



Goals, Expectations, and Factors for Success

Report on the Pre-Summit Survey Results for the
2015 Inspiring a New Generation North American Summit¹

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>> Introduction

The 2015 Inspiring a New Generation (ING) North American Summit will bring together diverse stakeholders from public and private sectors to design a Framework for Action to reconnect people with nature. These stakeholders will include over 200 professionals, some of whom have not yet been engaged in previous conversations about this topic. As such, attendees likely have a range of different goals for and expectations about the summit. In addition, attendees likely have a diversity of ideas about ways in which the summit can be successful.



Summit organizers might benefit from knowing these attendees' perspectives when planning the summit. In particular, organizers may be interested in knowing what are the most commonly held goals for the summit, how do these goals vary between younger and older attendees or highly involved and not highly involved attendees, how are these goals different for individual participants and for the group at large, and what are the most commonly understood factors of success.

This report presents the results of a pre-summit research project that looked at these questions. The data come from an online survey with attendees that was conducted in the months preceding the summit.

This report and the accompanying results are part of a larger evaluative research project that simultaneously measures the summit's impact and outcomes as well as furthers the field of collective impact evaluation literature by assessing the range of goals from the summit from diverse stakeholders and the extent to which these goals are met during and after the summit. We will be collecting and analyzing more data to answer these larger research questions after the summit is complete.

>> Methods

We invited the approximately 250 summit participants to an online survey through three emails sent between September 4th and 18th, 2015. The emails were delivered by summit organizers in order to maximize the chances that the messages were not filtered as spam. The survey included 5 questions and took respondents 12 minutes to complete on average, not accounting for response times over one hour which suggested respondents focusing on other tasks as they completed the survey. The survey was administered on the Qualtrics platform, which was mobile friendly. All research protocols were reviewed and approved by the University of Illinois' Institutional Review Board to ensure that participants' rights and safety were protected.

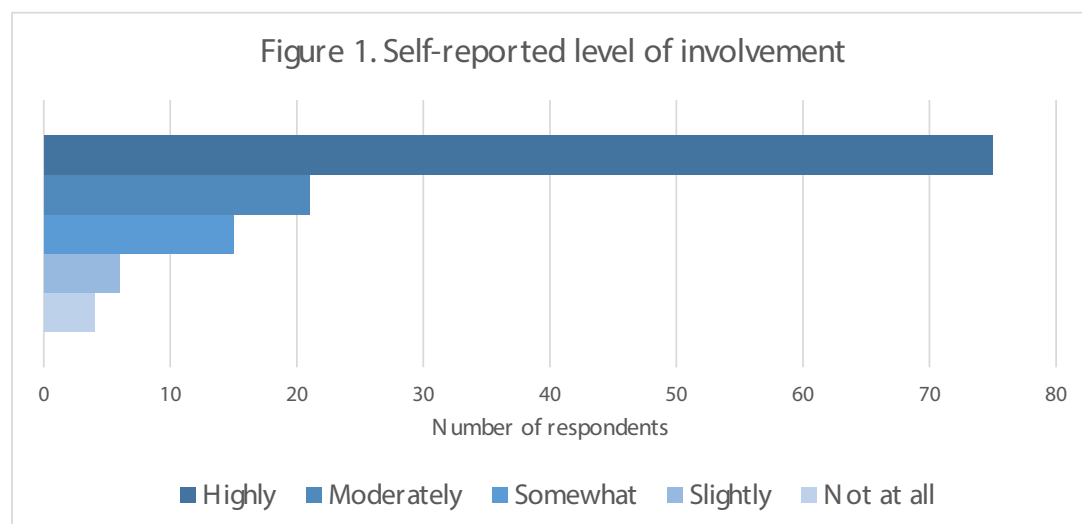
The survey items included:

1. How involved are you in the movement to inspire a new generation of conservation leaders and reunite people with nature? *Not at all, slightly, somewhat, moderately, or highly*
2. What are the top three reasons you are attending the 2015 ING Summit? *Participants were provided with three text boxes to explain their responses.*
3. What are the top three outcomes you'd like to see from the 2015 ING Summit? *Participants were provided with three more text boxes.*
4. What needs to happen for the ING 2015 Summit to accomplish the outcomes you listed above? *Participants were provided with three more boxes.*
5. On November 8th, 2015, will you be 35 years old or younger? *Yes or no*

Open-ended responses were first reviewed for patterns. An initial list of codes was created to identify where and how these patterns occurred. These codes were then refined into a list of overarching themes that best described the data. All coding was completed by a single researcher and then evaluated by another researcher to maximize validity and reliability. Lastly, the themes were sorted by the frequency with which they were discussed to understand general trends in the sample.

