

MUSIC FESTIVALS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: EXAMINING STAKEHOLDER  
RELATIONS TO BUILD EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS AND FOSTER  
SUSTAINABILITY

by  
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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS  
FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

in the Department of Environmental Science

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August 2018

Thompson Rivers University

Dominique Robyn Hazel, 2018

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## ABSTRACT

Music festivals are increasing in both popularity and diversity around the globe, due at least in part to their economic potential. A well planned and marketed festival can be a driver of community tourism and business growth. They can also strengthen the artistic culture and provide attendees with a highly sought after and unique experience. However, festivals are also known for producing waste and pollution, causing rifts in communities, and commonly running deficits. Current literature on festivals outline environmental implications, the importance of providing benefits to all stakeholders, and the need to fulfill economic potentials. Yet environmental issues persist and many festivals are viewed as unsuccessful on multiple fronts. Presently there is a major gap in the research on sustainable practices of festivals in Canada, with a particularly scarcity in British Columbia. This research reviews existing practices of music festivals within British Columbia, draws comparisons to those covered in the literature and evaluates the barriers and drivers of environmentalism faced by festival management. The thesis also addresses issues of sustainability by exploring the relationships between stakeholders and festival management, and assessing the way they shape environmental decisions and foster strong partnerships. A community-based participatory framework guides the study, using qualitative research methods in the form of in-depth interviews and surveys at three separate festivals within the interior of BC. This research demonstrates that a thorough understanding of these relationships can lead to partnerships that will create attainable environmental, economic, and sustainability goals. With escalating international competition for resources and a growing need to protect our natural environment, it is even more important for events to have the support of all those directly and indirectly impacted. This research fills a significant gap in festival literature and makes sound recommendations to improve stakeholder management practices and related environmental policies.

**keywords:** festivals, sustainability, environmental practices, community-based research, stakeholder relationships, power relations, tourism industries

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Courtney Mason, for his guidance, mentorship, and unwavering support. I have been extremely lucky to have a supervisor who recognized my full potential and cared so much about my work. I extend this appreciation to my committee, Dr. Rob Hood and Dr. Peter Tsigaris. Your genuine interest in my topic was ever encouraging and your time and feedback was tremendously valuable.

A sincere thank you to the festival managers who took the time to engage with me on these music festival issues and allowed me to interact with and survey festival attendees. The willingness to be honest and open with me about the barriers and incentives faced within their organization was critical to this study and demonstrated a clear passion for the industry.

Completing this work would have been all the more difficult if it were not for the support, friendship, and most of all the laughs provided by my peers in the Rural Livelihoods and Sustainable Communities Lab. I am indebted to them for their help. A special thank you to Kelsey Boulé, a great study partner and even better friend. I could not have done this without you.

I also want to thank my family and friends for their support and words of encouragement. To my parents, Mona and Greg, for not just being my second set of eyes, but for making sense of impossible sentences. A task that only people who know me better than I know myself could do, and I dedicate this milestone to them.

A profound thank you to Jeff Topham. There are not enough words to describe the kind of support provided by you, but unconditional comes close.

This research was generously supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). The work was approved by the Thompson Rivers University's Research Ethics for Human Subjects Board, protocol no. 101609.

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## Chapter One.

### Introduction

Festivals have been rooted in cultural history for thousands of years and scholars argue that they are a fundamental and essential human experience. These events range from religious celebrations, political assemblies, sport competitions, feasts and artistic platforms (Getz, 2005). Music festivals in particular have become an increasing trend in tourism because of their potential to develop businesses in local economies, improve destination marketing, and contribute to the success and diversity of artistic culture within a community (Quinn, 2006). They also provide the visitor with an opportunity to experience local culture and make connections with people who share the same interests, which can strengthen networks between different communities (Davis, 2016). Unfortunately, festivals are also attracting attention for their negative impacts on the environment and for creating conflict within host communities. Discourses of sustainability within music festivals often refer to financial stability, environmental stewardship and cultural preservation, yet existing literature often fails to encompass all three aspects. Current studies focus on environmental impacts, stakeholder management, and visitor motivations, using the resulting knowledge to develop recommendations designed to bolster economic sustainability. This research lacks a holistic view that incorporates each of these facets of sustainability and examines the way they affect inter-relationships. Music festivals are dynamic organizations, with multiple stakeholders such as business partners, community members and patrons, and this complexity needs to be recognized when addressing issues of sustainability.<sup>1</sup>

This study aims to fill this gap by working with festival management to understand stakeholder relationships from financial, environmental and cultural perspectives. It also presents knowledge of how patrons view environmental practices and the related impacts of music festivals, including how these affect their experience as an attendee. By using a community-based participatory research approach, this research identifies and articulates

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<sup>1</sup> Academic studies vary between their usage of the word patrons, attendees, and visitors to refer to consumers of events, including music festivals. For the purpose of this thesis, the terms patrons and attendees are used interchangeably throughout the study.

clear and practical implications for festival design. Importantly, it adds British Columbia, Canada, to the body of literature and deepens understandings of both the complexity and the necessity of managing festivals on three different fronts: economic, environmental and cultural. The key objective of my research is to foster sustainability through strong communication between all parties and provide the foundation for the development of best practices, which will lead to the adoption of more sustainable industry standards.

Music festivals produce mass amounts of waste and pollution, which leaves a large ecological footprint and creates conflict in host communities. Research identifies problem areas and offers solutions, yet incorporating the knowledge is not a regular practice. This research project will present stakeholder and patron concerns along with their influence over management decisions and answer the following critical questions: 1) What are the current environmental practices at music festivals in B.C. and who is regulating them?; 2) What are the main barriers to environmentalism?; 3) What incentives for managers to implement improved environmental practices currently exist and do they foster change?; 4) How does festival management navigate through the complex stakeholder relationships and why is the inclusion of stakeholders so crucial to sustainability?; and 5) What are the concerns and motivations of consumers when thinking about environmental sustainability at music festivals? This research will demonstrate that improving stakeholder relations by identifying incentives and barriers to change will create a more economical, socio-cultural, and environmental sustainable music festival industry in B.C.

## **THE INCREASING DEMAND FOR CRITICAL APPROACHES ON MUSIC FESTIVALS**

As music festivals expand around the globe, research on their impact and sustainability is also gaining momentum in academic circles. Studies range from socio-cultural functions and patron motivation, to economic benefits, sustainability, and more recently, environmental impacts. The majority of published research originates from Europe (Blesic et al., 2014; Karlsen & Nordström, 2008; Leenders, 2010; Luonila & Johansson, 2016), Australia (Laing & Mair, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2011; Pegg & Patterson, 2010), several locations in Asia (Lee, 2016; Lee et al., 2015; Song et al., 2015), and the United States (Barber et al., 2014; Hudson et al., 2015), with a modicum of research on Canada



(Getz et al., 2007; Nelson et al., 2011). A particular scarcity of research is noted in Western Canada and specifically in B.C. While the theories of sustainability developed around festivals are sound, it is important to recognize that cultural differences can significantly influence the applicability of the research findings (Getz & Andersson, 2008; Laing & Frost, 2010; Meynhardt et al., 2016). With differing genres and locations also comes changes in local laws and regulations, stakeholder relationships, visitor motivations, values in the host community, and patterns of communication. This literature review provides an overview of current research on music festivals, with particular attention paid to the environment, stakeholders, patrons, and community impacts.

Studies regarding music festivals and event tourism have expanded from social science origins to interdisciplinary areas of study. Music festival research has now been adopted in higher education and contributes to tourism development in commercial arenas (Getz & Page, 2016). Event structures, such as music festivals, have become “key marketing propositions in the promotion of places given the increasingly global competitiveness to attract visitor spending” (Getz & Page, 2016, p. 593). They serve an economic purpose, but more significantly, they provide a liminal space for attendees where patrons are liberated from their social constraints (Crompton & McKay, 1997; Mohr et al., 1993; Pernecky, 2015). Music festivals typically last between one to eleven days and accrue the majority of their income through ticket sales and sponsorship (Andersson & Getz, 2009).

Festival structures continuously interact with their environment. The structure itself becomes home to attendees for the duration of the festival, where people eat, sleep, relate with one another, and essentially use the resources of that environment to live. Locations are therefore carefully chosen as it determines the design and staging of the whole event, an integral component in the creation of the festival atmosphere. There is an increasing awareness that festivals of all kinds must become more environmentally friendly (Laing & Frost, 2010), but environmental degradation remains a major concern at these events (Getz, 2013; Collins & Cooper, 2017). The environmental impact of festivals has been measured in numerous ways, including lifecycle assessments (Toniolo et al., 2017), carbon footprints (Horng et al., 2014), ecological footprints (Collins & Cooper, 2017), and destination effects (Li et al., 2014). Mair and Laing (2012) also applied a conceptual model by Mair and Jago (2010) to music festivals that aims to understand the greening process and underpin the

development of strategies to enhance greening (Mair & Laing, 2012). These assessments reveal festival issues such as the production of massive amounts of waste, pollution of air, water, and land, water and energy usage, and effects on wildlife and habitat (Getz, 2013; Dutta et al., 2016; Tronstad & Gelderblom, 2016). Many scholars have analyzed the implications of such impacts and offered suggestions for festival managers on how to mitigate impacts and better incorporate greening strategies into their festival design. These strategies include improvements to transportation such as carpooling programs, secure bicycle racks, free transit, shuttles, and charters (Laing & Frost, 2010; Horng et al., 2014). Suggestions for minimizing energy usage include using biodiesel fueled generators, solar or wind power, as well as offering carbon offsets to attendees (Laing & Frost, 2010). Common options for dealing with waste include recycling programs, compostable toilets (“humanure”) and cutlery, as well as offering excess food to charities (Laing & Frost, 2010).

Despite numerous academic reviews and assessments, many music festivals still struggle to meet what many feel are easily achievable environmental standards. Scholars criticize the different environmental impact assessments as being little more than an attention grabbing tool, in that they fail to provide useful information for making informed environmental decisions. This is due, at least in part, to a limited understanding of how consumer activities relate to impact (Collins & Cooper, 2017). Other main barriers to implementation identified by Mair and Laing (2012) are the lack of support from stakeholders (particularly local government), time constraints, control over venues and patrons, and availability of sustainable suppliers and supplies. Festivals are project-based organizations (Luonila & Johansson, 2016) where resources and goals are negotiated by multiple parties, thus it is crucial that the festival management team choose the right organizations to develop relationships with in order to achieve their environmental sustainability goals (Getz et al., 2007).

Collaboration between resource outfitters and stakeholders is a permanent element of festival design (Andersson & Getz, 2008). The relationships of stakeholders in the festival industry are complex, often further complicated by the fact that the same stakeholder may hold multiple roles that evolve throughout the festival’s life cycle (Karlsen & Nordstrom, 2008; Turkulainen et al., 2016). The intricate relationships between stakeholders and festival management, as well as between different stakeholder groups themselves, has led to the

application of multiple theories and approaches to managing festivals including resource dependency, institutional theory, and stakeholder theory (Getz et al., 2007). Resource dependency examines an organization's interdependence by looking at their needs in comparison to the provider's control over the resources. This often leads to suggestions for actions to manage dependencies (Getz, 2005). Institutional theory analyzes how an organization addresses a fundamental social, cultural, or economic need. This theory often suggests for festivals to improve sustainability by conforming to the norms and expectations of the institutional environment (Andersson & Getz, 2008). Stakeholder theory is the most widely adopted theory in festival literature, as it provides an effective management tool for understanding the multifaceted relationships between stakeholders (Todd et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory was first introduced by Freeman in 1984 and recognizes that there are various individuals within any organizational context that both influence and are influenced by the organization. The theory was originally developed to address the need to classify and evaluate the concepts of corporate social performance and responsibility and has been growing as a topic of significance in the literature since the late 20<sup>th</sup> century (Carroll, 1991; Todd et al., 2017). Stakeholder theory can be understood as a method of ranking the priority of stakeholders based on their power, legitimacy, and urgency in order to develop management strategies (Mitchell et al., 1997; Mossberg & Getz, 2006). Power is concerned with the stakeholder's influence over the organization in hand with the organization's dependency. Legitimacy refers to the stakeholder's relationship with the organization (legal, contractual, ownership, etc.), while urgency refers to the ability of stakeholders to gain management attention along with their level of demand (Mitchell et al., 1997). Reflecting on these foundational relationships is critical in order to gain an understanding of how they affect festival viability and long-term sustainability. Every festival is unique in its stakeholder relations. Power, legitimacy, and urgency will shift with festival ownership. For example, the different orientations between private, public, or not for profit ownership are significant (Andersson & Getz, 2009).

Stakeholder theory enables insight into the patterns of changing roles as they become extended and blurred. This provides perspectives for future event development and management (Karlsen & Nordstrom, 2008; Todd et al., 2017). This theory also addresses the economic sustainability of festivals in a very robust way, which can pinpoint the principal

groups to build relationships with in order to secure support during financial hardships. This is a significant aspect for long-term sustainability of festivals (Getz & Andersson, 2008), but it does not always account for environmental interests. In this regard, because stakeholders have so much control over and play such a major role in the creation of festivals, the environmental discrepancies cannot be solved without their support. Stakeholders also benefit greatly from becoming involved with festivals. Festivals are a platform in which partners can improve their own activities and forge new collaborations among business partners, which facilitates relationships with other enterprises and offers benefits from collaborative value creation (Luonila & Johansson, 2016). In practice, stakeholder theory aims to understand the relationship impacts of all groups, beyond those of financial shareholders (Todd et al., 2017). This study utilizes stakeholder theory as a guide because of its purpose to relate to more than one partner. Stakeholder theory considers the wider environment of people or entities that can affect, or be affected by, an organization's actions, rather than directing focus only on dependencies, shareholders, or the institution (Andersson & Getz, 2008). While current literature on music festivals examined through stakeholder theory considers multiple entities, there is limited research that has resulted in management outcomes designed towards environmental sustainability specifically. Debates throughout management literature center around "strategic functions such as corporate planning, performance, systems theory and corporate social responsibility" (Todd et al., 2017, p. 496). An example is research by Clarkson (1995) who argues success is dependent on providing satisfaction to primary stakeholders whereas Jawahar and McLaughlin (2001) argue that different stakeholders are more important based on their ability to meet an organization's need. Andersson and Getz (2008) acknowledge that often certain stakeholders are favoured, particularly because of resource dependency, and stated "many of the strategies of necessity involve key stakeholders, especially those pertaining to financial health and marketing" (p. 215). Therefore, the aim of using stakeholder theory within this study is to analyze how different stakeholders are affecting environmental strategy.

Patrons and the host community are two key stakeholders in the music festival industry. Patrons are voluntarily involved with the festival, attending for a variety of reasons that are unique to each festival (Blesic et al., 2014; Leenders, 2010). The motivations of patrons to attend music festivals have been thoroughly studied by academics, as

understanding these motives leads to more effective marketing, increased attendance, and therefore greater profitability (Getz, 2013). There is no exhaustive list of motivations identified by scholars, however, the main motivations can be categorized into atmosphere, music, feelings of escape, togetherness, solidarity, and socialization. In this context, it is the presence of music rather than the quality of the lineup that draws participation and has an effect on the patron's experience (Leenders, 2010). Attendees seek out an experience that brings a sense of belonging, or *communitas*, which describes "an intense community spirit, resulting from a shared experience associated with an atmosphere of social equality, sharing, intimacy and togetherness" (Stone, 2008, p. 215). The motivational factors and symbolic meaning behind a festival are emphasized here because it is pertinent to the argument that attendees' motives do not revolve solely around shallow celebration, and that there is a greater sense of purpose behind these events (Laing & Mair, 2015).

The festival atmosphere is facilitated by music, venue, theme, the surrounding environment, and the attendees themselves. Perspectives from patrons on environmental concerns within music festivals should be considered by management and other stakeholder groups as it is an intricate part in the creation of value for the target audience (Morgan, 2008). Despite the growing interest in environmental issues around music festivals, there is an extremely limited number of studies that involve patrons and their perceptions on green initiatives (Wong et al., 2015). It has been shown, for example, that visitor intention to recycle is influenced by how individuals perceive recycling against their own satisfaction, convenience, and self-image (Barber et al., 2014). Additionally, O'Rourke et al. (2011) demonstrated that festival goers are aware of the impacts. Current literature has yet to verify, yet alone measure, the extent to which attendees are concerned with environmental impacts even though it is known that attendees expect some level of sustainability from the festival organizers (Mair & Laing, 2012). Meeting these expectations is incredibly vital, as satisfaction of patrons in turn increases loyalty and influences their intent to return and recommend the festival to others (Cossio-Silva et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2015). Additionally, festivals have the potential to teach their attendees about greening in their own lives, as findings show a positive linkage between green festival involvement and perceived value (Wong et al., 2015). This is further supported by the many scholars who speak to the potential that festivals hold for delivering education to a large and broad

audience (Barber et al., 2014; Getz, 1991; O'Rourke et al., 2011). There is a critical gap in the research that studies patron perspectives, and scholars have urged an exploration of this area of research (Laing & Frost, 2010; Mair & Laing, 2012). This study begins to address this gap, and furthers the argument that music festivals can serve as an opportune learning environment as well as initiate a change in values.

As a main stakeholder, the host community must also be given careful consideration. The community does not participate voluntarily, but nevertheless must bear the impacts of the festival, both positive and negative (Lee et al., 2015). The benefits of the festival to the locals, such as an increase in tourism, local business, employment opportunities, and a positive cultural atmosphere, must outweigh the negatives, including congestion, pollution, waste, and noise (Lee et al., 2015). Gaining the support of the local community is imperative in ensuring the long-term viability of the event, therefore consultation helps to mitigate backlash from any negative impacts (Song et al., 2015). As festivals and tourism are often associated with terms such as public goods, merit goods, and social equity (Andersson & Getz, 2009), and because they require public resources, local government involvement is nearly inevitable. This can play a positive role in the creation of an atmosphere by regulating festival impacts (Lee, 2016). Although community members and festival goers may not be aware of exact policies in place or influenced by the presence of governmental authorities, there is an expectation of safety, cleanliness, and security at any festival (Lee, 2016; O'Rourke et al., 2011). Festival guests are concerned with the venue as it directly influences their experience, while the host community is concerned with the surrounding physical environment. Regardless of the fact that festivals can be heavily driven by economic goals, the outcomes and consequences must be examined at both personal and societal levels (Lee, 2016).

