided an opportunity for scientists and science staff to convene, share their work, discuss scientific advancements, and build professional relationships. The most recent Gathering, held virtually in 2021 due to COVID-19, followed the last in-person event in Houston in 2018.

Since then, TNC adopted its ambitious 2030 goals, and Chief Scientist Katharine Hayhoe introduced the One Conservancy Science program. This TNC-wide science strategy aims to refine our scientific focus, enhance collaboration across the Conservancy, address gaps in expertise, and ensure consistency in our scientific work.

The 2024 One Conservancy Science Gathering was designed to accelerate our progress on the four pillars of the OSC while broadening our scope and building collaborations with partners. By aligning the event with these aims, the Gathering not only advanced TNC's scientific mission but also reinforced our commitment to inclusivity, diversity, and global collaboration through:

1. **Connecting and celebrating One Conservancy Science:**

Providing opportunities for scientist staff and conservation staff to connect, build collaborations, exchange ideas, and inspire deeper engagement. This was accomplished through a broad range of formal presentations and working sessions, as well as social activities and free time that enabled informal networking, meaningful conversations, and the chance to build stronger personal and professional relationships.

2. **Strengthening knowledge of inclusion and diversity:**

Promoting a greater understanding of inclusion and diversity in science, including traditional ecological knowledge. This was accomplished by holding the Gathering outside of the US for the first time, intentionally supporting participation from global staff, and showcasing diverse ways of knowing in plenaries, presentations, and workshops.

3. **Building technical and professional skills:**

Enhancing the scientific acumen of TNC staff through trainings, mentoring sessions, networking events and the formal scientific program.

4. **Connecting science to conservation:**

Empowering TNC scientists to effectively communicate how our scientific efforts directly impact conservation and TNC's 2030 goals. This was achieved through a plenary event focused on the art of storytelling, sessions modeling effective communication strategies, and hands-on workshops on using social media and crafting compelling personal narratives to tell stories.

In addition to these goals, the OCSG established several guiding principles. First, the Gathering was designed to be inclusive and reflective of TNC's global presence. Second, it sought to represent a diverse range of scientific disciplines and professionals at various career stages and levels of expertise. Third, for the first time, partners and peers were invited, including scientists and collaborators from external environmental NGOs. Finally, the event aimed to highlight the scientific contributions from Latin America, the host region, to promote greater recognition of its work.

By aligning with these principles and goals, the 2024 OCSG not only advanced TNC's scientific mission but also reinforced our commitment to inclusivity, and global collaboration.





A Global Gathering:

Who was there?

Inclusivity, diversity and sustainability were at the core of planning the One Conservancy Science Gathering. Held from November 11-15, 2024, in Mexico City, the location, program, and events were carefully chosen to reflect these values.

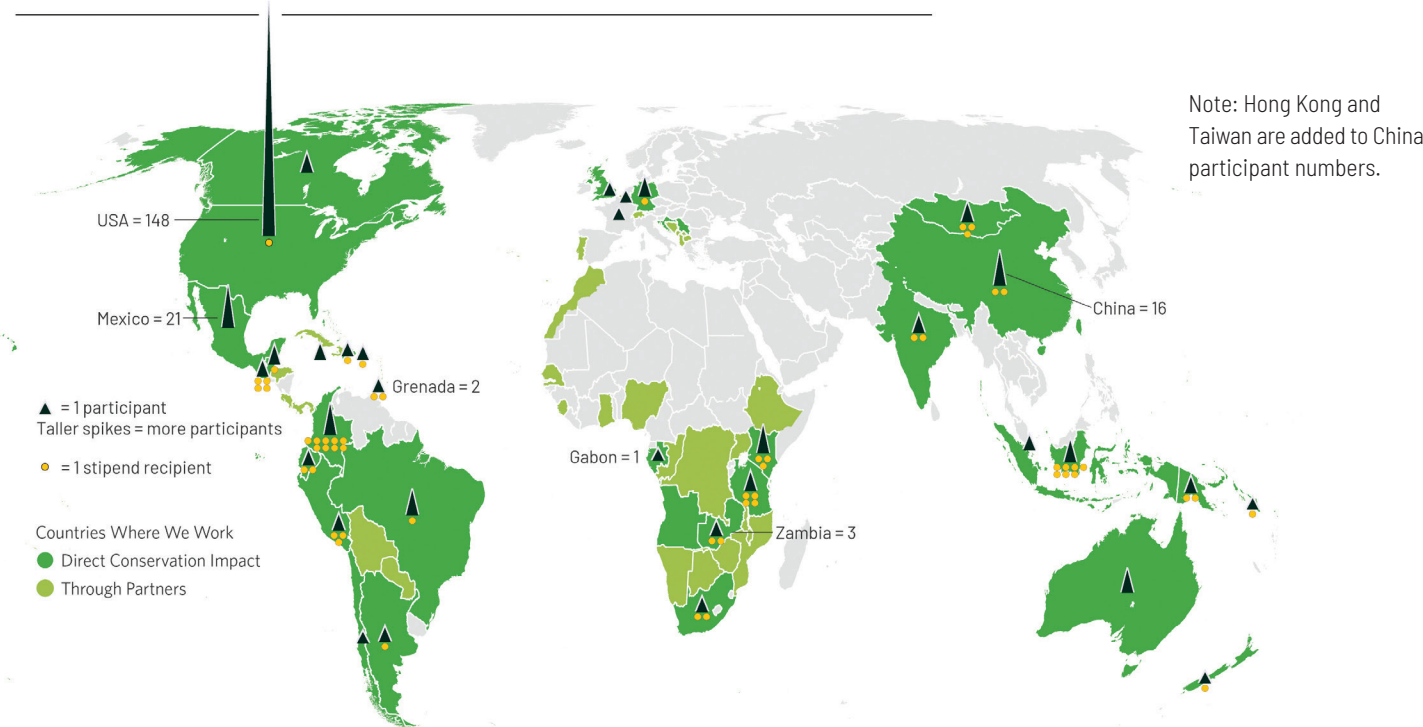
Mexico City was selected for its accessibility, affordability, rich cultural heritage, renowned cuisine, and vibrant atmosphere. Troop, a planning and group travel platform, highlighted Mexico City as having relatively low travel times and costs for global participants, affordable lodging options,

and the lowest estimated CO2 emissions from travel. This choice aligned with TNC's diversity and sustainability goals.