>> Results

We received 122 completed survey responses (approximately 50% response rate). One-third (34%) of the respondents were 35 years old or younger. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of respondents indicated that they were “highly involved” in the movement to inspire a new generation of conservation leaders and reunite people with nature. Because there was such a steep decline in the number of respondents who were less than “highly involved” (see Figure 1), we separated our sample into two categories of involvement: “highly involved” and “not highly involved.”



The survey platform was able to estimate where participants completed the survey. This was only possible if they were working on a computer or mobile device with location tracking enabled. Based on the data we received, we identified a number of locations with clusters of respondents. These included Vancouver, British Columbia; San Francisco, California; Denver, Colorado; Toronto, Ontario; and Washington D.C. Responses were also collected from throughout the United States and Canada as well as Mexico, Australia, Brazil, Spain, and Italy (Figure 2, 3). Because location tracking was not enabled for all respondents and not all geographic location data was accurately captured, the actual locations represented may be different than those mentioned here.

Figure 2. Survey Completion Locations World-Wide

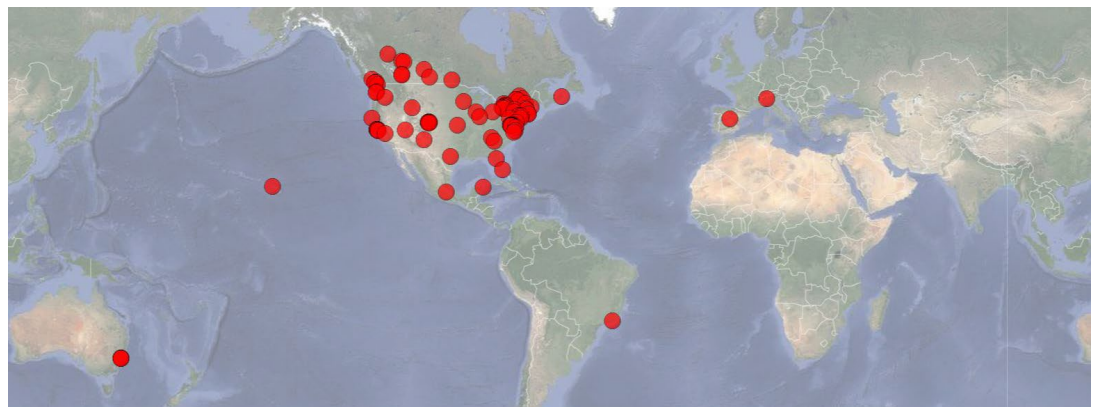
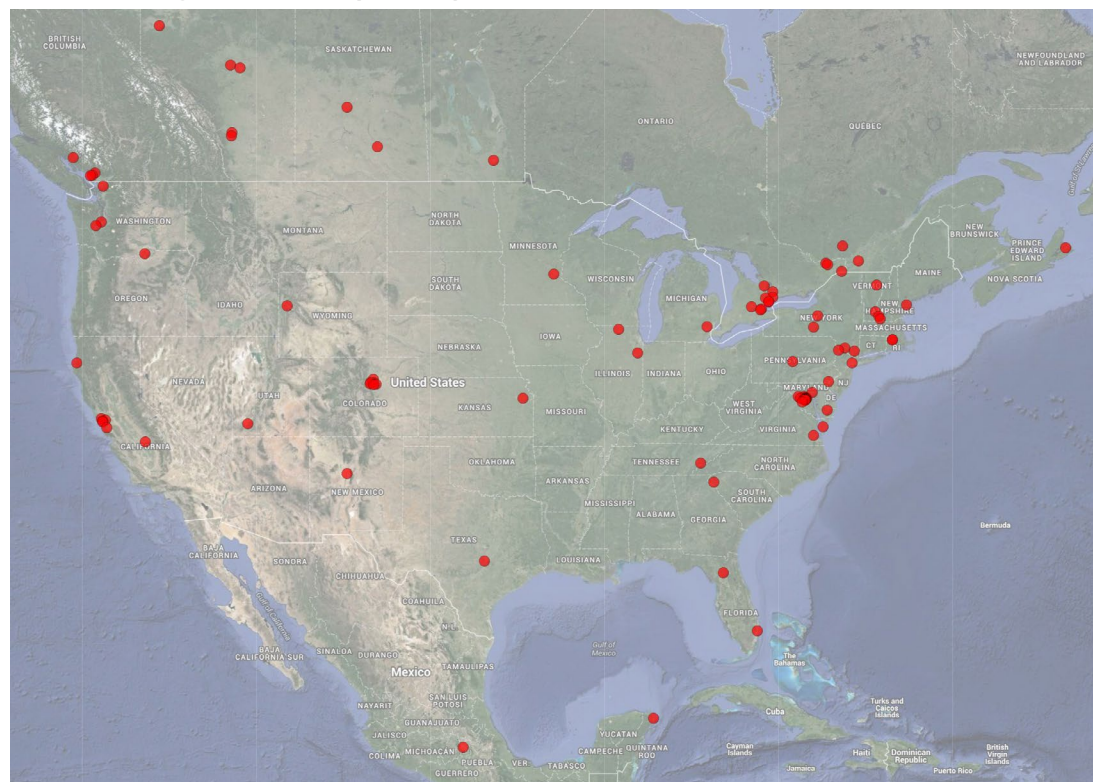


