

Why Nature Barrie sees hope for our future in *Just Recovery Simcoe*

Citizens around the world are calling for social justice, economic reform and preservation of nature, key strategies civilization needs to embrace in order to mitigate the worst impacts of the climate crisis we are already experiencing, while we plan our recovery from the present COVID 19 pandemic.

Threats from Climate Change to the natural environment, as well as to humans and other species – wildfires, floods, droughts and other extreme weather events, have overrun us in recent months, and even greater catastrophes like sea level rise and ocean warming lie in our near future.

"Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human history — and the rate of species extinctions is accelerating, with grave impacts on people around the world now likely." warns a landmark May 6, 2019 report from the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services ([IPBES](https://www.ipbes.net/)), part of the United Nations Environment Programme.

Source: IPBES press release <https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

But there is hope to turn around this collection of crises that now confront us!

COVID 19 shutdowns have shown us the need for humans to find solace in nature, how just going for a walk in natural green space helps relieve the stress from forced isolation in our homes.

The locally-developed ***Just Recovery Simcoe (JRS)*** principles outlined below set out how we can rebuild our economy and society to be much more equitable, much more humane and much more sustainable than the path we were following before COVID 19 slammed us all in the gut.

1. Invest in People

Prioritize the health and wellbeing of people, ensuring that government, whether municipal, provincial, or federal, acts on behalf of the public interest.

Government needs to re-establish its role as guarantor of the public interest. This means advancing the interests to benefit the public good when dealing with private interests, and actively promoting transparency and accountability in all decision making.

2. Invest in Nature

Recognize the role that ecosystems play in supporting our long term health.

3. Invest in Communities

Seek and facilitate community engagement.

Source: <https://justrecoverysimcoe.ca/>

The ***Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services*** referenced above is a detailed scientific report on the global state of [biodiversity](#).

“The overwhelming evidence of the IPBES Global Assessment, from a wide range of different fields of knowledge, presents an ominous picture,” said IPBES Chair, Sir Robert Watson. “The health of ecosystems on which we and all other species depend is deteriorating more rapidly than ever. We are eroding the very foundations of our economies, livelihoods, food security, health and quality of life worldwide.”

“The Report also tells us that it is not too late to make a difference, but only if we start now at every level from local to global,” he said. “Through ‘transformative change’, nature can still be conserved, restored and used sustainably – this is also key to meeting most other global goals. By transformative change, we mean a fundamental, system-wide reorganization across technological, economic and social factors, including paradigms, goals and values.”

“The member States of IPBES Plenary have now acknowledged that, by its very nature, transformative change can expect opposition from those with interests vested in the status quo, but also that such opposition can be overcome for the broader public good,” Watson said.

Source: IPBES press release <https://ipbes.net/news/Media-Release-Global-Assessment>

Two of Nature Barrie’s key aims are to protect and preserve wildlife and to stimulate public interest in nature and its value.

Nature Barrie therefore strongly endorses the principles outlined by ***Just Recovery Simcoe*** for restoring our society, our environment and our economy – Investing in People, Investing in Nature, Investing in Communities.

The ***JRS principles*** can help us move forward in our own region to make the social, environmental and economic changes that are essential for our present and future health, well-being and prosperity.

We encourage readers to support the ***JRS principles*** and share them with your communities and your elected representatives: councillors, mayors, MPPs and MPs.

Alan McNair

Conservation Chair, Nature Barrie

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