The success of the Gathering was driven by TNC's exceptional science community. Hosting the event in Mexico provided an opportunity to highlight TNC's Latin American science and scientists. Together, the Global Science team and Mexico business unit hosts **welcomed 508 participants, with 464 attending in person in Mexico City and 44 virtually**. To ensure global participation, the OCS program provided 56 stipends to TNC staff from 22 countries, prioritizing business units with lesser resources.

FIGURE 1. OCSG Participants Data

Participants by Country | One Conservancy Science Gathering 2024



The event featured more than **230 speakers from 32 countries and 75 business units** (Figure 1). Early career scientists made up 38% of attendees, while 53% were mid-career (Figure 2). Scientists from nearly three dozen environmental, government, academic, and research institutions also attended, half from other conservation organizations, 27% from academic institutions and 23% from research organizations (Figure 3).

High-level engagement from TNC's executive leadership further underscored the importance of the Gathering. Six of the fifteen members of TNC's executive leadership team attended the Gathering, including Chief Executive Officer Jen Morris, Chief Conservation Officer David Banks, Chief Marketing

and Communications Officer Meg Goldthwaite, Executive VP of Global Programs Matt Brown, Chief Global Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice Officer Officer James Page, and Chief Scientist Katharine Hayhoe. Three Global Board members, including Board Chair, Senator Bill Frist, Dr. Nancy Knowlton, Kent Thiry, and emeritus board member Craig McCaw actively engaged in the event, participating in panels and other programming.

Overall, the 2024 OCSG brought together participants from around the world, across a range of career stages and institutions, highlighting the interdisciplinary and collaborative nature of our work.

FIGURE 2. MAP OF TOP CONTRIBUTORS IN 2024

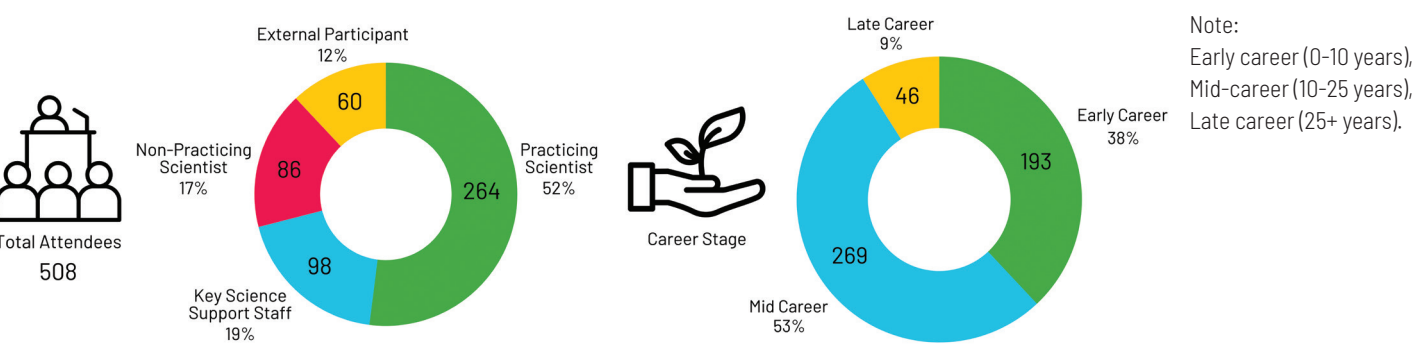
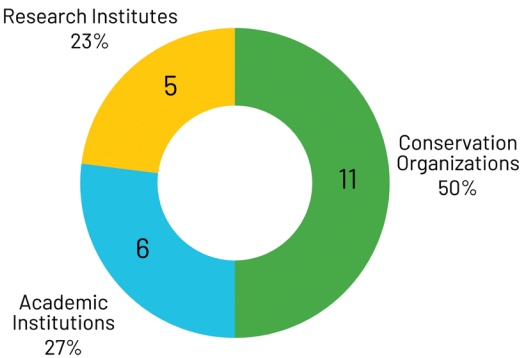


FIGURE 3. OCSG External Organization and Institutions

Conservation Organizations	Research and Academic Institutes
Audubon Society	Climate Central
Conservation International	Medicine Fish
Coral Reef Alliance	US Geological Survey
Earth Re-Earth Initiative	Smithsonian Institute
Environmental Defense Fund	World Resources Institute
Instituto Humboldt (Colombia)	Auburn University
International Union for The Conservation of Nature	Duke University
National Resources Defense Council	Ohio State University
Oceana	University of Louisville
Regenintel	University of Michigan
Wildlife Conservation Society	University of Washington





The Big Ideas: Key Themes and Insights

Several overarching themes emerged during the Gathering, reflecting the scientific discussions, challenges, and opportunities explored during the event. These themes powerfully illustrate how participants view their science, the impact our science is having from the local to global scale, and the depth and breadth of the intellectual exchanges during the week.

One central theme was the **profound impact of science on conservation and climate strategies within TNC and beyond**. TNC is the only environmental NGO that invests in a large science conference for its staff and partners, and this theme was woven throughout the Gathering, reflecting TNC's commitment to rigorous science driving conservation. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) sessions highlighted how TNC staff track and report data to demonstrate conservation results. Ellen Stofan, Under Secretary for Science and Research at the Smithsonian Institution, expanded on this theme in her plenary, and several working sessions focused on how to prioritize the science most directly relevant to TNC's 2030 goals.

The **crucial role of storytelling and effective science communication** emerged as another central theme. Climate justice activist Xiye Bastida captivated the audience with a masterclass in science communication, sharing her personal

journey to activism. The importance of storytelling for science was further emphasized during a fireside chat with Meg Goldthwaite and Katharine Hayhoe, who offered practical tips for effective communication. Katharine also led a pop-up session on how to share science on social media. Other sessions showcased innovative, field-tested approaches to science communication such as Megan Dettenmaier's lightning talk about her team's informal "office hours" program, and the Global Protect program's approach to leveraging storytelling to highlight the program's successes, using data visualization to make scientific evidence accessible, and engaging stakeholders through social media to mobilize a global audience to achieve TNC's 2030 goals.

Perhaps the **most surprising and powerful theme, however, was love**. From the opening plenary speakers, through panel after panel, and into the closing ceremony, science staff and leadership alike spoke eloquently and emotionally about how love powers their work: love of place, love of people, and love of nature. TNC Chief Scientist, Katharine Hayhoe, encouraged attendees to continue to make that head to heart connection in their daily work, emphasizing that beginning with a basis of love and care **"makes our science more effective at solving the world's most pressing problems."**

Voices from the Gathering

"I was aware that TNC was a science-based organization, but I only truly grasped its richness during this OCSG. It's impressive to realize that, as a TNC staff member, I have access to so many scientists and brilliant minds."