Environmental impacts remain an issue in music festivals despite the variety of assessment tools and suggestions for green initiatives. While festivals naturally vary in their energy usage, waste production and environmental degradation, managers are aware that to make the required changes it is not a one-dimensional consideration that can be made solely internally. Operational decisions can have both primary and secondary impacts, and may also impact budgets or require additional financing. Stakeholders are a cornerstone in festival design, but have also been identified as a barrier to green practices (Mair & Laing, 2012).

Integrating more than one theoretical model into the study design will provide the basis for viewing music festivals through a wider lens in order to capture the dynamics of these phenomena (Song et al., 2015).

Triple Bottom Line (TBL) is a framework growing in popularity within many industries. The theory evaluates performance based on financial, environmental, and social perspectives (Richardson & Henriques, 2004). The goal of my research is to use stakeholder theory and include festival attendees to advance the TBL approach. The link between TBL and stakeholder theory is predicated on the fact that the success of a music festival is directly related to its stakeholder associations. A study by Hede (2007) links TBL and stakeholder theory to both optimize the positive outcomes and reduce negative outcomes of special events, and grants equal consideration to economic, social, and environmental impacts. This study focuses on the influence of stakeholder relationships within the TBL framework of a music festival, with particular attention centered on environmental aspects. This focus will identify new hierarchical status' of stakeholders from the lens of festival managers in regards to not only economics, but with an emphasis on environmental and socio-cultural aspects as well.

## **CONTEXTUALIZING MUSIC FESTIVALS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA**

There is a vast amount of research that covers the impact of festivals, particularly economic contributions (Formica & Uysal, 1998; Gursoy et al., 2004), visitor motivations (Blesic et al., 2014; Saleh & Ryan, 1993), community impacts (Vestrum, 2014; Yolal et al., 2016), and stakeholder analyses (Getz & Andersson, 2010). Festival tourism has become a common referral in studies, implying that some festivals are built as a place-marketing tool with tourism objectives in mind. Further research problematizes this term (Quinn, 2006; Getz & Andersson, 2008). Although festivals will always have an impact on the tourism market, the exploitation of festivals solely for tourism and place marketing purposes comes with costs, such as the loss of a sense of place, often known as “festivalization” (Richards, 2007). Music festivals are not just economic drivers but are cultural celebrations embedded in history and serve as an important social and cultural function for many cities and peoples (Andersson & Getz, 2008; Quinn, 2006; Richards, 2007). The setting, values, purpose, and overall goal of the festival as an organization is critical to understand when analyzing

practices as these traits exert a heavy influence on the operations of the festival, including decision making, partnership and collaboration, and financing. The type of ownership also directly affects operations. Private (for profit) festivals are more customer-oriented, have more employees, depend heavily on artists, have larger monetary turnover, and have better developed financing from ticket sales and corporate sponsorship. Not-for-profit festivals are more product oriented as they have less employees and more volunteers who have a stronger influence. In these cases, decisions are mainly made by members and/or a board of directors (Andersson & Getz, 2009).

Although Canada is home to a large number of music festivals, it remains an understudied region in comparison to countries across Europe and Asia. British Columbia in particular is known for its diverse natural landscape, making it a popular host destination. Currently, there are an average of forty music festivals between the months of June and September in B.C. and this number continues to grow (ToDoCanada, 2018). Research for this paper took place within the interior of B.C. at three separate music festivals: Bass Coast; Rockin' River Music Festival; and Salmon Arm Roots and Blues Music Festival (see Figure 1.1). Each festival has a unique theme and atmosphere. These festivals are staple events within each host community and they offer three very different experiences.

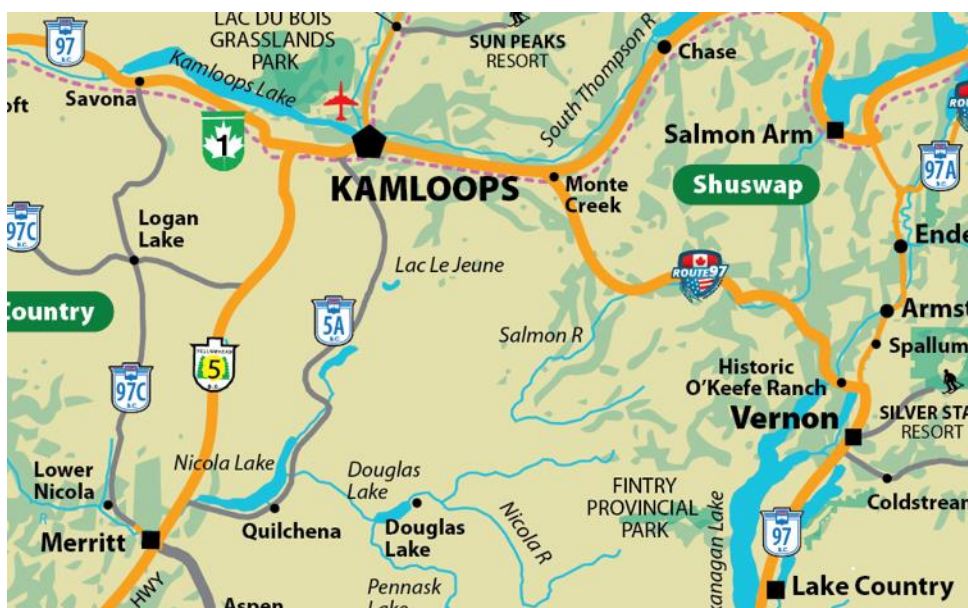


Figure 1.1 Map of Studied Music Festivals (TOTA, 2017).



Bass Coast, the first festival studied, had its ninth annual event July 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>, 2017. Nestled in the Nicola Valley just outside of Merritt, B.C., this artist-owned and operated festival is a four day/three-night event centering around electronic dance music (EDM) and art. A community is created in the midst of the valley as every piece is treated as art, from food vending to interactive installations by local artists. Although a private organization, the organizers also include a not-for-profit component, using bar sales to help fund the artists that turn their forest into a mirage of art. The vendors are curated by a staff member with the purpose to ensure diversity and encourage local vending. Bass Coast describes B.C.'s natural beauty as a quintessential element of the Bass Coast experience and prides itself in its ability to provide an inclusive environment where attendees feel inspired to participate to the fullest. Andrea Graham, Bass Coast co-founder, describes the festival as an "intimate boutique style festival" based around creating a platform for arts of all types (personal communication, October 27, 2017). The festival focuses on the subculture rather than the mainstream and strives to deliver a new experience to its attendees every year. In recent years, the festival sells out even before releasing their artistic line-up. This showcases the loyalty and trust of their customers, as 5,000 people choose to spend their first weekend of July at Bass Coast experiencing new musical and artistic talent while immersed in nature. As a rural festival, there are no restrictions on noise levels, and music runs all day and night. This is a small-scale festival and is funded through patrons with no sponsorship and instead focuses on the consumer experience, art, and the environment.

Rockin' River Music Festival takes place annually over the B.C. Day long weekend, from August 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>, in the same Nicola Valley as Bass Coast, just outside of Merritt. However, location is the only thing the two festivals share, as Rockin' River presents a different atmosphere and music genre. It includes a star-studded country music line-up that in 2017 featured well known artists such as Toby Keith and country legend Willie Nelson. The festival was originally staged in Mission, B.C. but in 2015, as the festival grew in popularity, organizers seized the opportunity to move the festival to the larger, more scenic location. The family-owned and operated country music festival boasts a number of extra experiences in addition to the hard hitting line-up, that offers a multitude of activities for all ages such as swimming, helicopter rides, a mechanical bull, biking trails, and games. The festival also features a variety of food vendors, including some local Indigenous vendors, but the

festival's biggest attraction is the camping experience. Running directly through the festival grounds is the Coldwater River where an average of 12,000 campers are all situated alongside. This offers attendees a place to cool off and play as summer temperatures rise. Campers are able to choose their campground depending on the level of involvement and interaction they are looking to have with other attendees, from sites such as "Chattahoochee" across from the Beach Stage with a 4:00 AM noise curfew, to grounds slightly further from the main site with curfew of 12:00 PM. No matter the age, Rockin' River Music Festival remains dedicated to their fan base. As stated by their founder, "If you're a country music fan, you're going to like what we put on the table" (L. Dean, personal communication, November 10, 2017). This is a private music festival with a strong focus on bringing in the best country artists and providing all ages with an engaging experience.

The Salmon Arm Roots and Blues celebrates their annual music festival the third weekend of August. They recently achieved the milestone of 25 years during their August 17<sup>th</sup> to August 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 event. This is a not-for-profit music festival that is run predominantly through the support of its community, relying on over 800 people in volunteer positions alone and attracting up to 10,000 attendees. The festival is centrally located in Salmon Arm, B.C. on the city's fairgrounds, which are close to grocery stores, main highways, local amenities, and community members' homes. This urban-centered festival has long been established as a family-friendly destination spot and features a range of music from blues to bluegrass, Celtic to Cuban and Americana to afro-beat. Four unique stages, including a barn-transformed stage, host forty culturally diverse artists that are strategically picked to engage Roots and Blues' multi-generational audience. In addition to the musical line-up, the festival has local buskers performing alongside major pathways, free interactive sessions such as drumming, as well as pop-up theatrical performances from a local arts and music studio. A popular feature includes the daytime workshops where artists from around the world collaborate on the spot, stunning people with their ability to play music on an improvisational basis. The festival offers classy wine tents and casual beer gardens, child care and play areas, and late entry discounts, therefore it has appeal to a wide audience. Roots and Blues began with small folk shows in the community halls and has now grown to become a staple event in the city while maintaining its small-town charm. Although the festival has grown tremendously, it is still "first and foremost a family friendly event" which

is “something that we have taken a lot of time to develop and continue to develop” (D. Gonella, personal communication, July 19, 2017). It remains a not-for-profit music festival that books an eclectic genre of music.

These festivals showcase the great diversity of just three music festivals within a 200 kilometer radius. Just as each festival is distinctive in its purpose and experience, their interactions with stakeholders and the environment are also diverse. Understanding the differences between these festivals on the basis of values provides additional insight and allows for further exploration of how the setting and environment affect management decisions and patron behavior. Each festival attracts a different consumer type, drawn to their festival of choice not only by the genre but the experience it offers. This also invites different levels of interest from sponsors, business partnerships, collaborators, and other stakeholders (Huang et al., 2014; Pera et al., 2016). It is the differences and similarities, as well as the successes and failures, of each festival that shape how organizations can begin to overcome barriers to change and reach new goals of sustainability.

## **METHODS AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES**

Research on music festivals in B.C. suggests that they are severely understudied. This thesis marks a significant new contribution to a limited body of knowledge. The main objective is to deepen understandings of festivals in B.C., establish the priorities of stakeholders, develop a sense of potential industry standards, and improve the knowledge around stakeholder salience and audience perspectives on the sustainability of music festivals. In terms of practical implications, insight from festival managers around the communication and relationships between their stakeholders is key. A community-based participatory research framework (CBPR) guided this study. This is an approach that involves researchers and participants working as partners in multiple aspects of the research process (Daley et al., 2010; Israel et al., 2005), which facilitates co-learning to achieve a balance between research and action (Frerichs et al., 2016; Leung et al., 2004). CBPR principles have proven their worth in health sciences (Frerichs et al., 2016; O’Fallon & Dearth, 2002; Townsend et al., 2016), but these principles also have strong applicability to other disciplines, including in this study’s context dealing directly with festival organizations and their stakeholder partners. There has been a rapid increase of CBPR projects over the

past two decades, and consequently a corresponding need for guiding principles (O'Fallon & Dearry, 2002). A number of principles were endorsed in 2001 by the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences (NIEHS) and the following were critical to the formation of a framework for this study: 1) to promote active collaboration and participation at every stage of research; 2) to foster co-learning; 3) to ensure projects are community driven; 4) to disseminate results in useful terms; and, 5) to ensure the research process is culturally appropriate (O'Fallon & Dearry, 2002). This project collaborated with management in the design and development of interview questions to ensure that the conversations would capture relevant information around issues that are important to festival management. Interview transcripts were shared with the managers afterwards for them to review, correct, expand upon, or retract any information. Additionally, managers were encouraged to ask questions and provide feedback throughout the study. The review and approval of all information by festival managers was essential to the integrity of this study because a key element of community-based research is to accurately capture without influencing, and create results that are beneficial to all those involved (Ablah et al., 2016). Collaboration in the development of the interviews led to discussions around topics that provided information that was not only beneficial for this thesis in an academic framework, but also that informed festival managers and provided them with clarity around issues that they are facing in the industry. This study was particularly beneficial to both researchers and festival managers, in that it led to new findings in regards to patron perspectives of sustainability, many of which were either unknown or were erroneous assumed by management or stakeholders in the industry. This project worked not only with management, but also engaged the festival community directly through on-site surveys. The participants of the surveys were festival patrons, many of whom are members of the host community. The local community and patrons are an integral part of what makes a festival a success, and their direct involvement and feedback opens new doors for communication with management around sustainability. Formal dissemination of the results appears in the form of this thesis, however for practical use and implication for managers, non-academic reports were developed. These are ten page reports that deliver key results and relay important themes of the research in a direct way for festival managers. This comprises concise insights on barriers and incentives to environmentalism, including stakeholder relationships and their effect on festival

sustainability. Survey results are also presented with short discussions and recommendations on how to move forward with the results. It might also be noted that all of the above are the product of many hours of formal and informal discussion and engagement with festival managers. Due of this, and our commitment to transparency, little of what they will read in our formal reports will be a complete surprise. Surveys were administered in person and on site by the researcher, which were preceded by discussions with management prior to the festivals to ensure that the content and interactions between researcher and participant would not compromise the core values of the festival. Upholding the culture at each music festival and not disrupting the experience of the festival attendee was crucial to the implementation of the surveys for retaining the support of management, and also for gaining patron trust to partake in the survey. Efforts were made to minimize the extent to which the interactions between interviewer and participants might shape and influence the festival experience of patrons. Ensuring that this interaction was informed and guided by management of each festival provided a greater degree of confidence that researcher interaction was not intrusive and was instead aligned in a way that ensured that festival's values and culture would be sustained.

This is a cross-sectional study with a small sample size, where the sample festivals were carefully chosen to capture a wide spectrum of theoretical and practical implications addressing sustainability. Research was conducted throughout the summer of 2017 at festivals within the interior of B.C. These festivals included: Salmon Arm Roots and Blues; Bass Coast in Merritt; and, Rockin' River Festival in Merritt. All are of a similar size, ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 attendees, yet each festival is unique in its values, atmosphere, theme, and music genre. These festivals were chosen because of their diversity in demographics and psychographics. Roots and Blues has a long history, celebrating its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this August, and it generally attracts an older audience. Bass Coast features electronic dance music and attracts a younger generation. Rockin' River Festival moved from its original location in Mission and is now hosted in Merritt and it features country music, attracting a diverse audience across gender and age. Studying three festivals that vary so greatly allowed for awareness into how demographics and genre of a festival influences the demand and uptake of sustainable practices.

This research used qualitative methods in the form of in-depth interviews with festival directors and/or site managers. Festival directors and site managers deal directly with stakeholders when negotiating costs and partnerships and are in charge of implementing recycling, waste, and other environmental programs. Semi-structured interviews were conducted in person or over the phone depending on the preference of the interviewee. The questions were developed to gain qualitative data on the influence and effects of each stakeholder, drawing upon debates around environmental and cultural issues to understand the concerns of listed stakeholders. Open-ended questions allow for more flexibility and in-depth responses, where concepts can evolve and underlying ideas may emerge (Taylor et al., 2015). Structured questions are included within the interview process to also generate quantitative data around the number of environmental programs within the three festivals for comparative analysis. Two of the interviews were conducted in person, one on one, and two were done over the phone. Interview questions were delivered beforehand for review, and the interviews took place in a setting of their choice, such as home offices or festival sites, in order to create a comfortable atmosphere between participants and the interviewer. The interviews averaged one hour in duration.

It is imperative to provide a brief background on each interviewee. Andrea Graham is the manager, co-founder and artistic director of Bass Coast music festival. In addition to starting a successful music festival from the ground up, funded directly through ticket sales with no sponsorship, she is also a popular D.J. known as The Librarian. She often performs at other music festivals and has been involved in the music industry through many different outlets as a performer, attendee and organizer. The green team manager of Bass Coast, Maria Yasel, was also interviewed to gain more detail of the environmental programs on site. Yasel began as a volunteer for the Bass Coast environment crew in 2012 with previous experience as a volunteer for numerous festival environment crews. In 2013, she assumed the role of green team manager for Bass Coast. David Gonella is the third interviewee and executive director of Roots and Blues. Gonella has been in this position with Roots and Blues for two years, but has been with the festival for much longer. He formerly acted as their volunteer coordinator and site coordinator, as well as production manager. As the executive director, Gonella oversees majority of the organization's departments, is in charge of site planning, aids with sponsorship and event marketing, and often acts as the face of the event when the

artistic director is unavailable. The manager of Rockin' River and fourth interviewee requested to remain anonymous and has been given the pseudonym of Larry Dean for this study. He is the founder of the festival and his role encompasses management of all departments. Duties within his position also include booking all talent, managing the site, securing policing and security, and dealing with many other stakeholders such as city officials. Dean comes from a family of musicians and is a successful country artist himself. He tours internationally and performs at popular country music festivals. The participants of these interviews are all people of incredible standing within the festival industry and bear the responsibilities for the festival success. As each respondent is of high standing in their field, recruitment was done through personal contact information provided to the researcher from Billy Collins, a Senior Lecturer and respected industry professional at TRU. Participants were reached out to via e-mail where they were briefed on the idea of the study and to assess their level of interest. Follow-up phone calls were then made to discuss details of the project and gather feedback from each participant. Moving forward, interview dates were set based on the interviewees schedules (See Appendix A for interview questions).