Figure 3. Survey Completion Locations in North America



Factors for Success

We identified 20 themes describing what respondents believed it would take for the summit to be successful (Table 1). Two themes were discussed at noticeably higher frequencies than other themes: *Socialization* and *discussion*.

We used our best judgement to estimate whether themes were within summit organizers' control as well as when these themes could best be addressed. We estimated that 8 of the 20 themes were definitely within organizers' control (including the 2 most frequently discussed themes), 8 were somewhat within organizers' control, and 4 were probably not within organizers' control. We also estimated that 2 themes discussed pre-summit opportunities, 3 discussed less structured time during the summit, 11 discussed more structured time during the summit, and 4 discussed post-summit opportunities.

Respondents had specific examples for ways in which the summit might be successful. We listed these according to the themes they represented in Table 2.

Personal and Group Goals

We identified 14 themes describing respondents' personal motivations for attending the summit and group goals for the summit in general (Table 3). Some of the personal goals were discussed at similar frequencies as the group goals. Other goals were discussed at different frequencies. *Framework for Action* was more common on the group level than on the individual level. *Learning* was more common on the individual than group level. *Interest or curiosity* was only discussed on the individual level. Specific examples of these goals are provided in Table 4.



Table I. Perceived Factors for Success

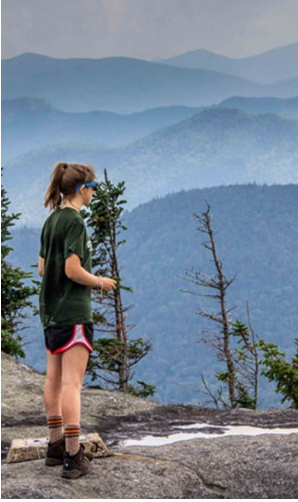
Theme	%age of respondents	Pre-summit	Less structured time during summit	More structured time during summit	Post-summit	Within organizers' control?
Socialization	34		✓			Yes
Discussion	32			✓		Yes
Collaboration	22			✓		Somewhat
Remaining committed	22				✓	Probably not
Framework for Action	18			✓		Yes
Alignment	17			✓		Somewhat
Resource sharing	16			✓		Yes
New stakeholder engagement	16			✓		Somewhat
Openness	15			✓		Probably not
Arriving committed	11	✓				Probably not
Public awareness	9				✓	Somewhat
Clear process	8			✓		Somewhat
Youth voice	7			✓		Yes
Sharing strategies	7			✓		Yes
Community building	7		✓			Somewhat
Pre-summit engagement	5	✓				Yes
Leadership by organizers	5			✓		Yes
Value building	5				✓	Somewhat
Impact measurement	3				✓	Yes
Enjoyment	2		✓			Yes