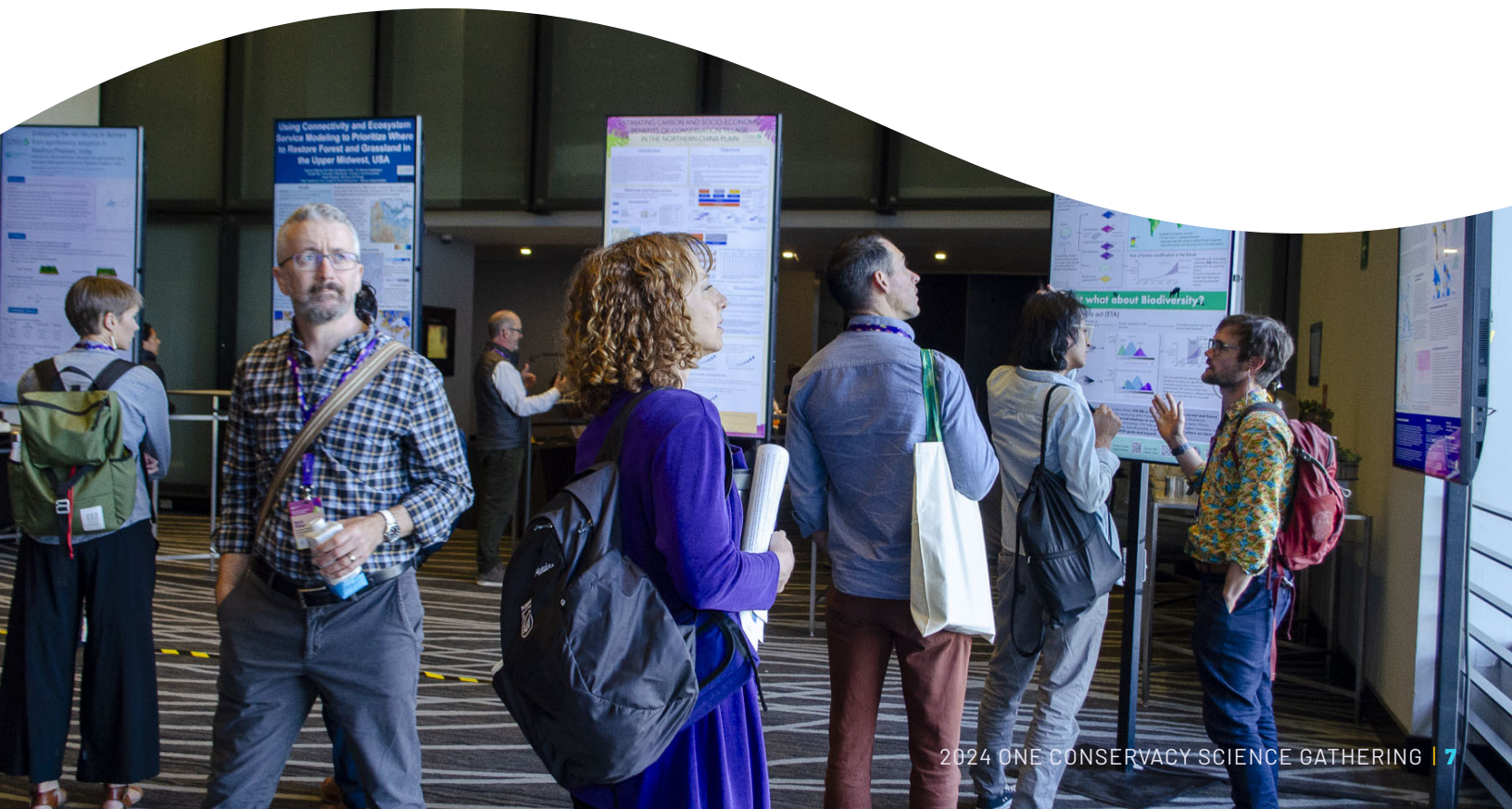
"Thank you so much for bringing us together and promoting such a kind, collaborative, and useful Gathering. Every session and talk had a beautiful balance of strong science and usefulness for practical application and needs of partners. An amazing week."

"In my 15 years at TNC, this has been one of the most enriching processes I've experienced. I've recommended it to several colleagues because it truly adds value to our work, especially with local communities."

"I was completely blown away by the organization. Everything was very well handled and in a timely manner. The details and all the activities made it a very big but personalized experience."

"Thank you for all the hard work! It was so amazing to have so many TNC scientists in one space."

"The small-group discussion-based sessions such as World Cafe and Working Sessions were the most effective for me. They allowed peer-to-peer learning, networking, sharing of information, and were the most engaging."





Xiye Bastida



Jen Morris



Kyle Whyte

Moments that Mattered:

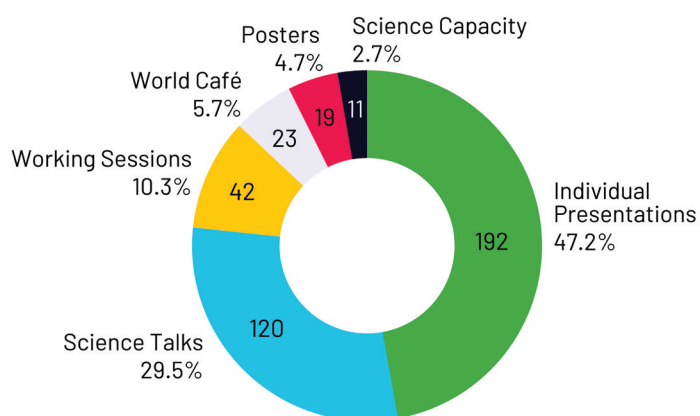
Conference Highlights

The Gathering showcased over 407 offerings from the TNC community and external participants. As summarized in Figure 4, these included:

- Keynotes and plenary talks
- New program and funding announcements
- Presentations, lightning talks, and poster sessions
- Workshops, working sessions, and professional development and science capacity trainings
- Networking events, dinners, field trips, and outdoor and wellness activities

This section describes each of these in more detail.

FIGURE 4. OCSG Sessions by the Numbers



Inspiring Voices: Keynote Speakers and Plenaries

Four plenary speakers headlined the OCSG and framed the themes of inclusivity, diversity, and collaboration in conservation science.