Visitor surveys are generally recognized for their effectiveness in obtaining formative, process, and summative information for basic types of planning and marketing evaluations (Getz, 1991). These surveys were designed to capture process and summative information. Process data focuses on the actual operations while summative or outcome evaluations identify, measure, and determine the significance and implications of event impacts (Getz, 1991). The questions therefore revolve around the opinions and perceptions of festival patrons with regard to the environmental structure of the festival they are attending. Managers of each festival expressed concern that the survey could negatively impact patron festival experience, which therefore limited the number of questions that could be asked of the festival attendees. The surveys were designed to take no longer than five minutes and they consisted of ten questions. The questions were created to inquire about patrons' understanding of environmental awareness, importance of programs and practices, and willingness to contribute towards festival environmentalism. Language was designed to be comprehensible and there were no long-answer options. The survey concluded with questions to capture demographics of age, sex, and location of home residence. Surveys were administered to attendees in person via *Survey Monkey* through tablets and iPhones. On-site

intercept sampling was used, where participants are systematically selected using every fifth person in line ups or past a given point, such as entry or exit gates and vendor line-ups. Although an effective option to produce results without arbitrary selection bias (Getz, 1991), the method does involve challenges as not all who are approached are willing to participate. In this scenario, attendees were thanked for their time and the next patron in line was approached. Given the nature of festival atmospheres, it is common for attendees to become inebriated as part of the carousing experience, particularly in the evenings. In order to retain legitimacy of surveys, patrons who were thought to be inebriated were not approached and responses were not collected during evening hours. In order to reach the response goal of 200 participants per festival, a research assistant was hired and trained to aid in administering the surveys. All survey and interview questions were approved by the Thompson Rivers University's Research Ethics for Human Subjects Board prior to implementation (See Appendix B for survey questions).

## **RESEARCHER POSITIONALITY**

A number of factors influenced my role as a researcher within this project that are pertinent to understanding why I chose this topic as well as how the research questions and methodology was developed. I have been an avid festival goer and volunteer for several years. As a result, I have an understanding of the many motivations that festival participants have to attend music festivals and a stakeholder's investment in their success. I began the Bachelor of Tourism Management degree in 2012 and graduated with a concentration in festivals and events in 2016. This education provided me with a strong background on festival and event literature, current industry standards, and theoretical models to understand events. Previous to beginning a Masters in Environmental Science, I worked as the Volunteer Coordinator for the Roots and Blues Music Festival. In this position I managed the recruitment and organization of volunteers and supervised numerous crews, including the environmental team. The Volunteer Coordinator is also a position whose role is interconnected with all other festival departments, filling requests for volunteers and providing additional support when possible. It was through this position that I gained first-hand insight into the restrictions, barriers, and complications faced by different departments. I have known festivals as a participant, a volunteer and a student, however, it was the



difficulties and struggles that I faced as an employee that led to my personal drive to gain a clearer understanding of what practices are available and what other festivals are doing, or not doing, to implement environmental change. My graduate research allowed me to address these issues in a more rigorous way, in an academic format with the direct aid of festival management. Through the program I was able to adjust my thought process from the strictly social science perspective gained through my undergrad work, and expand it to include new critical ways of thinking. This was imperative for the proper implementation of the methods and methodology. My background as an industry professional was also a main asset in establishing empathy and gaining the trust of festival managers and willingness to participate in the study. My ability to speak their jargon, communicate shared values, be up-to-date on current issues, and demonstrate a shared investment in the festival industry, beyond that of just a researcher, was crucial to create a relationship of open and in-depth dialogue. This background, along with consistent transparency, was a key component for managers to understand my intentions with this project, and allow me to conduct surveys with patrons on festival grounds. Additionally, my positionality within this research aided in my communication with festival attendees, which resulted in a large number of survey respondents. More simply, I was comfortable with them and they were comfortable with me. While the contextualized aspects of my positionality such as my personal, academic, and industry background were seen as positive when conversing with this festival community, I do not believe that the fixed aspects such as my gender, race, and age posed any advantages or challenges. As a researcher, I have attempted to utilize my background and previous experiences to accurately interpret and present the opinions and knowledge of the festival managers. As a result, the findings in this study are based solely on the opinions and perspectives of my participants, with little reference to my own ideas on these discussions.

## **OVERVIEW OF THESIS**

This thesis is divided into two distinct papers. The first, Chapter Two, outlines the current environmental practices of British Columbia's music festival industry and analyzes the barriers and incentives to deepening those practices from festival organizer perspectives. The aim of this paper is to identify the underlying issues that both drive and constrain environmental practices, as well as highlight incentives that have the greatest possibility to

motivate change. Additionally, this research adds British Columbia to a rapidly increasing body of literature as music festivals continue to gain attention globally for their positive and negative implications. The second paper, Chapter Three, uncovers the complexities of stakeholder relationships in the B.C. music festival industry through a combination of interviews with festival management and survey responses from festival attendees. This paper utilizes patron perspectives with regard to festival sustainability, an approach that is conspicuously absent from the existing literature, to showcase the need for environmental practices and draw connections between patron views and festival values. There is a specific focus on the importance of including environmentally sustainable practices within stakeholder management strategies. The patron perspective is also highlighted as a key leverage point for generating positive change in the industry. In the final chapter, or conclusion, the unique platform of festivals and their potential to become a leader in sustainable practices is discussed. Moreover, the importance to not undermine the implications or significance based on the scale of an event is addressed, as is clearly illustrated throughout this research.

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## Chapter Two.

### Creating New Incentives Through Environmental Literacy

A green event can be understood as one that incorporates sustainable policies and practices into its management and operations (Laing & Frost, 2010). Our Common Future (1987) of the Brundtland Commission, formerly known as the World Commission on Environment and Development, defines sustainability as: “development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (n.p.). This has since become one of the most widely adopted measurements for sustainability (Cole et al., 2014; Zaman, 2014). Nevertheless, the significant elements of sustainability encompass more than just an environmental approach, but also include economic and social approaches, as commonly reflected in triple bottom line (TBL) (Mitchell et al., 2008). In regards to these three pillars of sustainability, previous research has been largely devoted to the economic and social sustainability in the music festival realm (Martinho et al., 2017; Warnick et al., 2017; Yolal et al., 2016). Existing studies on the environmental sustainability of events have gauged practices through ecological and carbon footprints (Collins & Cooper, 2017; Gossling et al., 2011), measuring environmental emissions (Dutta et al., 2016; Huang et al., 2014), and conducting environmental impact assessments (Ahmed et al., 2008; Toniolo et al., 2017). While informative, pinpointing these issues does not motivate, or help managers, to eliminate or mitigate their environmental impacts, as many of them are well aware of the negative impacts associated with their event. More recently, studies have been conducted that examine the barriers and incentives for greening events (Laing & Frost, 2010; Mair & Jago, 2010). Yet, the current level of knowledge and understanding of the challenges associated with staging a green festival is still insufficient. More knowledge is required of the qualitative characteristics of environmental impacts, particularly in understudied regions, in order to improve the planning of green festivals (Cierjacks et al., 2012; Andersson & Getz, 2009). This chapter aims to provide insight into the environmental practices applied to music festivals in B.C., as well as provide a qualitative review of the barriers and opportunities for management with regard to greening their events. This research explores the environmental practices at three music festivals within the interior of B.C., and identifies and analyzes their barriers and incentives

by speaking directly with management. Findings from this work demonstrate that understanding the barriers and incentives to change is imperative to implement environmental practices at music festivals.

## **CURRENT ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES AT MUSIC FESTIVALS**

The growing concern, and resulting pressure, for festivals to become eco-friendly is recognized by many scholars, with studies urging for further research in new regions (Laing & Frost, 2010; Hottle et al., 2015; Martinho et al., 2017). Negative impacts have been studied extensively. Environmental impact assessments and ecological footprints outline the consequences of music festivals on the environment, particularly in resource demands, air pollution, general and food waste, water usage, and energy consumption (Collins & Cooper, 2017; Dávid, 2009; Zelenika et al., 2018). Litter accumulation and visitor trampling has also led to water and environment contamination, causing direct suffering to animal habitats and vegetation with expected long-term negative consequences (Cierjacks et al., 2012). Specific calculations of waste and damage are difficult to measure due to the short timeframe of festivals, thus continuous research is imperative given the large size of the industry and its potential to negatively affect communities and local or regional environments (Gibson & Wong, 2011; Martinho et al., 2017). Developing an understanding of the current practices of different festivals in other regions will close gaps in knowledge and highlight the issues being faced across a variety of events by management. Bass Coast, Rockin' River, and Roots and Blues are all festivals within the interior of British Columbia, an understudied region and a popular destination for festival goers because of local landscapes such as mountain vistas, the consistent warm weather, highway vicinity and the vast genre options. While many festivals incorporate similar practices, it was clear through observation and interviews that each festival in this study operates at different levels of sustainability. The planning, execution, and end results also vary.

The first festival, Bass Coast, has made environmentalism a core value of their organization and invests in a paid position of green team manager. This position revolves around working with a team of volunteers to create, execute, and follow up with greening initiatives before, during, and after the festival. These initiatives range from clear labelling and practical placement of large bins for consumers to dispose of “Waste”, “Recycling” and

“Refundables”, to safely moving bird nests from staging areas to prevent accidental death of wildlife. All sales of plastic water bottles, including that of food and beverage vendors, has been banned on site and instead there are numerous locations where potable water is sourced from a nearby spring is available to refill patrons own re-usable bottles. In an effort to reduce impact on the local environment, volunteers and security watch for behavior that is detrimental to wildlife habitat, such as river bathing. Carpooling is encouraged through social media outlets to reduce gas emissions, and the site uses eco-diesel generators when possible. Although there is a green team manager, the environmental efforts are group oriented. All staff members contribute to green efforts where possible, such as infrastructure crews making use of nearby bridge remains to create stages instead of purchasing new lumber.

The second festival, Roots and Blues, also includes a waste and recycling program for consumer use, but relies on the colours of the bins and garbage bags to inform the consumer of the difference between waste and recycling. There is no paid position that focuses solely on the environmental programs, but instead the festival makes a donation to a local community group in exchange for their work as a volunteer environment crew, collecting garbage and recycling throughout the festival grounds and campgrounds during open hours. The festival commonly re-uses supplies, props, and décor from previous years and has multiple potable water stations across the festival grounds. The sale of plastic water bottles is not forbidden, however, the festival itself does not sell any from their on-site merchandise stores and encourages patrons to bring their own reusable bottles. In regards to noise pollution and disturbance, the festival has a midnight noise curfew enforced through municipal by-law and licensing.

The last festival, Rockin’ River, has the most relaxed regulations around environmental practices. There is no clear labelling on garbage and recycling bins, though a group of paid staff collect and sort through bins behind the scenes to ensure recycling and waste are properly sorted. There is only one water refill station and it is not located on festival maps. The sale of water bottles is common, and one company has exclusivity over brand sales with their own tent set up as well. The organization has partnered with B.C. Fisheries for advice and help with keeping wildlife and habitat protected from damage, and volunteers are present during festival hours to deter patrons from any activity that may be considered harmful.

The ultimate goal for each festival regarding environmental sustainability is to leave the grounds in better condition than they were found when they arrived. To accomplish this, all have post-teardown clean ups, where staff or volunteers pick up any left-over garbage from cigarettes to food wrapping. Two of the festivals employ a grid-style method, sectioning off festival grounds into squares and assigning them to either volunteers, staff, or community groups to keep tasking organized. The current practices at these festivals are basic, and other than a “leave no trace” attitude, there are no regulated industry standards of practice among them. There is a clear issue regarding lack of clarity around expectations and regulation, both in the industry and legislation. Currently, the festivals face little policing from municipalities, as described by David Gonella (2017), the Roots and Blues festival manager:

Well, grey water - you always have to have permits for grey water. Grey water goes into the system, and it's temporary, there's a lot of permits. Otherwise, no. The city is more in tune to encroachments to the surrounding communities and their noise by-laws rights. We do that here for sure. The only other thing that the municipality would be involved in is the beer gardens or any alcohol serving gardens. They would want to be involved with that.

Adding to this discussion, Andrea Graham (2017), the Bass Coast manager, described the reasoning behind lack of standard regulations:

It seems like from my experience that each district has its own requirements for a special event's permit and I think that they are starting to be more directed by government policies but they are not the same yet from district to district. The whole process is not the same even for applying from district to district. And then there is also a difference between doing an event within a city limit versus outside the boundary, because then you apply to different organizations or panels and so ours doesn't have like a hard list. More what it is, is we submit our plan and then there is a discussion around that.

There is no immediate pressure for festival management to make environmentally conscience decisions throughout their festival planning. Municipalities are more concerned with how a festival will affect or disturb businesses and homeowners rather than the production of waste or the environmental impact. The responsibility is in the hands of the organizers to make these decisions for their own reasons, and falls to patrons to follow through when possible. With this open concept of environmentalism in the industry,

managers are unsure about how to analyze their practices or fully understand how to best reduce their impact (Laing & Frost, 2010). With a focus on transportation, waste, and energy, current literature suggests areas of improvement for festival managers (Getz, 1997; Van der Wagen, 2007). For example, these recommendations include carpooling programs, bicycles and energy saving vehicles for on-site transportation, volunteers stationed at waste bins, food composting, compostable toilets, eco-friendly staging equipment, and outsourcing companies for help (Horng et al., 2014; Laing & Frost, 2010; Zelenika et al., 2018). However, even with evidence supported by research and access to online guidance tools provided by companies such as Green Festivals (2015) and the International Organization for Standardization (2012), these suggested practices are not fully utilized (O'Rourke et al., 2011).

### **UNDERSTANDING THE BARRIERS TO CHANGE: THE INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL CONFLICTS OF ENVIRONMENTALISM**

Successful environmental practices within music festivals begin during the planning stages, months before the festival commences. Festival management have an increased awareness of the need to implement environmental changes; however, research has shown that there is often a disconnect between management intentions and the festival operations (Henderson, 2007; Laing & Frost, 2010). This is largely due to the numerous barriers faced by festival management on internal and external levels. Internal struggles have been identified as financial difficulties without full understanding on how to best reduce negative impacts. External levels often arise because of issues linked to time and lack of control over venues or suppliers (Laing & Frost, 2010; Mair & Laing, 2012; Zelenika et al., 2018).

The music festivals in this study endure similar barriers and management is left with tough decisions between financial and environmental sustainability. Festivals generally run low profit margins (Hesmondhalgh, 2007; Waddell, 2013), and managers indicate the difficulty this puts on new financial ventures. Staffing also becomes an issue for many festivals with only a small number of year-round employees working for the event. For festival manager Gonella, from Roots and Blues, the initial investment of a new program or product was not the main barrier. Rather, he felt that the human resource cost was more prohibitive. At Roots and Blues, having one employee create, execute, and monitor programs to ensure it runs smoothly is too expensive:

I mean we are always limited by finances for how much investment we can make in human resource (Gonella, 2017).

He explains further:

The only cost is really HR and initial investment to having to distribute the garbage from user to facility. How is that distributed, right? So that means extra cans, the equipment involved, that is where the investment is. A lot of time that is a one time with a minimal amount each year to keep it up kind of thing. So... that would be the kind of enterprise. But we would need someone who just comes in... we need one person who is just focused on *that*. And that would help us (Gonella, 2017).

This human resource issue appears to be a unique barrier faced by a not-for-profit festival as the other festivals incorporate either a green team manager or external paid staff that focus on environmental practices. Every festival did express concern over financial constraints in some capacity. The Bass Coast festival manager shares that the programs that have the potential to make a greater impact are too costly or unavailable:

I don't know if there is anything that pops out as one major challenge other than the fact that the cost of new technology is prohibitive. Like more solar panels and batteries and things that could help reduce our reliance on gasoline for power are still mostly too expensive (Graham, 2017).

Undoubtedly, resources and suppliers are limited, particularly in small towns and rural areas. The nature of these small towns in combination with the large occupancy of the festival makes it difficult to find resources that are locally sourced and can accommodate the high volume needed. As Gonella notes:

Absolutely. You would be hit on the head for a small town. Would we have a ginormous trucking company that gives four reefers? No. Right. Are we going to have our radios... a place that rents radios... that have a thousand of their stock so they can give us 100 every year? No we are not. You know it just becomes the scale (Gonella, 2017).

The lack of resources is also an issue when seeking environmentally conscious partners or suppliers that are available and affordable. As stated by Graham (2017):

In general... because of the difference in the US dollar it is never feasible to rent or have an American supplier. Whether it is for sound or power or anything. Which is

fine because we want to support the local economy...but it just means we don't have that available up here yet.

These financial constraints indicate that decisions around suppliers cannot always be based on personal values, such as a need for environmentalism. Environmental practices are still business decisions that must fit within the festival's budget. The dependency on stakeholders for supplies is not always necessarily a negative factor. Andersson & Getz (2008) noticed that as festivals become more established, mutual dependencies with suppliers are developed. This means that stakeholders also become committed to the event, which is positive for the sustainability of the festival. The difficulty is securing a supplier that fits within the business decisions and also offers technology that is eco-friendly. Graham (2017) discussed how suppliers, when she has funds for improvement, do not offer technology that is eco-friendly:

And the external suppliers and partners in those areas... we don't have a lot of opportunity to choose one that is better for the environment. You know for example a sound company. That is just not part of the equation.

There are plenty of challenges that hinder options of environmental sustainability for management. However, with programs that are possible, the challenge then becomes execution and ensuring that the programs are effective. With the initial start-up costs and risk of losing money on a new project, it is critical that implementation is perfect:

We are sort of who we are because of how much we afford. Right, we cannot just throw money at problems. So we tend to look at the triangle of time, quality, and cash. We tend to do time and quality—focus on those two. Because we always have limited amounts of money (Gonella, 2017).

There are existing companies that can be hired for their expertise in environmental management, but these again are not feasible due to high costs:

We had a couple companies a couple years ago, that were specialized businesses ask if they could take care of that aspect of our business (*environmentalism*), but they were just too costly to permit it (Gonella, 2017).

Control over patrons was another common theme among festival management. Without a dedicated employee, there is not always continued oversight during the festival, and managers have to trust that volunteers will follow through on environmental practices.

Gonella (2017) states:

Yeah we rely on patrons... that's why we're trying to work out our signage for them. And we rely on the dragon boat team that runs the environment volunteer committee. Yeah we don't have a... there's no maestro.

There is the expectation from patrons for management to provide a level of cleanliness and services for attendees, such as bins for waste disposal, but sustaining environmental practices can only be successful if there is awareness and participation from the attendees. In the same way that management has little pressure on them to be environmentally conscious, the festivals only expect minimal green behavior from their patrons, particularly in shorter, local festivals. As described by the Bass Coast manager:

Festivals that are two and three days out elsewhere... people do not do all the research you need because you don't have to. You can just show up. And so... we did not know that we would be able to just not have garbage or recycling and assume that people would do what they are supposed to do (Graham, 2017).