Table 2. Examples of Factors for Success

Theme	Examples
Socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Free spaces to chat and know each other” “Time for structured networking with small groups” “Time with other attendees with similar identified priorities”
Discussion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Breakout sessions for discussion on specific topics” “Adequate small group discussions”
Collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Establish a sense of community that fosters collaboration rather than competition” “Small group work given specific tasks during the summit”
Remaining committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Provide a way for those who have attended to keep in contact and share their updates, successes, and downfalls to keep the community alive” “Release an online poll for following online meetings”
Framework for Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Facilitating a big group toward a plan of action” “Embrace any approach which gets kids outside”
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Agreement on core messages and strategies” “Agreement on a small list of the most important and achievable goals for the short term and a longer list for the longer term”
Resource sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Knowing what resources to share” “Practical, clear explanation of what we did and why it (didn’t) worked as best practice for developing and implementing a regional framework and action plan”
New stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Bring together stakeholders from national and state environmental organizations to begin this dialog” “Use the education system to engage a new generation to the environment”
Openness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Participants open to sharing ideas and experiences with each other” “A willingness for people to get past their own agendas”
Arriving committed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Representatives from various organizations committing to working together” “Commitments from those in attendance as to the resource available (e.g., mentorship, curriculum, and specialized skills, etc)”
Public awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Some group needs to be charged with heading up a social media campaign that follows up on the campaign” “Key messages to share with our respective publics to spread the work, inspire others, and let people know what we are doing”
Clear process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Ensure process is clear, concise, focused, and meeting the needs and wants of the summit delegates” “Process to develop a vision, strategy and action plan”
Youth voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Pre-conference engagement of youth participants” “For those youth (19-29) that are part of this meeting, give them a direct voice and leadership opportunity in this summit”
Sharing strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Share written material, the data of trial, and document/directory/stories of the successful programs and available resources” “A detailed (visual) guidebook that describes the necessary steps and action needed”
Community building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A sense of community” “Enhanced trust amongst participants”
Pre-summit engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Advanced readings and summary packages” “Pre-meeting questions to focus the participants for the discussion”
Leadership by organizers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Summit leadership strong in keeping our purposes clear and movement toward them steady” “Responsibility of the session leader to shepherd the action step”
Value building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Cultivate an appreciation for the need for special places (parks, forests, etc), beyond the abstract appreciation for nature and the environment” “Common core education needed to start to change to incorporate nature/environment values”
Impact measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “A clear organized summit with the identification of clear outcomes” “A committee in charge of evaluating the impact of our work”

Differences by Age and Level of Involvement

We found differences in the frequency of discussed themes by age and level of involvement. Those mentioned below represent at least a 10% difference in response frequency between two groups.



Respondents 35 years old or younger discussed *learning* as a personal goal more than older respondents. In contrast, respondents over the age of 35 discussed *Framework for Action* and *further the movement* as group goals and *further the movement* and *partnerships* as personal goals more than younger respondents. Older respondents also discussed *alignment* as a factor for success more than younger respondents. Interestingly, no people under the age of 35 identified *youth voice* as a factor of success, but 3 people over the age of 35 did. Highly involved respondents mentioned *discussion* and *collaboration* more as a factor for success than respondents who were not highly involved. Less involved respondents discussed *new stakeholder engagement* more. Highly involved respondents also discussed *networking* as a personal goal more and as a group goal less than not highly involved respondents. Lastly, less involved respondents discussed *further the movement* more as a personal and group goal than highly involved respondents.