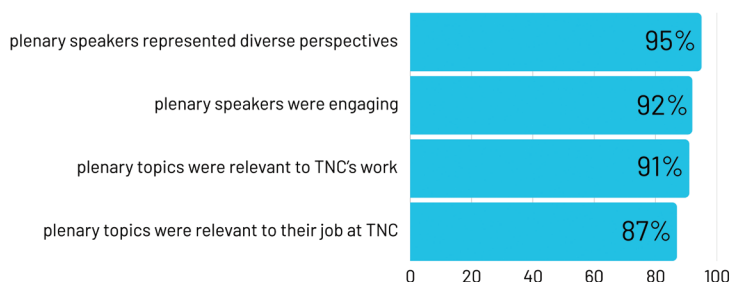
- **Dr. Kyle Whyte:** A faculty member at the University of Michigan, environmental justice scientist, and member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation. Dr. Whyte delivered a compelling talk on *Unearthing the Role of Memory in Mobilizing Conservation Science and Action*, exploring how collective memory can drive conservation efforts and inspire action.
- **Xiye Bastida:** An Otomi climate justice activist, Indigenous rights advocate, and co-founder of the Re-Earth Initiative. Ms. Bastida's powerful speech, *Raising Our Voices for Climate Justice*, emphasized the importance of Indigenous leadership and youth activism in the fight against climate change.
- **Dr. Ellen Stofan:** The Under Secretary for Science and Research at the Smithsonian Institution. Dr. Stofan's insightful presentation, *Life on a Sustainable Planet*, highlighted the critical steps needed to achieve sustainability and protect our planet's future.

- **Dr. Gerardo Ceballos:** A full-time researcher at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM) Institute of Ecology and renowned biodiversity scientist. Dr. Ceballos's talk, *The Massive Extinction of Species*, provided a sobering analysis of the current biodiversity crisis and the urgent need for conservation action.

The OSCG also hosted several sub-plenary sessions on the main stage that were of broad interest to participants and aligned with the conference goals. These sub-plenary sessions included:

- **Fireside Chat:** Jen Morris and Katharine Hayhoe discussed the critical role of science in TNC's conservation efforts and its 2030 goals.
- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge Panel:** Kyle Whyte, Pilar Gauthier, Nichole Barger, and Katharine Hayhoe explored the Integration of Indigenous knowledge in conservation.

FIGURE 5. OCSG Plenaries Participants' Feedback (n=202)



- **Coffee with Craig:** Craig McCaw and Katharine Hayhoe shared insights about Craig's contributions to TNC and his lifelong passion for conservation.
- **Chief Scientist Panel:** Steve Hamburg, Katharine Hayhoe, Ticora Jones, and Rebecca Johnson discussed the future of science in conservation.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in Science:** James Page, Meera Bhat, and Nichole Barger addressed diversity, equity, and inclusion within the scientific community.
- **Health and Climate Discussion:** Bill Frist, Aruni Bhatnagar, Katharine Hayhoe, and Catherine Machalaba examined the importance of planetary health and recent innovative programs.
- **Regional Science Perspectives:** Matt Brown, Rob McDonald, Edward "Eddie" Game, Tuyeni Mwampamba, and Fernando Veiga presented diverse regional viewpoints on pressing scientific issues.
- **Storytelling in Science:** Meg Goldthwaite and Katharine Hayhoe discussed the importance of communicating science in a way that is accessible, relatable, and engaging.
- **Board Member Insights:** Nancy Knowlton, Kent Thiry, Bill Frist, and Katharine Hayhoe provided valuable perspectives on science and conservation from the viewpoint of board members.

As shown in Figure 5, Gathering participants felt the plenary sessions and speakers were engaging and represented diverse perspectives relevant to our work at TNC.



James Page



Katharine Hayhoe and Craig McCaw



Fueling Discovery: Major Research Funding Announcements

Two exciting new research initiatives were announced during the Gathering. First, a joint **Smithsonian-TNC Sustainability Fellowship program** is being established thanks to a generous gift of \$2.7 million from Kent Thiry and Denise O’Leary. The program will fund six TNC Fellows for three-year terms, with an aim to create opportunities for the next generation

of diverse, post-doctoral fellows from around the globe to transform the face and future of science. Second, a \$1 million philanthropic gift from Global Board Chair Senator Bill Frist and TNC Tennessee Trustee Tracy Frist created The **Senator Bill and Tracy Frist Initiative for Planetary and Human Health**. Designed to bring together a team of TNC scientists to illuminate the complex interplay between nature and health, the initiative is intended to position TNC as a leading environmental NGO working in the planetary health community.

TABLE 1: Science Presentations Themes

Session theme	Number of sessions	Number of presentations
Freshwater	4	18
Oceans / Coasts / Fisheries	3	16
Nature-based solutions (NBS) / Natural Climate Solutions (NCS)	3	14
Agriculture / Regenerative Agriculture	2	10
Forests	2	10
Outside the Box	2	10
People sciences: human dimensions, social science, economics, policy, governance	2	10
Spatial science and conservation planning	2	10
eNGO	2	8
Habitat Restoration / Stewardship / Peatlands	1	5
Research Technology	1	5
Health Sciences	1	4

Deep Dives: Presentations, Lightning Talks, and Poster Sessions

Science Presentations. Individual 12-minute science talks highlighted the latest learnings and innovations in conservation science. A total of 120 science presentations were delivered in 25 separate sessions, centered on the 12 unique themes listed in Table 1: agriculture; forests; freshwater; people sciences (human dimensions, social science, economics, environmental policy and governance); nature-based solutions; habitat restoration and stewardship; spatial science and conservation planning; oceans, coasts, and fisheries; planetary health; and research technology. Talks also included sessions focused on presentations

from our partner environmental organizations and outside-the-box talks that included innovative topics that didn't fit into the other themes.

Lightning Talks: Lightning talks reduce scientific studies to their most essential components – the key points. Seventeen 4-minute lightning talks were delivered followed by 20-minute facilitated Q&A sessions. The topics included agricultural research prioritization, methods for collecting marine fisheries data, TNC's portfolio management, and implementation constraints on natural climate solutions, among others. There was general agreement among participants that this format worked well (Figure 6).