While Graham makes it clear she is speaking only about her Bass Coast experience, her quote is borne out anecdotally by my specific research on this paper plus my long time experience as a festival participant. Control over patron behavior has been previously identified as a source of conflict in music festival environmentalism by Mair and Laing (2012). The organizers in the study stressed the need to overcome this through education and awareness. This challenge was reiterated by the Bass Coast green team manager:

I would say people not being aware of what we are trying to do is the biggest challenge because then they cannot participate. So communicating is huge. Like communicating what we are trying to do, what our programs are, and providing ways for people to engage with us at the festival is the most important thing we can do to ensure success of our problems and protecting the environment at Bass Coast (M. Yasel, phone communication, December 2, 2017).

Even through strong communication, festival managers still run into issues throughout the festival over patron behavior and community resentment:

There are always challenges. Like I said, we have people that you know... they are not malicious, they are not mean, they are not miserable for the sake of being miserable... but you can tell them five times please do not build a rock bed (*in the river*) and they will still build that rock bed (*causing spawning issues for the salmon*).



And then inevitably somebody comes along and takes a picture of it... sends it to fisheries and says "Well you've got this festival here" you know, so we have run into that (Dean, 2017).

Dean refers to people not purposely trying to create issues within the festival, but not fully understanding the consequences of their actions. Festivals have the potential to educate and increase public awareness, providing new avenues for advertising initiatives and approaches (Barber et al., 2014; Wong et al., 2015).

The operational challenges of environmentalism within music festivals are not impossible to overcome, but do pose many risks. Spending more money may mean having to raise the price of ticket sales. Remaining loyal and fair to the attendees was emphasized by all three managers. The incentives must be great enough to convince management that it will not impact their ability to continue in the future. As described by Graham (2017):

I think that is having to be careful on the financial side. There are so many things that we really do want to do. So I guess when you were asking earlier if there are barriers... that would be a barrier. Because as much as we do owe it to our attendees to eventually offer something like that... if we go too early the cost could impact our ability to continue.

Many of the barriers seem to circle back to financial issues. Waste left behind by patrons has also been noted to contribute both to obstacles faced by organizers to maintain a green festival and costs of waste disposal.

The present challenges of creating sustainable music festivals are intimidating to tackle, but adding to this is the confusion around responsibility. There are arguments circling who to blame for environmental impacts. While Stone (2008) believes that the general atmosphere of partying present at outdoor music festivals is not conducive to encouraging environmental behavior in patrons, Gunn (1994) challenges this notion by insisting environmental damage is caused by lack of plans, policies, and actions of festival organizers. This research supports that of Getz (2005), who suggests that communication with attendees around environmentalism is important to the success of sustainability, implying that the environment of the festival serves for context and determinant of behaviour.

Environmentalism begins with managers who must set up programs that are easily accessible and falls to volunteers and patrons to manage and participate during the festival. It is

necessary to seek out incentives for change to better understand how to begin the process to overcome existing barriers and improve sustainable behavior.

## **INCENTIVES TO CHANGE: AWARENESS AND SHIFTING VALUES**

The barriers and challenges to making the shift towards a more environmentally sustainable future are not impossible to overcome. The knowledge has been developed and documented by academics and industry professionals (Laing & Frost, 2010), and while many festivals struggle to meet the basic standards of environmental stewardship, others are earning awards for their greening efforts (Mair & Laing, 2012). The question remains: what are the differences between these events, and why are the festivals in this study not performing similarly? There is a need to understand what is missing from the current incentives for managers to improve environmental performance. The current incentives for management include potential financial savings, competitive marketing, preservation and protection of property, and personal values. Ironically, the largest barrier identified in this study is the lack of incentive for management to change.

The festivals in this study have a strong understanding of their economic sustainability gleaned from years of operating experience and strategic partnering. However, because profit margins still remain low, with one festival even operating at a loss for the past three years, management must be able to see a monetary incentive when investing in environmental programs. Despite some promising research regarding economic gain for festivals that invest and follow through with environmental programs (Jenkins, 2006; Lee, 2016; Tzschentke et al., 2004), the actual numeric gain is unclear, and this financial risk is deterring managers from making new commitments. As explained by Gonella (2017):

Because you need to know it has economic gain, for us. Like for most enterprises to take stuff on they have to have a financial benefit. Right? I mean they can invest but they have to at some point start seeing it (*a financial return*).

Nonetheless, attention continues to grow worldwide for environmentalism, and the festival industry is coming under more scrutiny as research shines a light on their impacts. Environmental operations then have a growing appeal because of their potential to create marketing advantages and provide a competitive edge.

I think there is inherent benefits in doing this. It could also be the publicity from it. The branding improvement with people just thinking that we are more associated with this stuff. Yeah so there is a lot to gain (Gonella, 2017).

Staying competitive within the festival market is another potential reason for management to begin to make a change. Consumer demand has been identified in a previous study as an environmental driver (Mair & Laing, 2012), and although all three festivals expressed that their consumers exert the strongest influence over decisions in general, one manager pointed out that currently they are not seeing a demand for environmental causes:

Sustainability... no I think it is one of those things that people do not pay attention to, for one. As much as they say they do. Unless we advertise the heck out of it. They are just going to the stages most of the time. Most people just go to the stages, going to meet their friends, and enjoying themselves. They're not worried about how the garbage is separated. They are just not. Unless there is a pile that is gross and wasps everywhere. Then if you ask them they are going to be concerned about sustainability (Gonella, 2017).

On the other hand, the Bass Coast festival manager found her patrons are indeed the main driver of environmentalism within her event:

I mean my first instinct is to say the attendees are key stakeholders. And not only are they the ones who are making Bass Coast financially sustainable, but they are also driving our quest to be more environmental (Graham, 2017).

This was reiterated by the green team leader of the festival:

I mean I think it is just a testament to the kind of people we draw to Bass Coast. People who are advocates and feel strongly about community and environment and inclusivity (Yasel, 2017).

Arguably, the feelings of the patrons often reflect those of management or festival values and the demand from patrons for an environmentally conscious festival could easily be a result from the festival itself. The belief in environmentalism as a manager allows Graham (2017) to look past risks, such as losing money from a sponsorship deal that deters from environmental values:

Some companies could look at it like a missed opportunity. But to us, the opportunity is in not making that waste.

Along these same lines, preservation and protection of land is one of the more powerful influences forcing management to ensure cleanliness, as they begin to risk their land if they do not clean up properly. The Rockin' River manager described this risk, but was quick to include that while a driving force, it was not the *only* reason:

Well even in the years that we have lost money we have made sure that we did it because losing a little bit now is a lot better than losing the festival because you did not care about mother nature. Because that will shut you down in a hurry. And it is not just because it will shut us down but heck I am a fisherman... I want my fish back! (Dean, 2017).

As the above quote illustrates, the personal values of some managers stand out as the strongest motivator in environmental stewardship. Research by Mair and Laing (2012) is one of the few studies that extensively researches the drivers to environmental sustainability in a festival context. The findings stress the importance of staff stewardship as environmental champions and claim this was the source of the greatest influence in the green award-winning festivals studied. For the management within this study who are not currently engaged in strong environmental practices, they note that until they are able to properly incorporate practices, it will not be worth taking the risk as implementation would remain too difficult. Gonella explains the potential as well as his hesitation to implement new environmental programs:

I think there is lots to gain from it. It is just implementing in a way that does not seem like we are just doing it to make people look like were doing it. But actually we are doing it because we are really doing it well. I want to just do it well. So we have not found that level yet. We still separate cans, we still separate cardboard. I mean the bulk stuff we are still separating. There is another layer that we could be achieving but right now we have not really set the plan to make it seem that it is an operational decision. I do not want to just make it a marketing decision. A lot of times people just want to do it... and you can tell... they just want to do it because it sounds good to them. But if you do that and do not fulfill it in a real operational way it will look like what it is... which is just like a plastic veneer that you are just putting on. It is not real. So for us I want to have more integrity with this than just to do it. I will not do it until we can do it really well (Gonella, 2017).

This research demonstrates how personal values of management can play a role in environmental decisions. Yet, as strongly as a festival manager may feel about environmental responsibility, there is a financial risk associated with it and managers do not always have the

authority or mandate to put the financial viability of their festival on the line. Andersson and Bateman (2000) suggest that single individuals working in the operating cores of organizations are often capable of formulating and promoting environmental innovation. Hemingway and Maclagan (2004) believe that the agent of change does not necessarily need to be from senior management, but that middle management within an organization is capable of incorporating the need for social responsibility. In effect, when considering the implementation of environmental measures, festival managers behave like business managers. Often this means doing a formal or informal cost-benefit analysis and determining that the expected return on investment is not enough to offset the perceived risk. Another manager might conduct the same analysis through their personal environmental lens and see the risks as quite manageable, concluding that the benefits outweigh any financial risks. The challenge then, may be in getting more managers to see a path for realizing the full benefits of enhanced environmental programming. Increased environmental literacy is one obvious step worth exploring.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is an increasing awareness, and resultant demand, within society for better environmental practices (Jabbour & Santos, 2008; Lubin & Esty, 2010). At the same time, there is also a global increase in the generation of waste (Hershkowitz, 1998; Hoornweg et al., 2013). It is evident from existing literature that music festivals are waste generators, but impacts are not limited to waste. Pollution, damage to local environments, and negative experiences for host communities have also been identified as major concerns. Waste left behind from patrons is singled out in a previous study as the most significant environmental concern (Collins et al., 2007) and identified as a large barrier faced by management in terms of environmental practices. Ecological and carbon footprints, emissions, and environmental impact assessments have enlightened the research community and public about the true impact of music festival. In terms of practical application for event organizers, the assessments have been labelled as not much more than an attention-grabbing tool for environmentalists that fail to provide management with useful information on how to improve. The few studies that do provide suggestions are not commonly incorporated into

festival practices. This leaves a need for the practical “how-to” guides that will bridge the gap between research and practice.

This chapter was able to provide insight into the current practices in British Columbia, revealing that sustainability initiatives vary widely, partially due to the lack of regulation from municipalities or a clear industry standard. A disconnect between management intention and operations is created and sustained through both internal and external barriers. Proper implementation is a major concern for management, and even if it were affordable, suppliers committed to making it happen are difficult to come by. By gaining a stronger understanding of the greening process, we can recognize where rooted issues lay and make lighter work of the task of creating incentives for management. Internal stewardship appears to have the strongest potential for management to take on the task of overcoming environmental challenges, but as indicated these internal decisions are often based on personal values.

As the growth of special events increase and people become more aware of the need for environmentally-friendly festivals, the concern for environmental practices extends beyond the research realm. Given the importance of events to attendees and host destinations, and the influence of festivals as economic drivers and producers of regional identities, it is crucial to develop an understanding of the environmental impacts. To move forward sustainably, it is necessary to uncover the challenges and incentives in which festivals function and identify ways to address these. The intention is that this research within British Columbia will be recognized as beneficial for management, highlighting a festival success story and demonstrating how becoming your own champion within environmental stewardship is the first step. Ultimately, the hope is that this evaluation of festivals within British Columbia will provide a new framework for addressing the challenges of greening events and encourage managers to challenge current assumptions and current barriers, as well as commit to becoming their own agents of innovation.

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## Chapter Three.

### The Role of Stakeholders in Shifting Environmental Practices

Research suggests that festivals have the potential to become effective change agents for environmentalism by delivering strong educational messages to their audience through signage, performances, and interactive sessions (O'Rourke et al., 2011). Despite this, operational barriers such as financial constraints, the lack of suppliers or supplies, and the minimal amount of control over patron behavior are preventing them from becoming leaders in environmental programming. In addition, the personal values of festival managers are considered to be the core motivator in overcoming barriers to environmentalism. However, managers are not the sole decision makers within festival environments. Festivals managers have to answer to hundreds of stakeholders who all hold some form of power. These stakeholders can include a board of directors, sponsorship contracts, or partners due to resource dependency. There is an abundance of literature that focuses on stakeholder relationships of music festivals and how these can best be managed (Andersson & Getz, 2008; Getz & Andersson, 2010; Karlsen & Nordström, 2008; Ooi & Pendersen, 2010; Turkulainen et al., 2016). The main themes of this research are improving economic sustainability by enhancing stakeholder management and urging organizers to create relationships that will foster financial sustainability. Research suggests evaluating primary versus secondary stakeholders, helping managers to identify key partnerships (Freeman, 1984; Todd et al., 2017). The findings also acknowledge that stakeholders of festivals are often both voluntary and involuntary, as community businesses, law enforcement, and local residents will feel both the positive and negative impacts of the event, regardless of their preferences (Turkulainen et al., 2016). This literature provides a solid foundation for the importance of including and communicating with stakeholders for the economic sustainability of music festivals; however, environmental sustainability is regularly overlooked. Equally important to note is the lack of research which showcases the opinions of patrons when studying the environmental impacts and practices (Laing & Frost, 2010). This is a surprising gap in the research as patrons are continuously identified as the most significant stakeholder (Andersson & Getz, 2009). The analyses in this chapter considers how stakeholders may impact the ability of organizers to improve environmental practices.

The findings provide new incentives based on the survey results of patrons' beliefs. The challenges of music festivals are much more than operational. This research demonstrates that a high level of engagement with key stakeholders is required to foster economic, cultural, and environmental sustainability.

## **THE COMPLEXITY OF STAKEHOLDER RELATIONSHIPS**

The creation, staging, and execution of music festivals requires numerous partnerships, interest from consumers, and support from the local community. Consequently, key partnerships required for the economic success and sustainability of festivals have become a common research theme in scholarly studies in management (Karlsen & Nordstrom, 2008; Getz & Andersson, 2010; Luonila & Johansson, 2016). Freeman (1984) introduced stakeholder theory as a way to gain insight into the roles and influence of partnerships. Freeman lists stakeholders as owners, consumer advocates, customers, competitors, media, employees, special interest groups, environmentalists, suppliers, government, and local community organizations. A study by Getz, Andersson, and Larson (2007) specifies the stakeholder groups of music festivals as co-producers, facilitators, allies and collaborators, regulators, suppliers, venue, audience and the individuals impacted voluntarily or involuntarily. This extensive list of individuals and organizations for festival management to maintain relationships with is further convoluted by the complexity behind individual stakeholders, who may identify in multiple groups, and whose influence and lifecycle will shift with the festival (Todd et al., 2017). It is imperative that management understands how to direct these dynamic multi-organizational partnerships (Lampel et al., 2000). Managers must be cognizant of who their stakeholders are, how they can influence the event, and what management strategies to apply, as not all stakeholders are equal in terms of their ability to harm, impede, or help festival organizers (Getz & Andersson, 2010). Each stakeholder relationship plays a significant role in the success of festivals, but it is essential to recognize that each festival also affects and is affected by both voluntary and involuntary stakeholders (Larson, 2011). Collaboration is essential, but navigating these relationships and ensuring every partner is content requires a great deal of time and energy on behalf of management. Forming bonds with the appropriate stakeholders can create all the difference in planning, guaranteed funds, preservation of culture, and even enablement of environmental

sustainability. This can be a challenging task, particularly within cultural projects such as festivals (Turkulainen et al., 2016). The festivals in this study also face difficult navigations of complex partnerships. Even so, each claims to have developed solid working relationships throughout the years.

Consulting directly with the host community is a crucial aspect in festival design (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010). Festivals require support from the community to gain access to site properties and develop a strong sense of culture through community involvement. The relationships are reciprocal as host municipalities often also seek opportunities to develop artistic culture within their own community (Karlsen & Nordstrom, 2008; Getz et al., 2007; de Grosbois, 2009). The festivals require this support in order to survive, and the community benefits from the revenue brought in by the festival. One festival in this study felt a need to secure a new location, in part because they needed a larger physical space, but also because there were noise complaints from community members who were not supportive of the festival. Manager Graham (2017) talked about how the move to a new location after failing to receive full support at their previous site ended up being a positive experience:

It was definitely the best thing that could happen for us. Because the land was getting too hectic and small. The traffic on the road was getting busy and although 99 percent of the people that lived in that valley were really supportive of us it just did not feel good being somewhere where there was not 100 percent support.

While the manager did not conduct quantitative research to gain these percentages, she is illustrating a broader point that she is striving for complete community support. In this situation, the new location was very welcoming, as the city was looking for new revenue after experiencing the loss of a festival that did not have full community support. She explains:

Well...because... it's an interesting scenario because that site was used for a festival for years and years and it grew so large that it ended up kind of...too large. So then there was nothing for four or five years on that site and I think the city really recognized at that point what the economic impact had been of the previous festival and so when we came...it was welcomed because it is a small town and they need different revenue streams (Graham, 2017).

It has been argued that there is a pressing need to develop more innovative and imaginative approaches to regional development (Hutton, 2002), and further research has identified recreation and tourism as an opportunity to do so (Nelson et al., 2011). Community support is needed from more than just residents. Permit applications are a requirement within the industry, such as liquor licensing, grey water, parking, and fire safety. This means that all three festivals deal directly with their local municipality during the planning stages. Ensuring political support was another factor expressed by at least one manager:

If you do not have the community behind you it is a horrible, horrible uphill battle. So you have to have the political powers. You have to have council behind you. You have to have the mayor and all of those things. The chamber of commerce... all of those people are so very important and it goes up from there. You got to have the government, the provincial government, you have got to have them in place (Dean, 2017).

The list within the community stakeholder group grows further, as the majority of volunteers, who are also attendees, come directly from the host community. Volunteers are crucial for festival operations, particularly for not-for-profits. For a not-for-profit, the majority of festival functions, such as beer gardens and the environmental programming, is run solely by volunteers. Rockin' River's manager speaks to the importance of volunteers to the general success of his festival:

And then what you really need to have is you need to have a wonderful volunteer group to pull from. So... you got to have... those are integral to running anything. And of course your organization, your staff, all of those (Dean, 2017).

A festival must maintain solid relationships with volunteers. Ultimately, it is the volunteers who allow festivals to expand the diversity and quantity of their services without creating budgetary constraints (Bachman et al., 2014; Cnaan & Goldberg-Glen, 1991). A study by Catano, Pond, and Kelloway (2001) has shown that the setting and environment of a festival are the main contributing factors behind volunteer commitment. Yasel, the green team manager at Bass Coast, has volunteers that work directly under her as her environmental crew. She speaks to how important it is to show appreciation to volunteers:

Honestly we just really appreciate our volunteers...me personally...I just try to always be grateful for their help and treat them kindly and just express my gratitude

for their help. And also we try to encourage... like it is work but it's also... you're there to have a good time. So honestly I really don't have to do much... most of it is just the volunteers. They are so stoked to be there. They are so stoked to help out and most of the green team volunteers will be thanked by people. For example, the attendees will thank them for doing such an amazing job. So it's like while they are working they are receiving so much gratitude from everyone around them (Yasel, 2017).