Table 3. Personal and Group Goals

Theme	%age of respondents discuss this as a group goal	%age of respondents discuss this as a personal goal
Framework for Action	50	10
Further the movement	40	31
Networking	38	45
Partnerships	29	26
Learning	27	44
Commitment and sustainability	23	26
Practical applications	21	10
Work improvement	11	15
Youth empowerment	8	16
Resources	7	0
Inspiration	6	10
Community building	4	4
Enjoyment	2	2

Table 4. Examples of Goals

Theme	Examples
Framework for Action	“Develop a framework of action which will outline clear recommendations for policies and programs” “Discover new and innovative best practices for implementing ING” “A clearly defined plan of action and path for future generations to capitalize on the stakeholders resource and programs”
Further the movement	“Purpose statement for the ING campaign/movement”
Networking	“Meet 10 professional contacts that I remain in contact with following the summit”
Partnerships	“Pragmatic collaboration across the government, NGO, and corporate sectors”
Learning	“Learn about best practices from across North America”
Commitment and sustainability	“A strong and united commitment from the participants to continue to lead the charge in inspiring youth to appreciate and experience nature”
Practical applications	“Leave with a list of practical ideas to be more effective in our mission of connecting people with nature”
Work improvement	“Specific ideas to bring back to my organization”
Youth empowerment	“To empower future business leaders of America to be more environmentally conscious” “Invite youth to observe and shadow, welcoming them into meetings and discussions”
Resources	“Find new funding sources for sustainability and environmental education”
Inspiration	“No matter how committed, everyone can benefit from being ‘re-inspired’ themselves”
Community building	“Leveraging the power of like-minded people and institutions”
Enjoyment	“Have fun” “Location is very appealing”
Interest or curiosity	“I am interested in secondary environmental education”



>> Discussion and Recommendations

We discovered a range of goals for, expectations about, and perceived factors for success regarding the 2015 Inspiring a New Generation North American Summit. Organizers might benefit from reviewing these diversity of perspectives as they plan the summit. For example, organizers might benefit from knowing that of the approximately 50% of attendees who responded to our survey, one-third were 35 years old or younger and one-third were not already highly involved in the movement to reconnect people with nature. This suggests that there are large numbers of attendees who represent new stakeholders from whom to learn and with whom to engage.



Organizers might consider how the most commonly discussed factors for success (*socialization* and *discussion*) represent less structured and more structured experiences during the summit, respectively. These results promote the incorporation of adequate “free time” during the summit for attendees to socialize.

Organizers might also notice how *furthering the movement* was a common goal for attendees on both personal and group levels. This suggests many attendees already have a strong commitment to the movement. Our results suggest attendees’ levels of commitment are important factors for success. As such, this finding demonstrates that the summit may have a high potential for success.

The finding that some group and personal goals are different suggests that organizers should consider catering to the diverse needs and wants of attendees. In particular, *networking* and *learning* were frequently discussed personal goals while *framework for action* was a frequently discussed group goal. Thoughtful planning can make sure that attendees have time and space to accomplish both their personal and group goals and ultimately feel satisfied with their experience.

The finding that younger participants discussed *learning* as a personal goal more than older participants suggests that these stakeholders want to learn more about the movement. Organizers might consider incorporating an educational component into the summit to make sure their needs are met. Satisfying these stakeholders might increase the likelihood of them remaining committed to the movement and maximizing the impact of their work.

Summit organizers might consider which factors for success are likely within their control and focus their planning time and efforts accordingly. *Socialization*, *discussion*, *results sharing*, and *Framework for Action* were frequently discussed themes that organizers could likely address by incorporating adequate amounts of time in the summit agenda for these activities.

Other frequently discussed themes, such as *remaining committed*, are likely outside of organizers' control, because they represent occurrences that rely primarily on the attitudes and behaviors of participants after the summit. Awareness of such factors might be helpful for organizers but represent areas that organizers probably shouldn't focus as much time on as they plan the summit. Fortunately, most of the factors for success are within organizers' control to some extent. This represents a great opportunity for organizers to increase the likelihood that the summit is successful.

Organizers might also notice that the majority of factors for success refer to structured sessions at the summit. This suggests that the way in which these sessions are organized and facilitated is perhaps the most important thing organizers should pay attention to as they plan the summit.

>> **Limitations**

These results do not necessarily represent the range of perspectives or frequency with which these perspectives are held by summit attendees at large. We only received a 50% response rate. Although this is high for an online survey, it also demonstrates that approximately 125 attendees did not take their survey. As such, other attendees may hold different perspectives and may believe certain goals and factors for success are more or less important than our survey respondents.

>> **Acknowledgements**

We appreciate the tremendous help that the summit organizers have provided during our survey launch and data collection. We look forward to continuing to work with organizers as this research project progresses.