Digital Posters: Nineteen digital posters were on display in a high-traffic common area, providing a different mode of science communication after the main sessions of the day had finished. During poster sessions, presenters shared their work in two-minute talks, followed by a facilitated Q&A and unstructured time for attendees to explore the posters at their own pace. Topics included the potential impacts of offshore wind on migratory shorebirds, prioritizing mangrove restoration after hurricanes, conservation grazing, and co-designed wastewater solutions to benefit coral reefs. Most attendees also agreed that this format worked well (Figure 7), and those that did not offered valuable feedback on how to reduce background noise and encourage

FIGURE 6. OCSG Lightning talks participants' feedback (n=202)

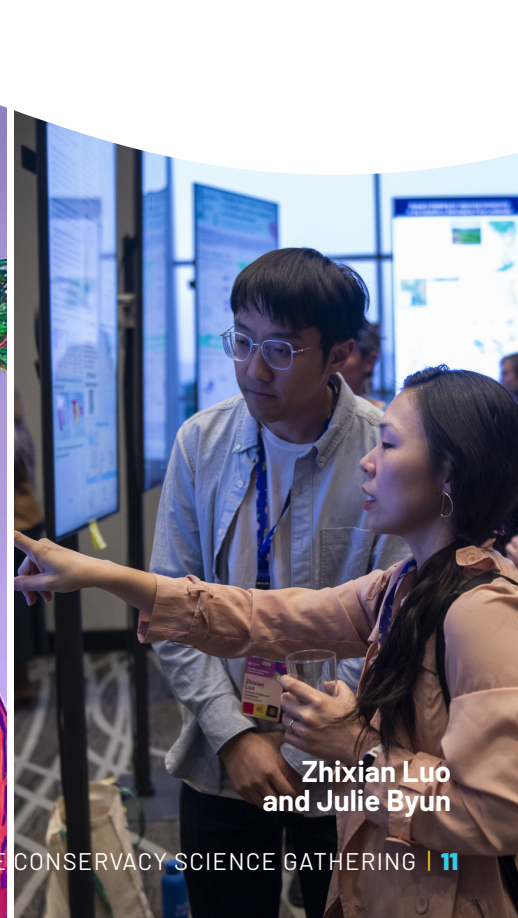
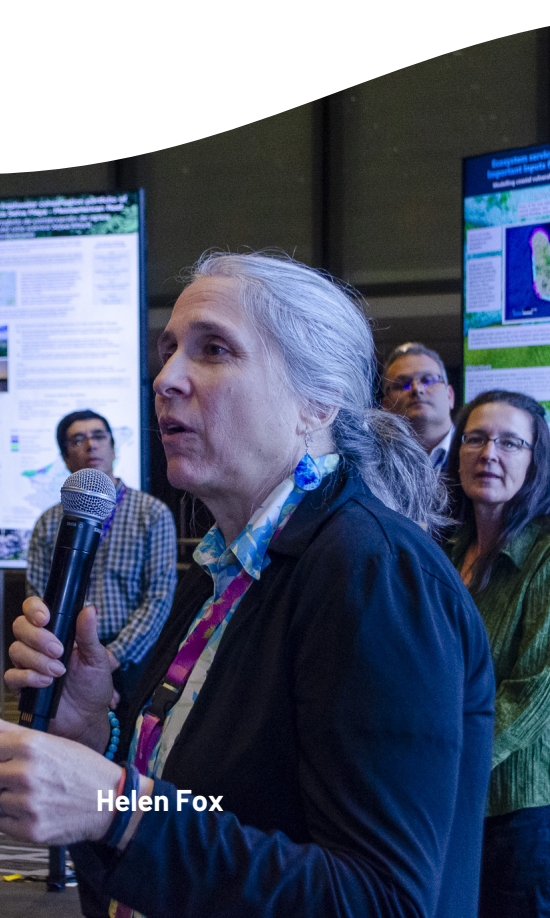
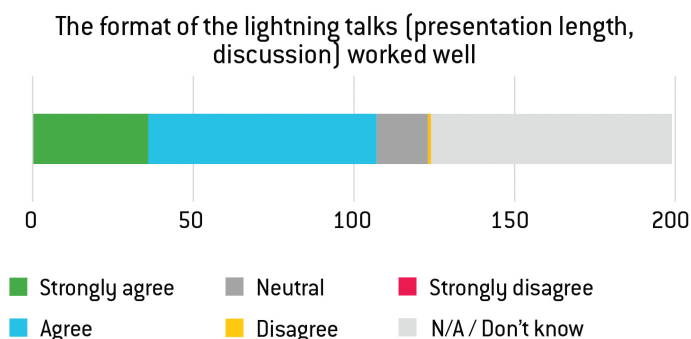
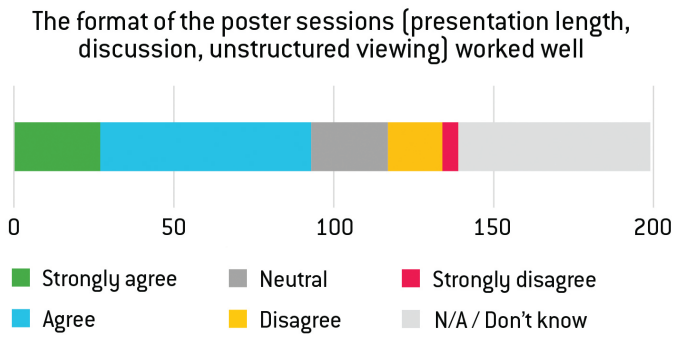


FIGURE 7. OCSG Poster sessions participants’ feedback (n=202)



more attendance.

Professional Skills, Capacity Building, Flash Mentoring, and Working Sessions

Science Professional Skills and Capacity Building:

Professional skills development sessions were a key component of the Gathering, focusing on enhancing the capabilities of TNC staff and external participants. The trainings covered a wide range of areas, including data

science, conservation planning, participatory mapping, socio- environmental governance, social sciences, climate change, conflict management, and science communication. These sessions aimed to equip participants with practical skills and knowledge to advance their work in conservation.

Eleven professional training sessions were offered, informed by the results of the One Conservancy Science Survey and participant proposals (Table 2). In total, 336 participants attended the various training and science capacity sessions*. Science capacity sessions rated high among all sessions in the post-Gathering feedback survey, with **99% of the 202 respondents ranking the sessions as useful.**

TABLE 2: Professional Training Session Topics

Training Topic	Number of presentations
Data Visualization	29
Science Writing	20
Intro to Climate Model Data	35
Integrating Conflict Management and Emotional Intelligence in Conservation Efforts and Science Capacity Building	14
Introduction to Systematic Conservation Planning with Marxan	25
Leveraging the Cloud for Data Science Pipelines at TNC	26
Mapping Together: Empowering Communities in Conservation through Participatory Mapping	26
Maximizing the Potential of the Social Sciences at TNC: An Interactive, Collaborative Workshop on Topics and Methods	50
Social Science, Social Surveys, and the 2030 People Goal	47
Tackle Climate Change with Naturebase: A Hands-On Training for Real-World Impact	47
TNC’s Cartography and Web Map Guidelines and Practical Tips for Implementing Them	7

*Note that a participant may attend multiple science capacity sessions.