A volunteer's intent to return is influenced by their experience at the festival, and there is a higher chance of satisfaction and return rate among volunteers when the festival image is congruent with the self-image of festival volunteers (Bachman et al., 2016).

Business relationships within music festivals can take many forms, and there are hundreds of partnerships to maintain. These include sound companies, staging, artists, fencing, plumbing, electrical, and vending to name a few. Gonella (2017) speaks to the volume of vendor business alone that is required to meet festival needs:

I mean the whole site and the whole event is just basically a big opportunity for infrastructure to show up as well as suppliers. I mean you got to have suppliers coming in... at least 35 in food vendors and that is not including the artisan market. There's another 40 in the artisan market. That is almost a hundred businesses just right there.

As expected, management of these relationships takes numerous staff members, and managers must trust in their staff to create and maintain partnerships that are beneficial for both the festival and the business. When asked about how management decides with whom to make partnerships with, answers varied slightly. The Roots and Blues manager speaks to how even placement of food vendors is a fundamental component to maintain a solid relationship:

Right... she (*office administrator*) is going to have two pizzas, two coffees, two lemonade stands, two of these, four of these... kind of so we can blend it all on site. I mean we might have four hot dog stands but they're all on four key points away from each other on site. Because it is not serving those vendors. We have to protect the vendor's investment to stay. Right? So if you come on... you are a hot dog vendor for example you are not going to be pleased to have two other ones right next to you (Gonella, 2017).



In addition to this reference above from Gonella, Graham also mentions the importance of not creating competition among suppliers, but also touches on the significance of ensuring that partnerships match or reflect well with the values of the festival:

And we approach the food vending kind of like curating the art installations or the artisan vending. Like we have a manager who actually is... well we have the food vending manager Steve. He vends at a ton of different festivals and he is very experienced and knows most of the people that would be applying and so he is able to sort of curate who we accept to be fitting with our values. And also to provide a really good cross section of food so they are not competing with each other and all of those things. He is great at all of that (Graham, 2017).

Sponsorship is the most common form of funding within music festivals (Andersson et al., 2013) and it has a strong impact on management decisions due to contract stipulations and requirements. Gaining sponsorship can also be tricky for management. Gonella (2017) explains how sponsorship works for his festival, and how profit numbers play a big role in whether or not he can gain investors:

Because they are underfunded (*sponsors*). They have to select. They have to save us (*from financial peril*), or help us get started. They have to focus. And it is not criticism. Do not take it from me as criticism. It is just that they are underfunded themselves and we will never have the funding we want because we are in the arts... that is never going to be sustained. That will never be sustained. And that is our problem, right? So... that is why we stick to an average over the last twelve years for attendance... that is where our budget is set to now. Take out the high, take out the low and you have an average. And that is where we try to set our budget. Even though we had a great year last year we still came into this year with the same budget that we had the previous year.

Sponsors also have limited funds and must allocate their funds carefully, choosing to fund an organization that is truly in need. This places organizers of Roots and Blues in a difficult position: if the festival progresses too quickly and presents a larger budget, sponsors may decide the funds could be allocated to somewhere of better use. He also explains how contracts with sponsors can actually limit new opportunities:

And I was stuck last year... I wanted to do this last year (*create new partnerships*). But I did not do it because we have an exclusive deal that I did not want to break. Because of the financial year we had for the previous two years I did not feel like I

could gamble on both deals. This year we have more chips, make more crazy decisions that I think are better for us (Gonella, 2017).

A study by Getz and Andersson (2010) found that festival reliance on sponsors varied quite broadly, but research did indicate a pattern of dependency on sponsors for festivals of a private, for-profit orientation or not-for-profit festivals whose mission is either comprised or strengthened by corporate involvement. While the study by Getz and Andersson (2010) was carried out through Sweden, Norway, Scotland, and Australia, the authors did note that sponsorship was believed to be a more common source of revenue in some countries, particularly the United States. Stakeholders are commonly classified based on the festival's level of dependence (Getz & Andersson, 2010). Rockin' River's manager briefly speaks to the order of stakeholders but in regards to the ability to create a festival to begin with:

I mean there is... of course it starts with the company deciding what the group of investors or whatever saying "okay we feel that the audience is going to enjoy this or we need this in the community" so I think the stakeholders are the first and foremost the investors that come... or they're the first ones... not foremost... but the first ones are the investors that come up and decide that they're going to plan it. They're going to do it and then the people who run the festival... and then I think you've got the community (Dean, 2017).

Dean classifies investors as one of the first stakeholders, followed by staff and the community. It was clear throughout his interview that collaboration and support was critical to the festival. This suggests that the orientation, goals, and values of the festivals are crucial components used by festival managers to prioritize stakeholders.

Maintaining communication with stakeholders is crucial, and personal communication, either face to face or through messaging, is thought to be the most successful mode (Turkulainen et al., 2016). The Rockin' River manager speaks about the importance of maintaining communication with all stakeholders:

You know so, when we first went there we started out that way and we have tried to maintain that as good as we can to have a very open dialogue with all of them. Because I think it is vital. If somebody is sitting there and you do not talk to them for six months and they were mad at you because something went wrong at the last meeting or last event, they have six months to brew on it. Whereas if your meeting on a regular basis and you have open dialogue, like all of these people have my personal phone number and are able, if they have an issue or a question, they feel free to give me a call. And that has been a tremendous thing for me (Dean, 2017).

Turkulainen, Aaltonen and Lohikoski (2016) recognize that the management of stakeholders within festivals can be a greater challenge because communication must be maintained over the projects extensive lifecycle. It is thought to be additionally difficult due to the unpredictability and ambiguity of experiential goods in cultural projects such as music festivals (Pan & Huan, 2013).

It is clear that stakeholder management is not as simple as one might first assume. To create and sustain partnerships requires significant time and thought on behalf of managers. What should be noted here is that the majority of the partnerships are created and navigated with sustainability in mind, particularly economic and social. The three pillars of sustainability are generally understood by many scholars to be economic, socio-cultural, and environmental (Getz & Andersson, 2008; Mair & Laing, 2012; Quinn, 2006) but studies often fail to stress the importance and impact that stakeholders can have on environmental practices. Managers are keen to form partnerships that will benefit their festival financially and are quick to turn down partnerships that do not reflect the culture of their festival. Conversely, many fail to take into account how the partnerships they create affects their environmental practices. Managers understand that change is not always simply operational. Partners, shareholders, and sponsors need to be on board and communicated with when any substantive change is being contemplated. In this sense, it seems inconceivable not to acknowledge that environmental programs, as the third pillar of sustainability, could be more successful if supported by stakeholders. The most significant stakeholder, holding the utmost potential to initiate this change, is the patron.

## **THE CONSUMPTION PATTERNS OF PATRONS**

Music festivals are becoming more popular worldwide, prompting extensive research on the consumption patterns of patrons in regards to their experience and motivations to attend in order to improve attendance and generate economic gain within communities (Blesic et al., 2014; Hudson et al., 2015; Leenders, 2010; Pegg & Patterson, 2010). Although festivals rely on collaboration and support from businesses and communities, the patron is the most crucial stakeholder, particularly in regards to not-for-profit and private festivals (Andersson & Getz, 2009). They are also the group that has the greatest potential to drive

change, as their perceptions and values are vital knowledge for managers, particularly to create effective marketing strategies (Andersson & Lundenberg, 2013; Smith & Costello, 2009). Developing loyalty with patrons is a significant part of stakeholder navigation that festival managers have learnt to manage well. This building of trust with consumers is predicated on the belief that the festival will deliver a unique experience, worthy artistic line-ups, food, safety, and cleanliness. Post-festival surveys are a common way for managers to capture patron opinions in search of feedback to consistently improve (Getz, 1991). The surveys in this research differed from the usual context in that the focus was on the environmental impacts of festivals and how this influences patron decisions when deciding which festival to attend.

These surveys were conducted in person by the researcher and an assistant during festival hours. The surveys were completely voluntary and anonymous, with no personal identifiers attached to any of the results. Respondents could withdraw from the survey at any point without consequences. In total, there were 613 respondents, with an average of over 200 per festival. There were more male respondents at Bass Coast and Rockin' River, with slightly more female respondents for Roots and Blues (see Figure 3.1). Age distribution varied at each festival, with younger audiences attending Bass Coast and Rockin' River, while a wider age range was present at Roots and Blues (see Figure 3.2). Taken together, the majority of respondents were from British Columbia, followed by Alberta with few non-Canadian residencies (see Figure 3.3).

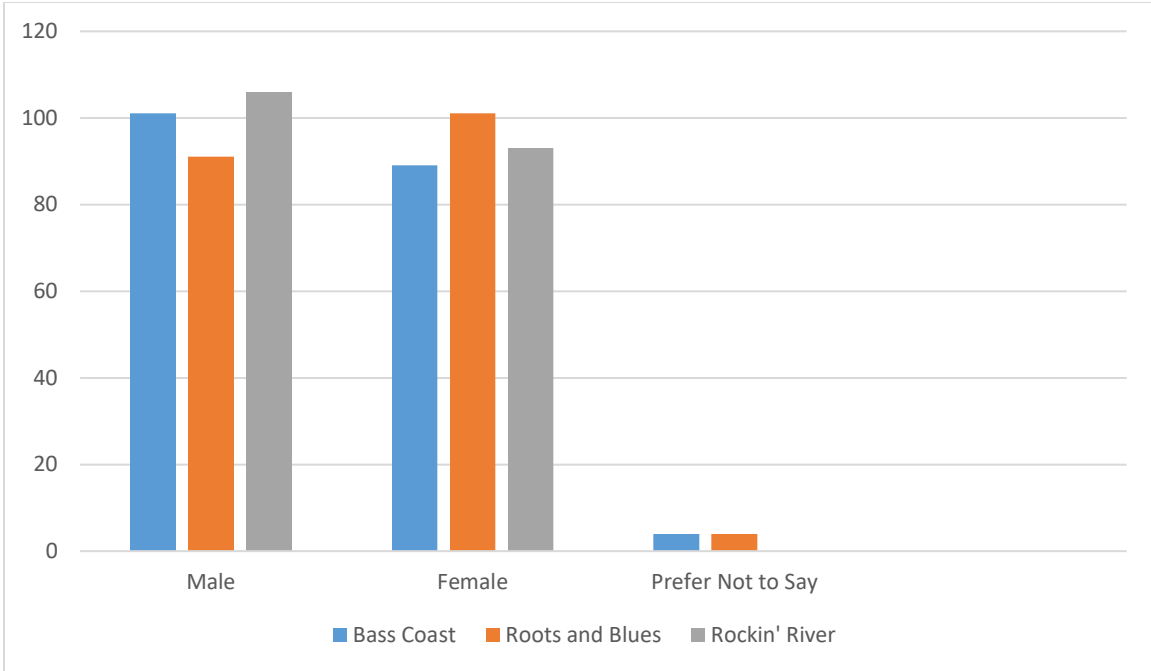


Figure 3.1 Gender Distribution by Festival

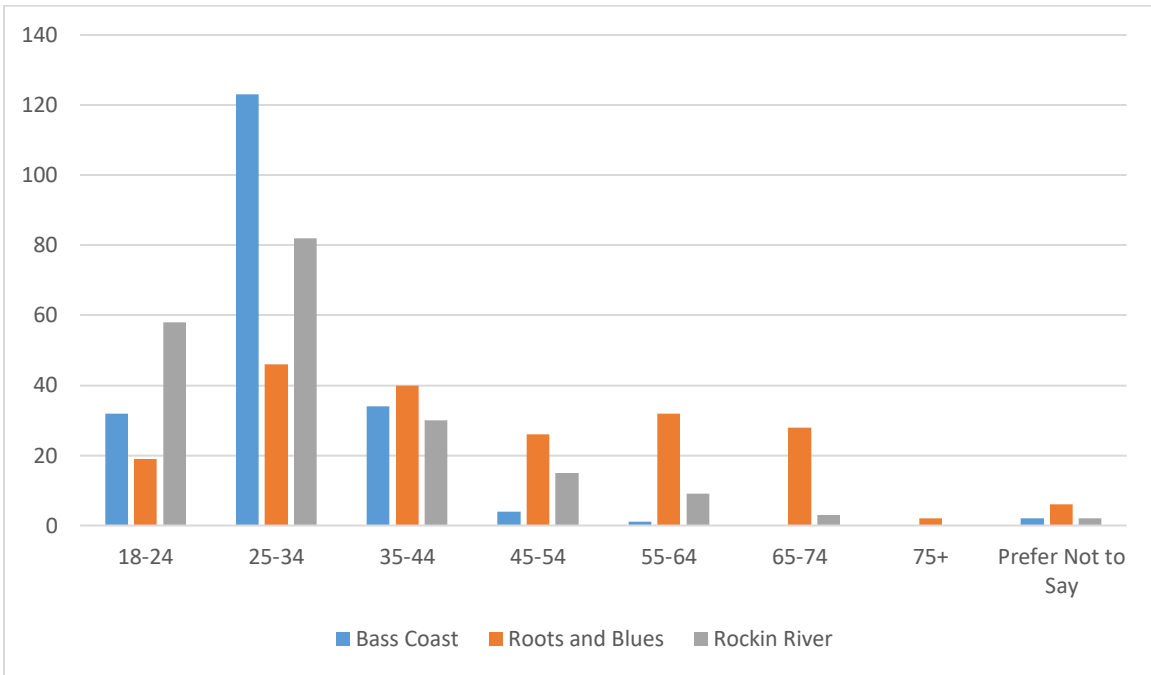


Figure 3.2 Age Distribution by Festival

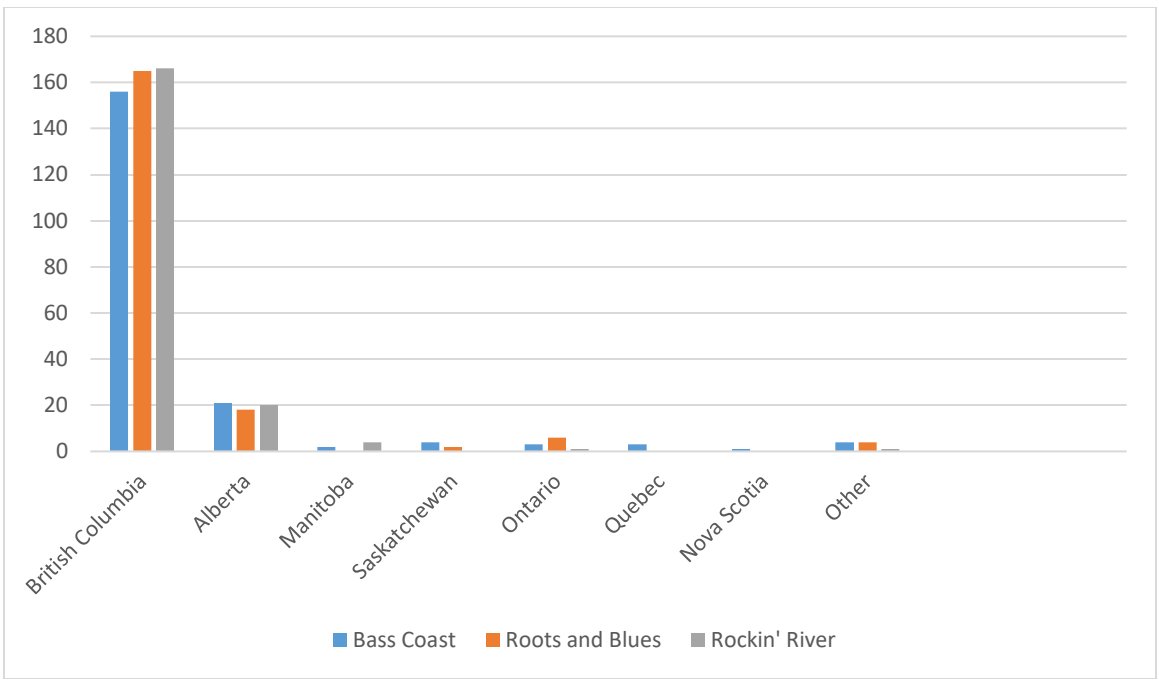


Figure 3.3 Patron Origin by Festival

Management indicated that conversations with patrons regarding their perceptions of environmental sustainability ranged from rare to nonexistent. These surveys revealed that patrons are aware of environmental impacts, particularly with waste, damage to the local environment, and pollution (see Figure 3.4). Only 43 respondents in total (7%) believed that music festivals created no significant negative impacts. When asked to rate the level of importance of environmental programs, ticket price, atmosphere, and line up to their overall experience at a music festival, results revealed patrons found recycling, proper disposal of waste, and good atmosphere as most important (see Figure 3.5).