Flash Mentoring: Flash mentoring provided an opportunity for less-experienced and early career scientists and science staff to learn from more experienced scientists and staff during short round-robin three-minute conversations. Over 100 mentors and mentees participated in two flash mentoring sessions, building connections, sharing experience, and providing career advice. Mentees appreciated the opportunity to engage with senior leaders, including TNC's Chief Scientist, Deputy Chief Scientist, and several senior conservation and science directors.

Working Sessions and World Cafés: Unlike traditional science presentations, working sessions offered spaces for collaborative brainstorming and strategic planning, fostering interdisciplinary teamwork. Here, the focus was on interactive engagement, often involving small group discussions, brainstorming activities, or hands-on exercises. At the Gathering, working sessions focused on six themes: people sciences; monitoring, evaluation, and learning; equitable conservation, IPLC; nature-based solutions; and conservation in practice. Other represented themes included spatial science and conservation planning; oceans, coasts, and fisheries; and communications. Each of the forty-two sessions were tailored to align with the specific objectives of the session, which ranged from knowledge sharing and fostering collaborations to developing actionable outcomes.

For example, the session, *Mind the Gap: Bridging a multilevel matrixed organization to cultivate a science-based culture*, featured a series of presentations on how science is

structured in different BUs and at various scales, including state, divisional, and regional levels. The session concluded with an open discussion, allowing participants to share insights and ideas.

Key outcomes from the working sessions included the establishment of new research collaborations, the formation of new communities of practice, the generation of notes and ideas on diverse topics, and draft strategies aimed at advancing science. These results highlighted the Gathering's success in fostering meaningful connections and actionable insights to drive progress.

In addition, 23 World Café sessions were offered: a specific type of working session, where participants rotate tables, each focusing on a separate topic. World Café sessions differ from typical sessions by emphasizing informal, small-group conversations that rotate participants, fostering inclusive dialogue and diverse perspectives in a dynamic and participatory format. The key outcome of a World Café session is the generation of collective insights and actionable ideas through inclusive dialogue.

For instance, the World Café session, *What Can Spatial Analysis Contribute to Accomplishing Equitable Conservation?*, involved a series of small group discussions designed to draw out relevant experiences, highlight best practices, and raise critical questions. The session aimed to both inform participants and provide guidance for a specific U.S. project focused on developing maps and guidelines to support the equitable conservation of resilient lands and waters.



Ellen Stofan



Reception and Networking Events

A vibrant welcome reception set the tone for the week, featuring a Tlalmanalli, a traditional Indigenous ceremony performed by a local group of Nahua women. Representatives from the Mexico BU, including BU Director Edgar Gonzalez introduced participants to the local context and the significance of hosting the event in Mexico City. An engaging fireside chat followed, featuring, Jen Morris and Katharine Hayhoe, who discussed the goals for the week, key themes, and the importance of the Gathering.

The following evenings featured catered networking events, each hosting 250 participants. These were held on an outdoor terrace, providing a relaxed setting for participants to connect, engage, and have fun while leaving time for team dinners and other events.

Outdoor, Nature, and Wellness Activities. Outdoor and wellness activities were organized based on results of an interest survey and the availability of volunteers to lead them. From early morning birding and paddle tennis to yoga sessions and leisurely walks, these activities fostered meaningful interactions, strengthened connections, and provided a chance to experience the local culture in a relaxed and informal setting. One hundred thirty-seven staff participated in activities highlighted in Table 3.

Field Trips. Three field trips were offered to participants. Two nature walks explored the Historic District in Mexico City, combining bus transportation and walking. These excursions highlighted iconic landmarks, including El Zocalo, the main

square of Mexico City, the Catedral Metropolitana, the oldest and largest cathedral in Latin America, and the Palacio de Bellas Artes, a world-renowned cultural venue. Additionally, a half-day trip to the Pyramid of the Moon at Teotihuacan was offered after the close of the Gathering on the last day.

The structured opportunities for physical activity and outdoor time were especially well-received, providing a refreshing break from indoor events and enhancing the overall experience of the Gathering. Key takeaways from hosting the social activities included the importance of offering a variety of options at different times of the day.

The participant survey highlighted the importance of these casual networking and social activities, with **45% of Gathering participants stating that they felt most comfortable connecting with new colleagues at the evening networking events, and 33% indicating they felt most comfortable doing so through social activities** such as birdwatching, jogging, walking, and field trips (Figure 8).

FIGURE 8. OCSG Participants’ new connection format (n=202)

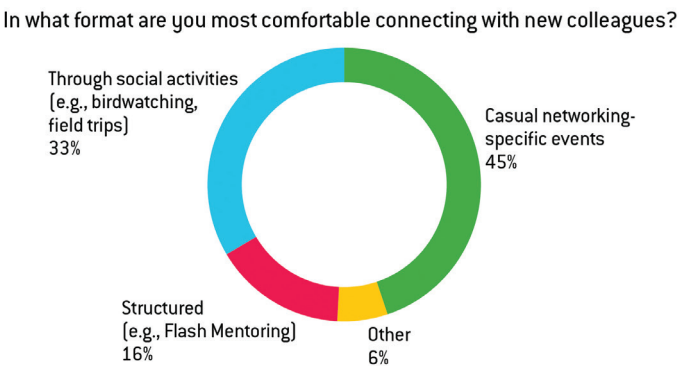


TABLE 3: Outdoor, Nature, and Wellness Activities

Activity	Description	Participants	Number of Days
Bird Watching	Lead participants on a group walk to observe local bird species.	31	2
Yoga	Lead participants in an accessible yoga class with meditative exercises.	18	1
Paddle Tennis	Open court and basic instruction for attendees to play paddle tennis.	14	2
Running (Easy)	Group run advertised as social pace.	16	2
Running (Fast)	Group run advertised as faster pace.	5	1
Metabolic Walking	Mindful social group walk.	13	1
Coffee Churro Walk	Walk to Curva Specialty Coffee/El Moro churrería for coffee and churros.	40	2

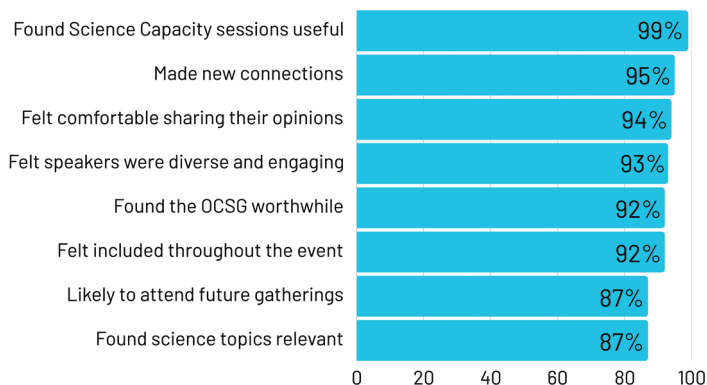


What People Said: Feedback and Input

Feedback on the Gathering was collected through session surveys and a post-Gathering survey, providing valuable insights into what worked well and areas for future improvement. At the end of each session, attendees were provided a QR code to scan and provide feedback on the session structure and content. The feedback form was anonymous to ensure participants could offer their opinions freely.

Across the 258 sessions, **83% of attendees reported a positive experience** (Figure 9). The sentiment of one respondent, who shared that they “had a great time and would encourage others in [their] team to attend next time,”

FIGURE 9. Participants’ feedback on benefits of attending OCSG (n=202)



was widely echoed: 92% of respondents found the Gathering valuable, and 85% expressed interest in attending future Gatherings.

The Gathering appeared to successfully achieve its primary goal of **fostering connectivity**, with 95% of post-Gathering survey respondents indicating they had “made new connections.” A sample comment highlighting the importance of in-person events shared that, “I really appreciate all the work that was put into this conference! It is so important to meet with our colleagues in person. Especially if we want our scientists to be connected across the globe, these are necessary.”

Likewise, Gathering created an environment conducive to its second goal, **strengthening inclusion and diversity in science at TNC**. This is reflected in the high proportion of respondents who felt comfortable sharing their opinions during the event (95%), felt included in the event (92%), and who found the speakers to be both diverse and engaging (93%, Figure 10). This sentiment was echoed in respondent comments, such as the one that underscored how holding the conference in Mexico “allowed me get to know colleagues that I likely would not have met and just made me think about my US biases.”

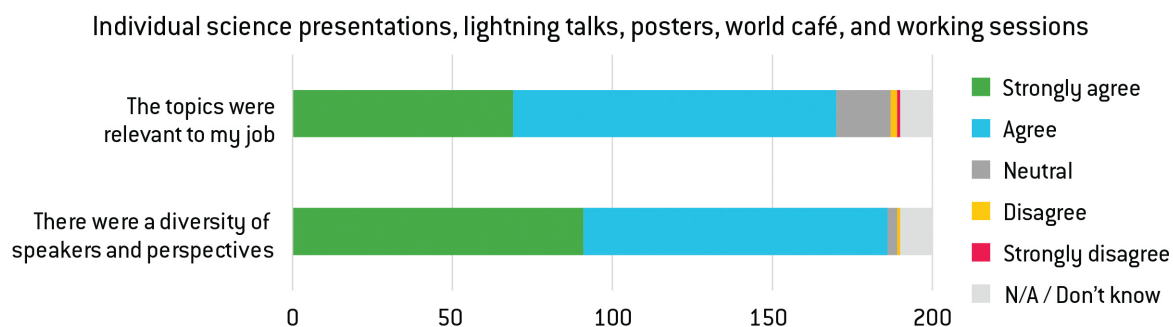
Individual comments submitted by participants overwhelmingly praised the Gathering for its thoughtful organization, engaging content, and valuable networking opportunities. Many highlighted the smooth execution of the event, the diverse and inclusive environment, and the ability to bring family

members, which made attendance more accessible. The location in Mexico was particularly appreciated for fostering connections with colleagues from different regions and challenging US-centric biases. Attendees expressed a strong desire for more frequent Gatherings, emphasizing the importance of in-person interactions for building global scientific connections. Overall, the feedback reflected a highly positive experience, with participants feeling inspired,

connected, and eager for future events. A full list of all the comments provided by participants is available in Appendix 2.

This numerical and written feedback highlight the event's success in fostering connectivity, promoting inclusion and diversity, and providing a valuable experience for participants. These insights will help guide the planning and improvement of future events, ensuring they continue to meet the needs and expectations of TNC's scientific community.

FIGURE 10. OCSG participants' feedback on topic relevance and diversity of speakers (n=202)





Looking Ahead: Key Takeaways and Next Steps

The success of the One Conservancy Science Gathering can be attributed to the active engagement of TNC science staff, partners, and leadership. The dedication, energy, and passion demonstrated by participants underscore the vital role that science plays in advancing our mission to address the dual challenges of the biodiversity and climate crises.

Survey results and feedback indicate **the Gathering largely met its goals of building connection, creating the enabling conditions to strengthen knowledge of inclusion and diversity, and building technical and professional skills**. The goal of connecting science to conservation was underscored by two themes that emerged again and again through plenary talks and presentations: that science must provide the evidence to develop and adapt conservation

strategies; and that the link between science and conservation depends on effective communication and storytelling by scientists. Again and again, speakers and participants emphasized that our science doesn't end with the publication of results—it requires effective communication to ensure its impact and adoption.

An unexpected yet powerful theme emerged from the Gathering: the power of love in motivating science and action. Participants, from plenary speakers to flash mentees, made it clear that science is not just a pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, but also an act of care, connection, and dedication to solving challenges and threats to preserving the lands and waters on which all life depends. Engaging our passion and empathy to our work is key to achieving our goals.

The contents of this report and the feedback received will be actively used to help inform planning for other TNC meetings and to develop a strategy and plan for future science Gatherings. By doing so, we aim to continue advancing scientific collaboration, fostering inclusivity and diversity, and inspiring continued engagement from our scientific community.