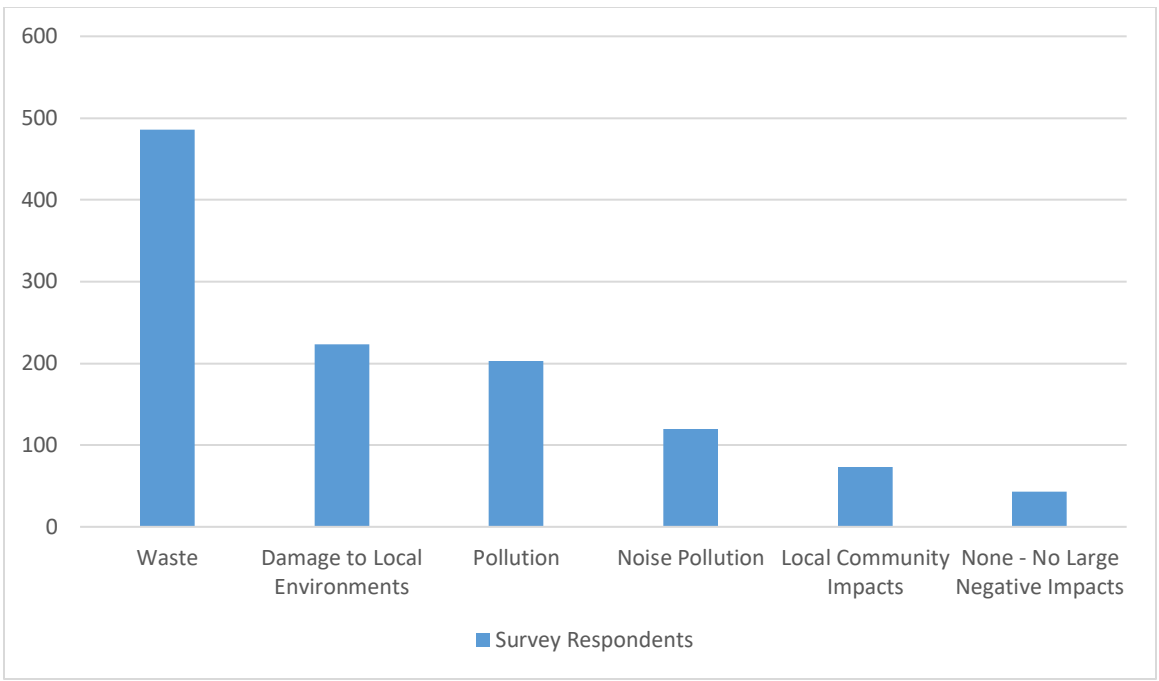


Figure 3.4 Patron Perspectives of Large Negative Impacts

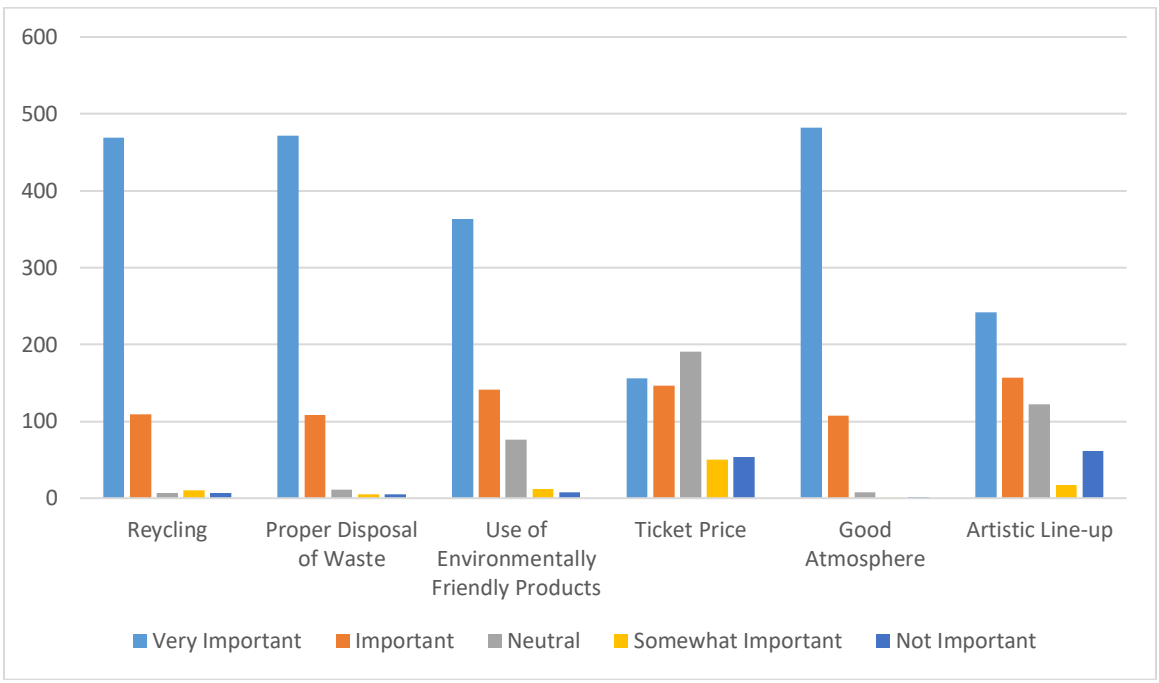
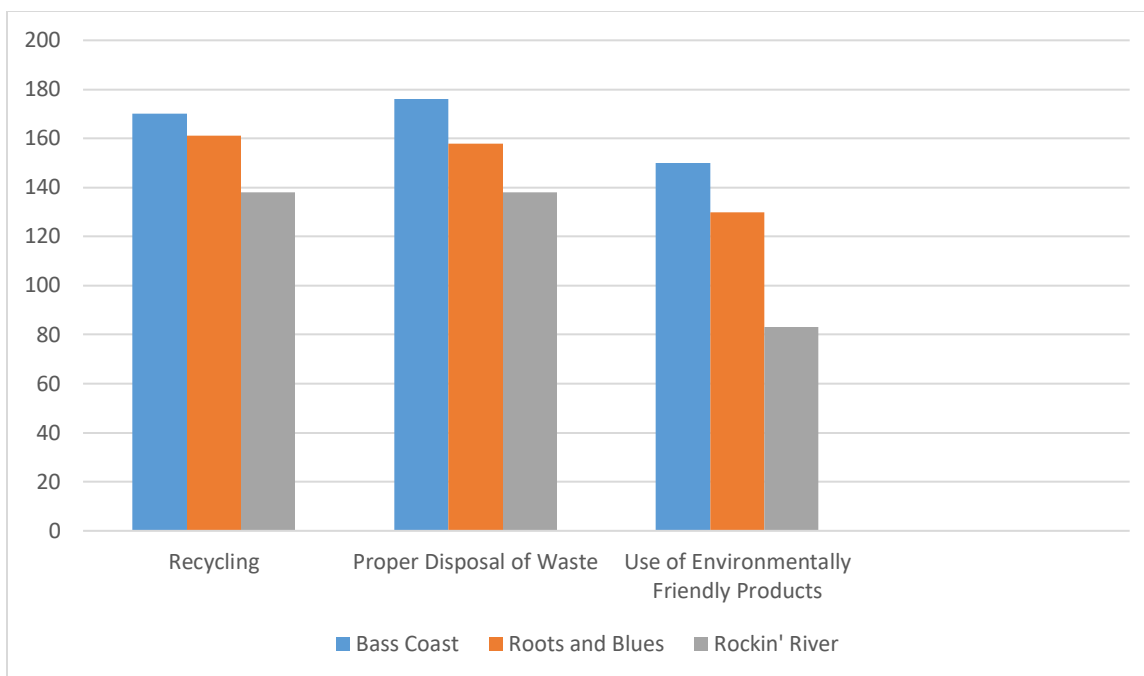


Figure 3.5 Patron Ratings of Importance on Different Music Festival Elements

What is interesting to note from these surveys is the differences in responses at each festival and the awareness they provide into the relationship between festivals and patrons. Respondents at Bass Coast Music Festival revealed strong environmental values and placed

the most importance on basic environmental efforts in comparison to the other festivals (see Figure 3.6). Patrons of Roots and Blues had similar responses, scaling high for importance of efforts such as recycling, proper disposal of waste, and the use of environmentally friendly products. One of the more interesting findings from this study was that 88% of respondents from Bass Coast and 79% of Roots and Blues respondents were more likely to attend a festival that is environmentally friendly. Additionally, 88% of people from Bass Coast and 85% of respondents from Roots and Blues were willing to pay an additional charge on their ticket price to mitigate negative environmental impacts. At Bass Coast, 31% were willing to pay twenty dollars or more while only 6% at Roots and Blues would pay twenty dollars or more. However, 41% at Roots and Blues were willing to pay five to ten dollars. Many festival attendees did express verbally that they would want complete transparency from the organizers about how this additional fee would be utilized. Only 12% of respondents at Bass Coast and 15% at Roots and Blues were not willing to pay an additional fee to combat negative impacts. Over half of these respondents at both festivals (57% at Bass Coast and 55% at Roots and Blues) felt it was the responsibility of the organizers to manage any negative impacts. The responses at Rockin' River Music Festival were quite different. At this festival, respondents were less concerned with environmental practices, although they recognized that impacts do exist. Intriguingly, at this festival, 55% indicated that they would not be more likely to attend a music festival just because it has improved environmental practices, and 53% were not willing to pay an additional charge. Of this 53%, a majority of the patrons either could not afford an additional fee (56%) or thought it was the responsibility of the organizers to handle environmental hurdles (27%).





*Figure 3.6* Very Important Practices as Rated by Survey Respondents

These results are indicative of the relationship between festival values and patron values. Bass Coast was the most environmentally oriented, with a patronage base expressing similar interests. Roots and Blues, while eager to become more environmentally oriented, falls slightly short in their practices in comparison to Bass Coast, and the results of their surveys do as well. Rockin' River's management has a stronger emphasis on their artistic line-up, and not as many environmental core values, which is mirrored in the survey results. This is supported by studies which have proposed that festivals with green values can be suggestive to patrons and serve as a behavioral model (Hottle et al., 2015). Green festival involvement is known to significantly influence attendees' perceived value of green events. This suggests that as consumers become more involved in an environmentally friendly event, they are more inclined to realize its value (Wong et al., 2015). In turn, participation and demand for environmental practices is expected to grow, which will give festivals with established environmental initiatives a competitive edge. There is already growing interest to adopt green initiatives to improve an event's competitiveness (Whitfield & Dioko, 2012). Nonetheless, the potential to educate patrons should not be overshadowed by financial gain. Through the interviews managers have expressed personal concern for environmental practices, showing an awareness that the natural environment is something that we all share,

and that environmental negligence within a festival could eventually impact their own experiences in the environment outside of the festival. Organizers can use their festivals to create and strengthen awareness of this important connection to patrons by using the pristine setting to showcase why environmental practices are so critical, both within the context of an event and beyond.

There are some similarities that are worth noting from the survey results. Research has suggested that while the artistic line-up is one of the key components of music festivals, it is not always the main motivator for attendance, whereas components such as good weather, cozy and sociable company, good music, and feelings of solidarity and togetherness ranked higher as motivators (Leenders, 2010). In our surveys, when patrons were asked to rate the importance of artistic talent, 87% of the respondents at Bass Coast and 74% at Rockin' River reported the line-up to be important or very important, whereas responses from Roots and Blues were closer in value, and had 39% rating line-up as important or very important. These are higher numbers than expected considering previous research on artistic line-up playing a smaller role in motivation and importance (Leenders, 2010). Although, 98% of all respondents did identify that the atmosphere is very important. These responses are critical as they emphasize that the physical environment is a crucial component of building festival atmosphere (Lee, 2016).

In regards to the demographics at each festival, there appear to be no major significant differences of opinion that can be traced to the age of attendees or festival location, and only slight differences in regards to gender. More females (90%) were aware to somewhat aware of the environmental impact than males (85%) (see Figure 3.7). More females also rated environmental practices such as recycling (82%), proper disposal of waste (84%), and use of environmentally friendly products (65%) as very important, roughly ten percent more than males (recycling 74%, proper disposal of waste 73%, use of environmentally friendly products 55%) (see Figure 3.8). Also, more women (76%) were willing to pay an additional fee than men (71%). These findings are consistent with previous research that shows women are generally more concerned with environmentalism (Milfont & Sibley, 2016; Salehi et al., 2015; Stern et al., 1995; Zelezny et al., 2000).

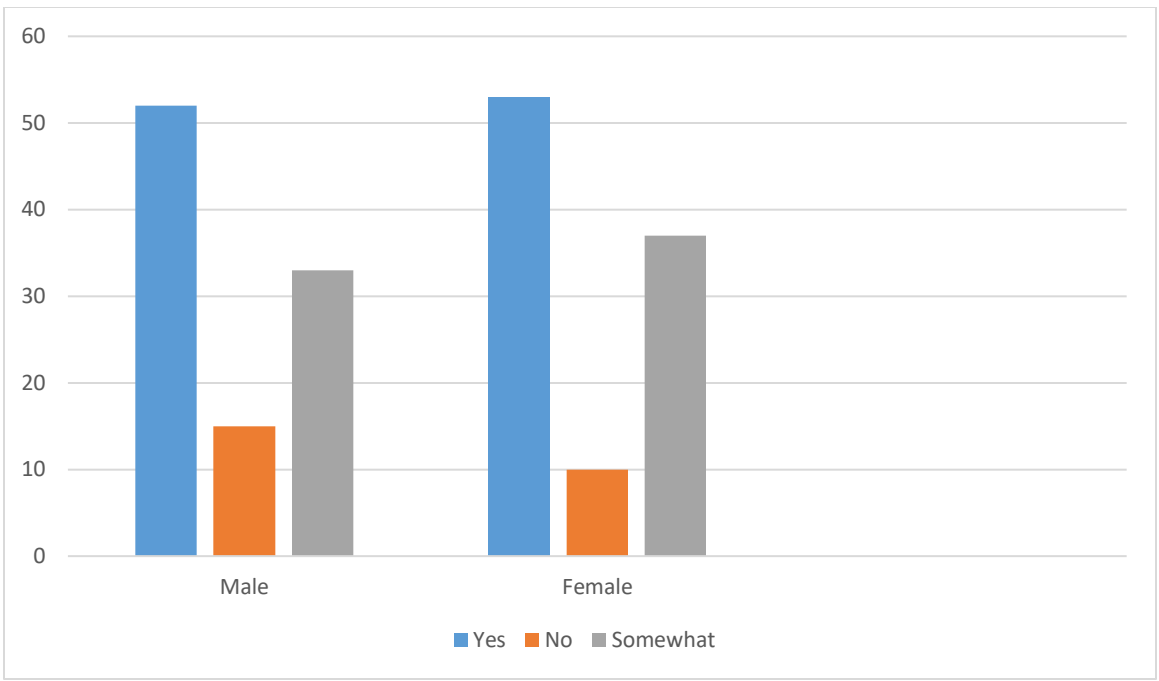


Figure 3.7 Awareness of Environmental Impacts Based on Gender

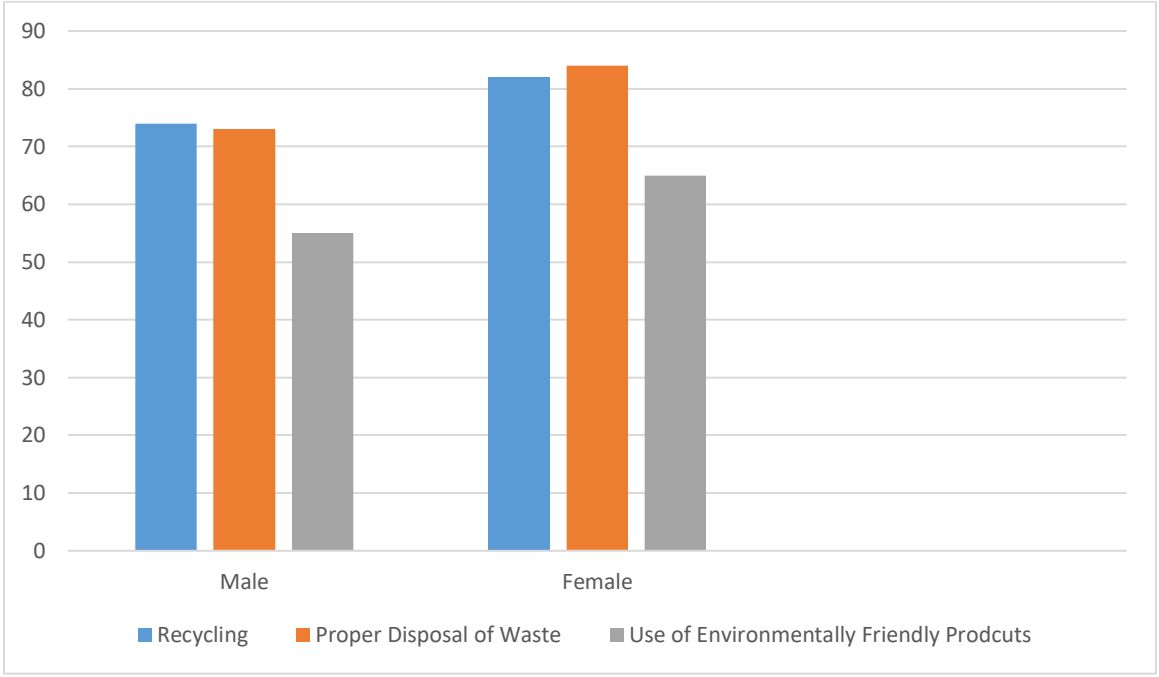


Figure 3.8 Very Important Practices Based on Gender

Analysis of age data indicates that festival values are a stronger variable than age, with responses ranging widely for each festival. There appears to be more awareness of

environmental impacts and importance of practices from respondents aged between 25 and 44 (see Figures 3.9 and 3.10). However, because the majority of respondents fall between the 25 – 34 age category, meaningful comparisons over age distribution are difficult to make. Results analyzed by age become more interesting broken down by festival, as it is the patrons aged 35 and above at Roots and Blues that acknowledged more types of negative impacts such as noise pollution, damage to local environments, and local community impacts. Additionally, more respondents at this festival aged between 45-74 also claimed to review the environmental policies of music festivals (12%). Conversely, the majority of patrons at Bass Coast fall into the younger age categories (25-34, 35-44 and 18-24) and this generation appears to have stronger environmental values in comparison to all age groups at each festival. The results of perspectives on environmentalism analyzed by age are not consistent between each festival. This demonstrates again that many of these environmental values are not based on demographics, but rather on personal values which are reflected in the theme, atmosphere, and values that are portrayed through the music festivals. Graham, the manager at Bass Coast, believes the consumers have become the main driver for environmentalism at her festival. She explains why:

Just because of the type of community that is part of Bass Coast... in a broad statement: they are open minded, creative, work in like a large variety of industries, but seem to be interested in something new. And that curiosity I think also is reflected in trying to live healthy, have a smaller impact, and you know... be better people. It is just an overall kind of... that seems to be a common thread between people that come to Bass Coast (Graham, 2017).

Research by Nicholson and Pearce (2001) articulates that one of the most significant reasons for attendance at major events relates specifically to the theme and activities. Graham indicated that, from inception, she set out to develop a festival that had a minimal impact on the environment, and these values are now woven into the atmosphere of the festival and valued just as highly by the community that is drawn to Bass Coast.