THANK YOU

Learn more

- [One Conservancy Science](#)
- [One Conservancy Science Gathering](#)
- [2024 OCSG Detailed Agenda](#)
- [2024 OCSG Selected Pictures](#)

Photos provided by:
© Juan Carlos Valdez Dragonné

One Conservancy Science Gathering Organization Core Team

John Poulsen
Jessica Cañizares

Meaza Demissie
Gianinna Ferreyro

Rachel Amador
Queen Mathabela

Contact Us

For further information, please contact sciencecapacity@tnc.org

List of Working Team Leads, Members and Volunteers

Team	Leads	Members	
Communication	Alison Miller	Alison Miller Cassandra Newkirk	Daniela Nuñez Ruth Love
Content	John Poulsen Cristina Lasch	Alejandra Colom Alison Miller Bianca Santos Christianaha Oyenuga Francesco Tonini Jensen Montalbault Jessica Cañizares Jorge Alvarez Romero Laura Geselbracht Linette Hwu	Mario Barroso Martha Rogers Nicholas Wolf Philip Loring Priya Shiamsundar Roberto Real Sara Leavitt Seth Morgan Teal Wyckoff
Diversity, Equity, Inclusion	Ruby Rivera, Meaza Demissie	Eduardo Vieira Barnes Heidi Albritton James Fitzsimons Jensen Montambault Jessica Cañizares Meaza Demissie	Queen Mathabela Rocio Johnson Ruby Rivera Ruth Love Silvia Benitez
Donors and Fundraising	Paige Martin	Paige Martin Rachel Amador	Victoria Wu
Event Logistics and IT	Heidi Albritton	Danielle Brantley Eveline Chan	Garrett Hendon
Facilitators, Large Networking and Knowledge Management	Kristina Serbesoff Haydee Hernandez	Alejandra Colom Andrew Rayburn Haydee Hernandez Yañez Lucie Hacker Michelle Canick Olivia Millard	Pathanchali Premachandra Sara Ortiz Sofia García Valentina Joya William Anderson Kristina Serbesoff-King
Operations and Financial Management	Andrew Bauer	Andrew Bauer Eveline Chan	Kate Jordan
Reviewers	Laura Geselbracht Martha Rogers	Alejandro Sánchez Burgoa Amit Zimmer-Faust Andrew Rayburn Cristina Lasch Glenn Moncrieff Ian Luby James Erbaugh Kim Falinsky Kristina Serbesoff-King Lane Conville-Canney Laura Geselbracht Leung Pui Kin (Felix)	Martha Rogers Nisa Novita Nynke Humalda Ronnie Drever Sara Leavitt Sara Ortiz Sunpreet Kaur Surabhi Bhardwaj Tsz Kin Chan Valentina Joya William Anderson Wong, Lok Yiu Sheila
Science Capacity and Professional Development	Meaza Demissie	Bella Mayorga Cassandra Newkirk Garrett Herndon Gianinna Ferreyro Jensen Montambault John Poulsen Lucie Hacker	Meghan Bogaerts Meaza Demissie Miguel Cañon Pathanchali Premachandra Ruth Love Shamitha Keerthi Tim Boucher

Participant Feedback

Reflections from participants for future Gatherings, as captured from the post-Gathering feedback survey.

- "Can we please do this more than once every six years!? It was so engaging and fulfilling!"
- "I really enjoyed the conference and thought that many details were very thoughtfully planned and executed. The location was amazing and the rich conversations and connections I had with colleagues were worth it!"
- "An extremely well-organized event, I would just like to thank everyone who had a hand in organizing it. Thank you!!"
- "Applauding the organizers for a great job and support from the beginning of the process."
- "Outstanding meeting in so many ways. Huge thanks to the team that organized it!"
- "Overall, this was a great conference! Thanks for all your hard work to make it possible."
- "Everything ran very smoothly, thank you for your hard work!"
- "This was my first Gathering; I have no complaints. There was wide representation across the BUs."
- "Thank you for putting on such a great event! I absolutely loved the opportunity to meet people from across TNC and across the globe. I certainly hope I can go to the next one, whenever it may be."
- "Thank you for the sponsorship that made it possible for me to attend the Gathering. I do appreciate it, thank you!"
- "Thank you so much for bringing us together and promoting such a kind, collaborative, and useful Gathering. Every session and talk had a beautiful balance of strong science and practical application. Well, done! An amazing week of learning, connecting, and inspiration! Thank you."
- "Overall, I got a lot out of the experience and learned a ton. Thanks for making it happen!"
- "Thank you OCSG team! I had such a great time and met so many new colleagues. It was a ton of work to organize, and I really appreciate it!"
- "The organizing team did a GREAT job with this conference, and I appreciate the thoroughness and creativity evident throughout."
- "Great effort and great conference! All your hard work clearly paid off. You produced a quality event! Kudos! I was very happy to be a part of it."
- "This was the best professional conference I've ever attended."
- "I had a great time and would encourage others in my team to attend next time."
- "Overall, the conference was great, and the organization was spectacular. Very happy I went and looking forward to the next time we can get the band back together already. THANK YOU!!!"
- "THANK YOU! Huge congratulations to you for pulling this off! The organizing team was welcoming, helpful, informative, and timely."
- "Please host another one in the next couple of years. It had been too long since Houston."

- "I really appreciate all the work that was put into this conference! It is so important to meet with our colleagues in person. Especially if we want our scientists to be connected across the globe, these are necessary."
- "Well done! This was no small feat, and kudos to the planning team for pulling off such an amazing event! I'm already eager for the next one."
- "A well-organized event. Well-thought-through venue and program. Thank you to the dedicated organizers!"
- "I really enjoyed participating in the event. I had the opportunity to meet colleagues from other regions and organizations in person, which increased my sense of belonging to TNC."
- "I really appreciated the fact that you opened the conference with three amazing Indigenous speakers and included an Indigenous person in the conference branding. The gift bags contained products from local businesses, and the name badges were gorgeous. The sessions were organized into overarching themes, making it easy to find what you wanted to attend."
- "Incredibly well-thought-out schedule. I loved the themed days. The plenaries were fantastic. I loved the conversational aspect they had."
- "This was the best conference I've ever attended. It was very fulfilling from a career and personal standpoint. Thank you for putting together such a thoughtful agenda. From an attendee perspective, it all ran very smoothly. I know there were a lot of people behind the scenes making that happen, so THANK YOU!"
- "It was amazing that I could bring my family with no extra costs. This enabled me to attend the Gathering (having a baby), so thank you for that! I also appreciated having a private room. I really appreciated the many networking opportunities which made it comfortable for everyone to pick a format that works best for them."
- "Really enjoyed the networking events that were held at night as that's where most people relaxed and opened up a bit."
- "Thank you VERY MUCH for all the work that went into this Gathering! I really appreciated that it was in Mexico (I'm from the US) as it really helped me get to know more colleagues that I likely would not have met and just made me think about my US biases."