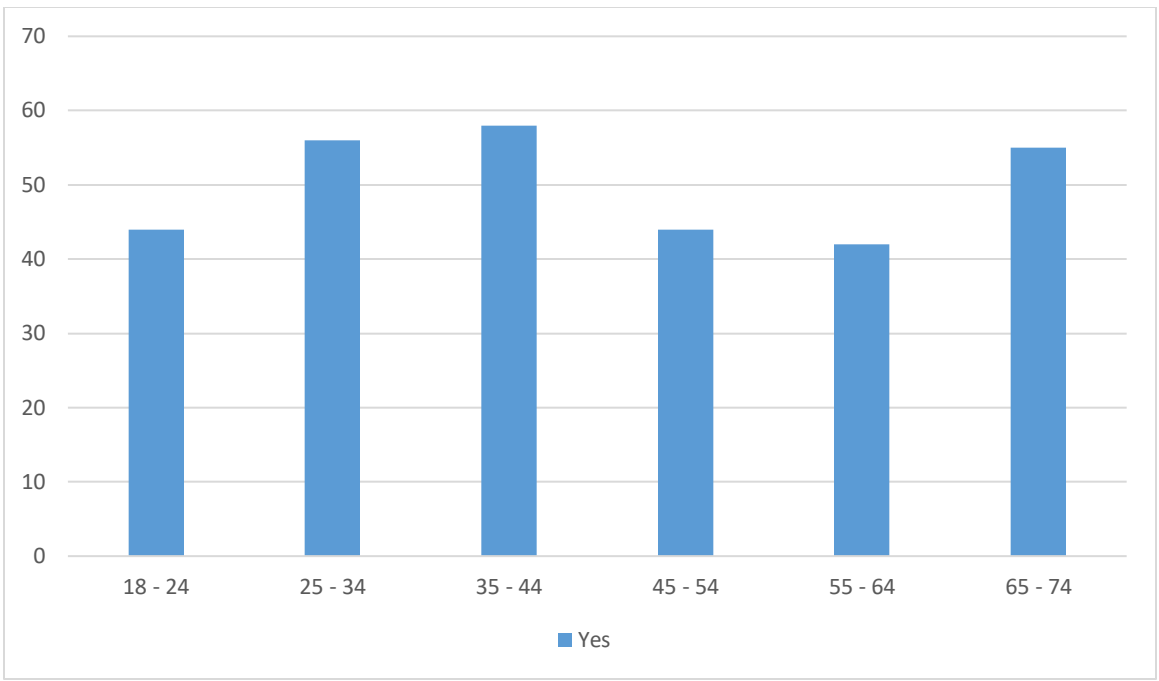


Figure 3.9 Awareness of Environmental Impacts Based on Age

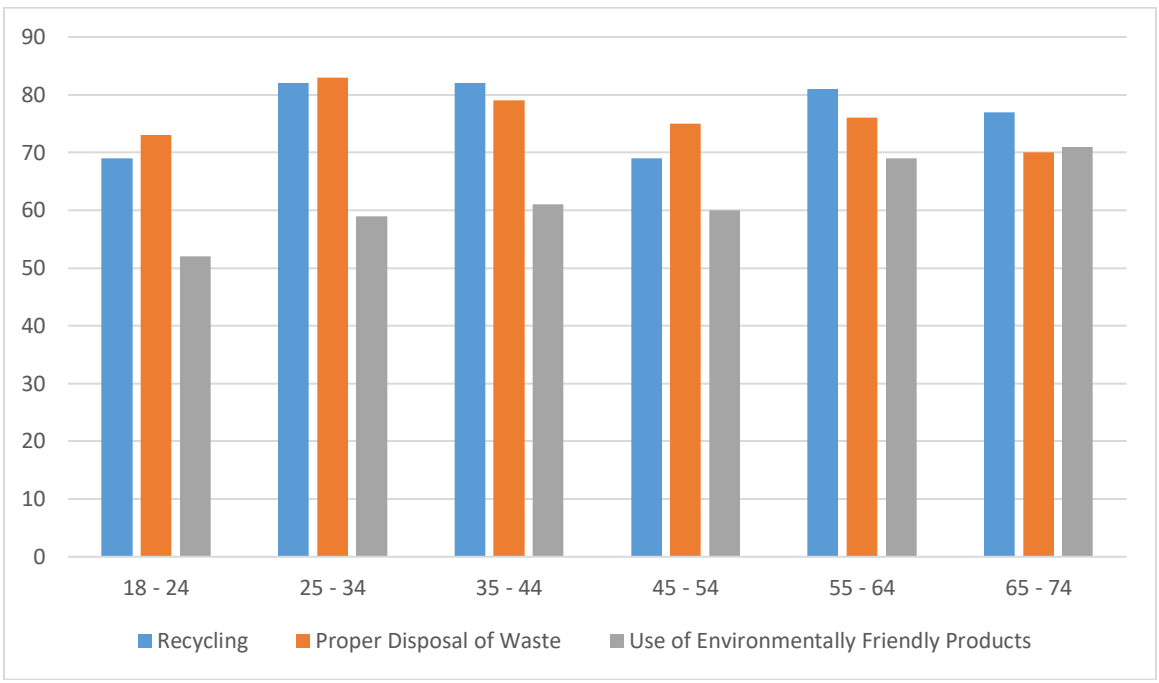


Figure 3.110 Very Important Practices Based on Age

Management should be more in tune to how caring for their environment could improve festival atmosphere. Other stakeholders are often task-oriented, but consumers are more hedonistic, and pleasing festival patrons is an essential element of management (Pera et

al., 2016). When asked to rank stakeholders in order of importance, all three festivals described their patrons as most important. For Rockin' River, speaking with attendees and staying current to their wants and needs was a critical piece to the sustainability of the festival. As the Rockin River manager articulates below:

... We also have to make sure that we keep our ear to the ground and stay current. Understand what the audience wants and listen to our audience. It is a festival that was started by musicians and is run by musicians. So the music world is all we have ever known. As a family all we have ever done is music. So I think that if we cannot adjust to what is current... if we cannot figure out what is current... I cannot see why anybody else could. You know... because I have got children that work for me as well that are in their twenties and thirties. So they are listening with young ears while I am listening with old ears. And so it is a nice marriage between that (Dean, 2017).

Dean refers to being aware of his patrons wants and needs, particularly in regards to the artistic line-up, but he also explains how the festival is more than just a music venue. The festival grounds become almost home for patrons:

I think we do a lot more than most just to try and entertain. You know if you go see a concert at the arena... you walk in and your ticket gets taken and that's pretty much the end of your connection to the event. You sit down and you watch your show and that's it. There's no more... where for us... we've got you there for four days so we want to make sure that we take care of you. We become your host... no different than having friends and family over for the weekend. We want to make sure that they're taken care of (Dean, 2017).

Being able to provide a place where festival patrons have a strong sense of community and social inclusion has been identified as a common source of pride among festival organizers (Finkel, 2010; Laing & Mair, 2015). By this same means, if patrons begin to voice their concerns for environmental practices, particularly in connection to their festival experience, managers will feel the pressure to implement green initiatives. When speaking about change within festivals, manager Gonella (2017) says at his festival they do not implement large change unless at least seven percent of his consumers make a request:

We do surveys. They directly affect. I do the seven percent rule, so if it is over seven percent of opinion then we listen to it. Like a third rule, like every thirty percent of something, third rule. It is just a percentage that I have always used as a way of helping let me know if it is a commitment I should concentrate on or something. The thing is that I get filled with so many requests, so I sort of know when to gauge the

ones that actually have momentum and actually may be on a lot of people's minds. That is where I use the seven percent rule.

Unfortunately, he does not feel as though there is enough demand from patrons to make a change environmentally:

Most of the time it is left to us organizers to raise the bar. And that is one of the reasons why we do not focus on it. Honestly, because we do not have a lot of push from the patrons, overtly. Right? They are not overtly saying. They would rather have a headliner than four garbage cans, putting it in perspective. They are not wishing for that. They want popular bands to come. And also recycling bins, they are not asking for those. There has never been a conversation that happens (Gonella, 2017).

As Gonella refers to above, there has not yet been a dialogue with attendees around the environment in his festival. That does not mean there is not a conversation to be had, it just indicates that neither side has initiated a dialogue. Although the patron opinion is valued, few studies have examined the influence of attendees on management decisions or their concern with environmental practices (Mair & Laing, 2012; Wong et al., 2015). This survey opens the door for conversation with attendees, dealing directly with the consumer to gain insight into how they feel about environmental practices. This research suggests that consumers have the potential to leverage their role as the most valued stakeholder and create real change, and that there is a potential marketing advantage to becoming environmentally friendly. This relies on the fact that consumers would rather attend a festival with strong environmental practices. Although respondents were quick to say they would rather attend an environmentally friendly festival, only 22% of all respondents check the environmental policies of a festival before purchasing a ticket. This is interesting to note because there appeared to be a correlation between practices portrayed online and patron views, and there is a significant difference in the environmental values included on each website. Roots and Blues outlines their environmental practices, Rockin' River has omitted them, and Bass Coast does not delve into the details of their environmental practices, but instead stresses the importance of environmentalism to the entire festival ethos. It is up to management to use this knowledge to develop stronger advertising, particularly through social media as it commands the greatest reach and it is a key part in brand development and loyalty (Hudson et al., 2015).

The interviews indicate that if patrons were more vocal about the importance of environmental practices at music festivals, managers would feel more pressure to make

changes. Through analysis of the findings of our survey results, this research provides a snapshot around patron opinion on the environmental efforts of music festivals in British Columbia. Contrary to management opinion, this research shows that patrons do care about the environment, they just are not overly vocal about it. It should be acknowledged that patrons of these festivals do find environmental initiatives such as recycling and proper disposal of waste very important practices to include at music festivals. Atmosphere is relayed as one of the most significant elements of the patron experience in this study, and the environment is known to play a crucial role in its creation (Lee, 2016). Generating conversation with attendees to learn more about their preferences with regard to environmentalism can help managers gain a competitive edge, improve their festival atmosphere and lead to a more sustainable event (Barber et al., 2014; Song et al., 2015). This study agrees that further research should be conducted around other complex social components that can affect environmental practices of patrons including factors such as convenience, perceived efficacy, outreach, and participation (Hottle et al., 2015). Behavior change is a central factor, necessary for shifting to more sustainable waste management, yet there is a lack of research on behavior change intentions (Zhang et al., 2011). This area of research warrants more investigation into behavior change, intentions, and how music genre plays a factor in the environmental perspectives of patrons.

### **PUSHING THE MESSAGE TO ALL ENTITIES: HOW TO GENERATE CHANGE**

Stakeholder and patron relationships are a complex but crucial element of festival design. The exchanges between organizers and stakeholder individuals, namely the creativity, flexibility and negotiation, are what leads to valuable co-creation. These networks are widely acknowledged for the opportunities they present for enterprises to make operational improvements and enhance the value of their business activities (Luonila & Johansson, 2016; Pera et al., 2016). By approaching stakeholders with a holistic lens, which considers their influence on and their role within management, organizers can critically analyze and prioritize the stakeholder relationship to enhance festival sustainability (Karlsen & Nordstrom, 2008). Previous studies emphasize the importance of creating partnerships that increase the viability and economic sustainability of festivals (Andersson & Getz, 2008). The



findings in this research suggest that including environmental practices within these conversations is the first step to overcoming barriers to environmentalism and building a sustainable foundation to move forward.

Stakeholders are not always thought of as instrumental in working towards environmental sustainability. Currently in British Columbia, festivals are not under enough pressure to operate at a high level of environmentalism, and are facing too many operational obstacles to create effective change without fear of substantive damage to the bottom line. While some scholars argue that innovation can be developed by a single individual in an organization and does not necessarily need to come from the top of the chain of command to be successful (Andersson & Bateman, 2000; Hemingway & Maclagan, 2004), implementation of change does need to be communicated through all entities. This is particularly the case in festivals which are comprised of dynamic multi-organizations. The role of festival leadership includes being an innovator and partner, and improvements with innovation, production and experience are facilitated not only through festival operations, but also with the cooperation of stakeholders and partners (Getz et al., 2007; Luonila & Johansson, 2016). Rockin' River's manager speaks to the importance of communication and understanding of operations with all involved, no matter how seemingly inconsequential the matter:

Oh, my goodness, yes. It does. And it takes everybody understanding. You cannot just be one guy at the top going "okay, this is important." It needs to be everybody understanding that the philosophy of the industry... the philosophy of that particular company... needs to go right down to the volunteers. To the guy who has the hardest job... picking up garbage or whatever. They need to understand that if somebody comes up and says, "Hey, I lost my cat," they need to make it important. They need to ask up the chain and make it important. And the guy at the top who you know... some guy comes running up to me and says, "Hey, I lost my cat," I cannot go "Oh, go tell a volunteer." I cannot do that. I need to turn to that person and say, "Just a minute, let me make a call," and I need to get on the radio and I need to say, "Hey, somebody's cat is missing." You know what I mean? Whether I care about cats or not, that is irrelevant. I care about the customers. Because inevitably, if you do not care about your customers, soon enough it will be just as bad as not caring about your business. Because it is going to fail. And I know I preach but... I think the philosophy that I preach benefits everybody (Dean, 2017).

While this quote does not directly involve environmentalism, it showcases the understanding on behalf of management in regard to the importance of keeping every stakeholder in the loop. He further explains the complexities of festivals and the importance of everything working together through an analogy:

Absolutely. Without a question. I absolutely believe that everything has to work together. I always talk to everybody about a festival being like a Rubik's Cube, inside a Rubik's Cube, inside a Rubik's Cube. And if you do not... at some point everything will come together... but everything has to be in motion at all times and we have to watch every move that we make and be smart about it. And every single square is important. Everybody is important (Dean, 2017).

As Getz, Andersson, and Larson (2007) emphasize, managers of festivals are not independent actors, but rather dependent co-producers in a network of organizations, relying on many sources to help achieve their goals. It is because of these dependencies that festivals struggle to meet environmental targets. The many challenges of environmentalism include learning to implement practices that can be easily set up and executed. Roots and Blues festival manager Gonella (2017) explains further:

We are always looking for those things that we can just do up line and have them set up so when they are down the line they can be implemented without thoughts like, "that's the way we just do it." Versus trying to do some kind of cultural change. That is the problem. We are going to need all sorts of training with. We can hire HR to help with focusing on this... but we still need a community cultural change for some of this. For example, everyone has to agree that we are okay with the compostable toilets. Where you going to put this stuff? I mean can we all just bring it to your house? Use it for your garden?

This need for cultural change can be understood as a need for complete understanding, agreement, and participation from all those that create impact or will be impacted. He explains how this also becomes one of the reasons that his festival does not feel the need to operate at a higher level of environmental sustainability:

But we are talking about a cultural change. So... that is something... I would consider that under a cultural change... because it is your community. Cultural is more of a group thing. It is not an individual thing. Like you can have your own culture... but if I want all of us to follow it... that is a cultural change. Does that make sense? So what you are asking is do we have a mandate to push to all our connected entities saying "this is where we want to go with"? You know... I think we

are piggy backing off of a movement in our time. I do not think we have to be the leader in that... honestly. I mean we can be... but I mean it would just be for stoking your own fire. Because I think culturally the momentum is there. Right? We are being influenced by other festivals, we are influenced by other people... so we are always trying to adjust in that because it is competitive. Or based on competition rather than pure altruism (Gonella, 2017).

There is no immediate call to action for festivals in B.C. to begin making an environmental shift in values because outside pressures are not yet strong enough. There has yet to be a conversation around the environmental practices with stakeholders, as the festivals are waiting for society to inspire change rather than owning their responsibility and creating change themselves. Protecting the values of the festival was expressed as being an important element in each case. There is already an understanding that managers do not want to partner with organizations that are not going to benefit the festival or that might reflect poorly on them as an organization. While the view of one manager is that personal affairs cannot be allowed to interrupt business, his ethical values in partnership are always considered:

No I do not. If you're asking if you know... something along the lines of their political affiliation, no it does not. But if I had a company that I thought did not care about their business... like if I heard that they were at another festival and a speaker fell off and hurt somebody and they did not care about it then of course I am not going to hire them. So that part of my values matters, but...my political values, my religious values, none of that plays any part whatsoever. My ethical values matter very much. And my moral stances absolutely matter in who I hire. But you know... that is just good business (Dean, 2017).

Managers are already making decisions based on personal values at a business level, but values need to expand to include environmental practices, as impact reduction relies heavily on the beliefs of managers and host organizations who can act as stewards of environmentalism (Mair & Laing, 2012). Two of the festivals do not currently address environmental practices in their partnership process. Conversely, for Bass Coast manager, Graham (2017), sustainability has always been a core goal and these conversations are already initiated when seeking partnerships:

I am just trying to think of suppliers that have reached out about it. I mean the ones that come in through our application process, I do not think they have the opportunity to even express that interest before we are like, "this is what we're looking for," so we have already started that conversation.

The festival is able to avoid partnerships that do not align with values of environmentalism by establishing a dialogue early, thus allowing them to work on agreements that benefit everyone. The relationships between managers and stakeholders are two-fold and there should be expectations on both ends. For example, managers have expressed the need for patron involvement in order for environmental success. The survey results showed that 52% of patrons are aware of the negative impacts of music festivals and an additional 35% were somewhat aware. While some are eager to participate, others feel it is the responsibility of the organizer to prevent impacts. Currently, there is little expectation for attendees to assume responsibility but, by communicating and educating attendees, managers can increase participation in environmental programs and significantly influence perception of the value of green events (Wong et al., 2015). This same approach should be applied to partnerships. As managers begin to seek out more environmentally friendly providers, suppliers will begin to feel pressure to change. Graham (2017) speaks about how her suppliers are already beginning to be exposed to these needs:

Well some of the bigger generators are eco-diesel. Things like that. So within their own companies I think they are starting to also try and reflect what people want. I think that the people that run those companies, you know supply and power, you would supply to a huge variety of industries from festivals to tree planting to work sites like construction. And I think through that they are exposed to different mind sets. So...maybe just through exposure and their own personal interest it is starting to pop up.

Sponsorship contracts should also be addressed in this way. Bass Coast does not take sponsorships to protect the integrity of its core values. She explains her view on sponsorship:

Yeah, our whole concept is that Bass Coast is sponsored by you. By the attendee. Like the ticket holder by the artist by everyone involved. Like that is who sponsors Bass Coast! And so that is our belief. We are not opposed to very specific industry related partnerships, if it really is benefiting both and also the attendee. I could see some music production company and if they want to come in and offer like a workshop that would to me seem really fitting. But we do not have any. We have been approached by cigarette companies and car companies and things like that and it is just not of interest (Graham, 2017).

Bass Coast is in a unique position because it was built without the financial support of

sponsorships, but the lesson is still applicable. By choosing not to partner with companies that do not reflect their environmental values, organizations and their managers can begin to lessen restrictions or the impacts of taking on a sponsor that contradicts festival leadership beliefs. The benefits of greening a festival and becoming formally recognized as such include alleviating industry and stakeholder stresses, as well as attracting more sponsorships that align with these goals (Mair & Laing, 2012). Festival manager Gonella (2017) has already experienced a snowball effect with liquor sponsorships:

Like right now we did this (*partnered with local craft breweries*), and then suddenly another brewery heard we were doing this and wanted to get in. And we did not have room for them so they paid for all the sponsorship appreciation beer and wanted to be involved. That gives competition. More people and sponsorships you have on this thing... the other sponsors see that they have a piece of the pie and they want to get in... competition breeds competition. Monopoly breeds monopoly. There is no way around it.

Music festivals provide a platform of opportunity for partners to improve services, experiment with new products, and foster new collaborations, making them attractive for businesses looking to build relationships with other enterprises in the festival's partner portfolio as well as consumers (Mackellar, 2006; Luonila & Johansson, 2016). Corporate sponsors in North America provide a much higher level of revenue and therefore are more powerful (Andersson & Getz, 2008). Nevertheless, by mastering the ability to leverage their platform and craft strategic relationships that are beneficial financially and environmentally, managers can come out with more favourable contracts and also attract interest from other businesses. Getz, Andersson, and Larson (2007) argue that festivals with strong identities that are valued within a community can develop powerful positions in relation to their stakeholders. As explained by Barber, Kim, and Barth (2014), "festivals should partner toward a common strategy that will influence the destination's positioning, awareness, and funding opportunities that can benefit recycling and other local environmental behaviors" (p. 617). As music festivals become more established, the power to leverage their platform matures and becomes an opportunity to develop robust relationships with stakeholders that support their environmental sustainability.

Generating change within a music festival can be very difficult, more so if the change involves a shift in values or goals. The culture of music festivals currently revolves around

exploration of music and atmosphere, socialization, and feelings of escape (Blesic et al., 2014). Music festivals bring together mass amounts of people and partnerships who are all invested in the success of the event. Without patron participation and broad stakeholder support, the responsibility for environmental program success rests with festival staff alone. Organizers must learn to incorporate their current knowledge and management of these complex relationships to address environmentalism, rather than treating it as a separate entity. The complexity behind stakeholder relationships reveals that many of the barriers to environmentalism extend past simply a financial constraint or lack of supplies. Managers would not expect to make a large change to the finances or social values of their festival without stakeholder support, and this study suggests that environmentalism should receive the same consideration. With all parties involved and a deeper understanding, programs will have a much greater likelihood of success and any barriers will become easier to overcome.

## **CONCLUSION**

As concern for environmentalism continues to grow, it is essential that managers of music festivals better understand how their current stakeholder relationships, including perspectives of patrons, encourage or impede their ability to incorporate green practices. Inadequate management can lead to a festival that focuses too heavily on the monetary potential, putting it at risk of losing its cultural significance and thus losing the support of their major stakeholders. It is clear from this research that finding stakeholders that will support the festival's values and goals, including environmental objectives, is key to overall sustainability.

It was evident from the interviews with managers that they cannot make large operational changes without the support of stakeholders. Most importantly, managers consulted in this study do not want to sell out their values for financial gain. Staying true to the roots of the festival is of major importance to their audience, and maintaining a foundation of loyalty and trust with patrons is imperative. By initiating conversations with partners and communicating environmental objectives, managers can begin to identify partnerships that do not fit with their standards. Forming new partnerships that highlight sustainable practices can create opportunity for a snowball effect and create new demand. This research demonstrates that management already has the tools and understanding of how

to navigate the complex relationships that keep their festival afloat, therefore it is simply a matter of an adjustment of perspective to include environmental practices.

The patron is largely identified as the most crucial stakeholder and therefore has been a main focus of festival research (Blesic et al., 2014; Crompton & McKay, 1997; Mohr et al., 1993). In regards to environmentalism, the opinions of patrons have been severely understudied. This research addresses this gap in knowledge by conducting surveys focusing on the perspectives of patrons on environmental practices, their knowledge of negative impacts, and how these affect their festival experience. The first theme that emerged was that the majority of patrons are aware of environmental impacts, but their level of concern and knowledge varies depending on the festival they were attending. It was observed that the feedback from patrons often reflected the environmental practices of the festival, and arguably the values and atmosphere established at each event. It was notable from the survey results that the majority of patrons were more likely to attend a festival that has strong environmental practices, however, it is up to the organizers to deliver and communicate this message to attendees. This demonstrates the potential that managers have to use their festival as a platform to educate their patrons and instigate a change outside the festival lifestyle as well. Because surveys were integrated into this research, patron perspectives and knowledge are now represented in the depiction of, and recommendations for, the festival industry in B.C. Therefore, when planning future development, the opinions of patrons towards environmental practices should be thought of as an important factor to influence manager attitudes and potentially the values articulated at music festivals.

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## Chapter Four.

### Music Festivals Tapping into Their Own Potential: Utilizing Existing Skills to Foster Sustainability

Exemplary sustainability practices at music festival can be difficult to achieve. These are organizations that require large plots of land, enormous amounts of energy to run all the stage equipment, and gather hundreds, to hundreds of thousands, of people in a confined space for multiple days. Waste and pollution is inevitable, but it is also manageable. Environmental impact assessments (“EIAs”) are a useful tool for identifying the problem areas and measuring environmental success in those festivals that have implemented programs. Yet, EIAs do not account for consumer impacts and they frequently do not offer practical solutions for either policy makers or festival managers. Stakeholder relationships are unique to every music festival and priorities often shift with changes in management or boards. This means that it is critical that every festival reviews and understands how their respective event is impacted by and communicates with its stakeholder groups. Sponsorship contracts and resource dependency lends many stakeholders strong influence on management decisions, highlighting the importance for each festival to develop relations with stakeholders who have shared values that are in alignment with one another. Only in this way can a festival be assured of support as it stays loyal to its cultural roots. As demonstrated above, patrons are arguably the most significant stakeholder, as they are the main driver of the music festival market and largest source of revenue that provides financial sustainability. Patrons have a unique relationship as these festivals provide symbolic meaning and social function to the attendees. Understanding their motives can help managers market the festival and create experiences for their guests, but there is a need to understand how environmental sustainability plays a role in the experiences of consumers. The physical environment, whether that be mountain peaks, a rural farm, or a city park, plays a central role in the creation of festival atmosphere. Through the interviews managers expressed a general concern for environmental practices and recognize that there is only one natural environment that we all share. This is a logical position for one to take: an environmentalist with a concern, for example, for a particular river would likely also express a concern for all rivers. Applying the same logic, a festival manager concerned about the environmental

impacts of his/her festival on a specific parcel of property (the festival grounds) also shares a concern about society's impacts on the environment in general. Thus there is potential for festivals to become teaching moments, delivering the message that if environmental stewardship matters here at our music festival, then it matters everywhere. All stakeholders including staff, patrons, and community members engage with these environments in some capacity even when not involved in the festival, and organizers need to actively sustain the environments that support their success.

## **LIMITATIONS**

A growing number of festivals in British Columbia recycle, sort waste, encourage carpooling, and operate with a leave-no-trace attitude, but still fall well short of anything resembling comprehensive programs that fully separate all discarded food and materials or reduce negative consequences such as energy usage and pollution. Operational barriers such as financial constraints, lack of suppliers and resources, increased pressure on the volunteer roster and the lack of control over patron behavior deter management from fully committing to environmentally responsible decisions that encompass the majority of festival functions. This study brings to the forefront new knowledge to local festival communities, however the limitations of the study must also be noted. An initial delimitation concerned the number of festivals to examine. Due to the time constraint of the master's research project, it was decided that three music festivals were the appropriate number. While there was a possibility to conduct interviews with other music festival managers, it was not possible to also survey their festival attendees, and it was important that the research methods remained consistent throughout. While each interview covered the same topics and followed the same interview guide, the semi-structured format meant that each interview played out differently and followed the natural path of conversation. As a result, the wording of the questions was not necessarily the same for each interviewee, nor did every interview contain the same information. This makes it difficult to compare specific questions and answers between interviewees. However, the objective was to have a deep understanding of the respondents' point of view. This reasoning also applies to the limitation of sample size. The study does not aim to assume all events to be the same as the three festivals focused in this study, but rather to include the perspectives and examples of smaller events in British Columbia into a broad

range of literature. The managers and festivals were chosen very carefully for their immense knowledge and experience in the industry to provide an example of how successful festivals in an understudied area are managing their stakeholder relationships and how a new perspective has potential to drive change. Limitations of the surveys must be recognized, as 200 respondents per festival is a relatively small sample size in festivals with 5,000 to 10,000 attendees. The majority of respondents were between the ages of 25 – 44, and research with an even distribution across age groups and gender could provide further knowledge of how demographics may play a role in consumer opinions. There were no t-tests or tests for statistical significance completed on the survey results as they functioned more as a secondary research method to inform the managers and the researcher on patron opinion. It was emphasized by the interviewees that the results were to be disseminated in useful and relevant terms to the cooperating managers, rather than through statistical reporting.

Subsequent research should expand the interviewee base, as current research focuses on stakeholder theories from the view of festival managers, rather than directly from stakeholders. This includes business stakeholder groups, community members, and further research on patron perspectives. As this study reveals that communication between stakeholders is crucial to sustainability, gaining direct knowledge from different stakeholder groups would almost certainly provide new findings. Applying the findings of this research to festivals of varying size across British Columbia may also lead to deeper insights, especially considering how influential the patrons and personal opinions of managers are to the success of environmental practices. In-depth interviews with attendees would allow for more elaborate thoughts and concerns to be voiced, as well as greater understanding of the role of environment on experience and purchase intention. Lastly, as this research has broader applications across a swathe of events, it is also suggested that researchers further explore how different events may also be impacted by stakeholder relations, personal values of management, and visitor opinion.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study increases comprehension on how the complexity of stakeholder relationships can prove prohibitive to overcome the operational barriers of environmentalism, but also how managers can leverage their platform for stakeholders to create new

partnerships that foster and support primary values around sustainability. Additionally, this research was able to demonstrate that having a clear understanding of how the physical environment shapes festival-goers experience, and the importance of conserving that environment, provides powerful insights that can inform future marketing initiatives. One of the primary contributions of this study is that it provides management with deeper understandings into a wide range of barriers. This in turn enables a more solid understanding of how to move beyond simple measures and craft a more sophisticated and flexible environmental strategy that reduces risk, anticipates obstacles, and greatly improves the odds of successful implementation. Understanding how some stakeholder partnerships can actually restrict new programs is one example of a more sophisticated and strategic approach. Identifying barriers and communicating the full complexity of the issues to management means the right information gets into the hands of people who can develop long-term solutions and sustainable improvements to environmental policies and practices.

Another significant outcome of this study is that it serves to highlight the importance for managers to begin meaningful conversations around environmentalism with festival stakeholders, including the attendees. It was apparent, through the analyzed data of management interviews, that the economics and cultures of a festival are made possible through collaboration. These findings also supported previous research that emphasizes the importance of stakeholders for problem solving during times of distress (Getz & Andersson, 2008). The evidence in this study also indicates that partnerships should be created that enhance environmental practices as well, and that the right stakeholder, in addition to bolstering a festival's financial or cultural components, can also provide solutions to environmental barriers.

Most of the results and conclusions of this study are derived from the practical implications of the participatory research approach that was employed. Within the interviews, managers indicated that they did not think of their own stakeholder relationships as complicated, but rather viewed them within the context of business decisions. As our conversations deepened and more questions were asked, managers were forced to critically analyze their partnerships and reflect on how these relations impact both their day-to-day and big picture festival operations. This thought process was not intended to convince managers to change their associations, but to begin to acknowledge both the positive and negative



impacts that some relationships have. The reports developed specifically for managers gave them an opportunity to view their partnerships from an outside perspective and receive suggestions from a point of view without an inside investment. While the reports did not include interview transcripts in order to conceal any sensitive information, knowledge and practices between festivals were shared so that managers could learn from each other and connections within the industry could start to form. The knowledge produced through these conversations and exchanges is already being used in a meaningful way. The Roots and Blues music festival has dramatically improved their environmental practices for the 2018 festival and has begun to communicate with other festivals. Through the use of a community based participatory research methodology, the research results are clear, constructive and being put into action.

In the context of this study, we see that management has already been subjected to the influence that is exerted by competition and experienced the resulted pressure to change in different aspects of their business. This often sets into motion a snowball effect that occurs when new opportunities for collaboration arise. In this capacity, when festivals create partnerships with environmentally conscious stakeholders, others will likely begin to take interest in the festival as well. This study also demonstrates a need for environmental practices that address the particular concerns of patrons. Survey results revealed a growing awareness of the importance of conserving the environment along with an expectation of action. The potential for supportive collaboration in combination with new knowledge around patron opinions in turn creates stronger incentives for management to begin shifting environmentalism into their core values, as a successfully managed event must meet the needs of patrons and partners (Getz & Andersson, 2010; Pegg & Patterson, 2010; Pine & Gilmore, 1999). As this study shows, recognizing and utilizing the full potential of festival platforms is a worthy consideration because of the prospective reach of festivals and their unique ability to educate and create demand through their interactions with stakeholders and patrons. A shift in values on behalf of management can result in long-term improvements to festival sustainability and also initiate a potential chain reaction that creates pressure for other festivals to evolve. This will build towards a critical mass in the demand for environmental resources from suppliers and educate patrons in the process.

The impacts of mega events like the Olympics or FIFA World Cup have been studied thoroughly (Collins et al., 2009; Lenskyj, 2008; Michopoulou & Giuliano, 2018; Parkes et al., 2016; Prayag et al., 2013), and it is time to recognize the positive and negative impacts of smaller events occurring in all areas of the world, many of which are working towards a more sustainable future (Mair & Laing, 2012). As popular global media events are filled with nationalism and excitement, they are often at the center of debates because of their equal potential to both benefit and disempower the host community, participants, and other stakeholders (Jackson & Scherer, 2013; Lim & Lee, 2006). There is a disproportionate focus on the effects of mega events as critical analyses reveal economic, cultural and environmental concerns. These are issues that also need to be addressed, and examined, in smaller events throughout the world, where local and regional communities are being affected in the same way. This research explored the issues that are faced by smaller music festivals in British Columbia. The study worked with and involved festival management in the process of understanding stakeholder relationships on financial, environmental and cultural levels. Personal interviews with management provided a detailed look into quotidian operations and communications with stakeholders. This study emphasizes the importance of an inclusive understanding of all stakeholders in order to move forward with environmental initiatives.

Smaller scale music festivals may not attract global media attention or produce the same economic income as a mega event, but their symbolic meaning and cultural influence are equally powerful and should be recognized as such. The meaning of a festival cannot be captured with a single definition, but at the base of all festivals is a public, cultural celebration; a bringing together of people for a common purpose to create a sense of belonging (Getz, 1991). Captured well by Falassi (1987), he indicates that “both the social function and the symbolic meaning of the festival are closely related to a series of overt values that the community recognizes as essential to its ideology and worldview, to its social identity, its historical continuity, and to its physical survival, which is ultimately what festival celebrates” (p. 2). There is considerable potential for music festivals to become leaders in sustainability. Managers already possess many of the skills to foster the relationships that are required to achieve this goal. Many festivals already have a supportive base of patrons that are interested in pursuing sustainable practices. Music festivals do cause

negative impacts on the environment and in the communities where they are hosted, but the benefits greatly outweigh these impacts. For this reason, and because of the multitude of people reaping a diversity of benefits, it is imperative that we continue to foster, and contribute to research that supports sustainable music festivals.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Interview Guide

#### Position

1. What is your position within this festival and what does this role entail?
2. How long have you been in this position?
3. What type of organization is your festival: private, public, or not-for-profit?
4. How would you describe the atmosphere of your festival, including key aspects like genre and theme?

#### Sustainability

1. What does sustainability mean to your festival, and what are the goals of sustainability?
2. Are you meeting these goals?
3. Are you currently aware of the environmental impacts of music festivals? If yes, please describe.
4. Do you have a specific management plan related to environmental impacts in place?
5. What are the main barriers that your company faces when it comes to implementing or continuing environmental programs?
6. Who regulates environmental practices?
7. Have any stakeholders expressed interest in your environmental programs?
8. When it comes to environmental, cultural, and economic sustainability, where would you place these in your festivals priorities and why?
9. In your experience, what is the most common concern/issue relating to sustainability with your festival?

#### Stakeholder Relationships

1. Who does your festival consider as stakeholders?
2. Are there stakeholders that take priority over others?
3. How do you choose which businesses or groups to create partnerships with?
4. Which stakeholders do you consider key to the survival of the festival?

5. How do you feel the partnerships you create affect the sustainability of your festival?
6. How do the partnerships you make influence management decisions?
7. In your experience, who provides the most stability economically to your festival?
8. In your experience, who provides the most support environmentally to your festival?
9. How do the opinions and motivations of attendees affect management decisions?
10. Reflecting on the previous questions, how would you describe the key values of your festival and how do these partnerships ensure these values are met?

## Appendix B: Survey Questions

### Environmental Perceptions

1. Are you aware of the environmental impacts of music festivals?
  - Yes
  - No
  - Somewhat
2. How would you rate the importance of the following? (Likert Scale)
  - Recycling
  - Proper Disposal of Waste
  - Use of Environmentally friendly products
  - Ticket Price
  - Good Atmosphere
  - Artistic Line-up
3. When buying a ticket, do you look at the environmental policies of the festival?
  - Yes
  - No
4. Are you more likely to attend a festival that has environmental practices over one that does not?
  - Yes
  - No
5. Are you willing to pay to aid in combating negative environmental impacts from festivals? (Skip Logic Included)
  - Yes
  - No
6. If yes, what is the maximum amount you would be willing to pay to aid in combating negative environmental impacts from festivals? (\$0 - \$5, \$5 - \$10, \$10 - \$15, \$15-\$20, \$20+)
  - I cannot afford to pay an additional fee
  - It is the responsibility of the organizations to pay for these impacts
  - I don't think the impacts are large enough to worth paying a fee
  - I do not like to pay for such things
  - Other
7. If you answered no, why are you not willing to pay?
  - I cannot afford to pay an additional fee
  - It is the responsibility of the organizations to pay for these impacts
  - I don't think the impacts are large enough to worth paying a fee
  - I do not like to pay for such things
  - Other

### Demographics:

8. What is your province of residence? (drop down menu)
9. What is your sex?
  - Male
  - Female
  - Prefer not to say
10. What is your age? (range menu)