



In collaboration with:



Weekly #SportPositive Twitter Chat

Tuesday, May 12

Sport and Nature

Please note we have just taken salient points that were added in the discussion and have not given attribution. This document is to give a flavour of the Twitter Chat, it is not a transcription. If you wish to see who wrote points that resonate with you, to pick up a discussion, search #SportPositive on Twitter and you will be able to see the original tweets.

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Q1: Either within your organisation, or as a sense from working within the community, do you believe sport understands and does enough to understand and reduce the impact of their activities on biodiversity?

Society is at the moment primarily focusing on Carbon, rather than Biodiversity. I believe we should put the two on same level of urgency. One example: Sports mostly measures its Carbon Footprint rather than LCA and other impacts on natural resources, etc.

From working within the community, we would say generally no. That said, it's not the most obvious connection when talking about **#sport** and **#sustainability**. More education in order

There's always more to learn and room for growth. Starter Qs to guide action: what/how many plant and animal species live on your land (historically & at present)? What soils are you working with? Is your aquifer clean, fully replenished, healthy?

When I think about sectors involved in protecting **#biodiversity** & **#NaturalHabitats** **#Sport** does not come to mind. Not in the slightest. Just learned that **#CreativeIndustries** are moving it to top of their list alongside other SDGs

think this is a hard no, with a few exceptions in the sports where nature is a critical determining factor in their actual competition (sailing, surfing). Not very #sportpositive of me to say but I believe true

- > The only ones which spring to mind involve #Water. There is definitely an #ocean #biodiversity angle to yachting, and surfers too include noted #environmentalists

Yes, we have argued that carbon offsetting programs can be used to restore, protect, and maintain biodiversity/habitats of team mascots. High fit and great support among fans that we have surveyed.

So many professional teams have an animal as a mascot or on their shields - SO MUCH MORE could be done with that!

-> Hat tip to @drhershkowitz and his work with Philadelphia Eagles

Q2: Do you think sport has a duty to account (financially, ecologically or otherwise) for the degradation/destruction of habitats/nature caused by its activities, and how could that work?

Yes. In some cases this is a legal obligation as well. More policy is needed to guide commitments to biodiversity, and training resources for grounds managers/facilities staff, esp bc most sport folks aren't experts in this area!

Great work by IUCN + IOC on <https://iucn.org/theme/business-and-biodiversity/our-work/business-engagement-sector/sport...>

- how bioD can be impacted by construction of sports venues & events;
- present ways of mitigating negative impacts on bioD from sport;
- highlight bioD opportunities available to sports community

No more or less than any other industry, individual, government, etc. "How could that work" is the big question. Many of these issues are already addressed (in the US at least) in the environmental impact process, however.

-> Very true, but this assumes that governmental EIAs are not fast-tracked - happens more often than not with sport facilities.

Event-based (traveling/circuit) sports are accustomed to the permitting process for diff jurisdictions. If host cities embedded these issues it may be the most logical way to 1) set a baseline of issues/mitigation factors and b) have this adopted broadly/rapidly

Yes, there is a shared responsibility of everyone to do their part - sport organizations, fans, etc. There are many environmental justice issues at play when considering major financial development and long term planning

Q3: How can sport enhance, restore and reconnect with natural habitats in urban environments?

For community ideas, what about linking urban gardening with kargoBiking [who can find a name for it?] as Plogging has blended waste collection with jogging.

I could write volumes about how #sport can restore natural habitat in cities. There are so many groups who would love to work with sports teams on local regeneration. E.g. @savebutterflies @foe_us @BumblebeeTrust @urbanfarming @WildlifeTrusts has a whole ecosystem to initiate & support efforts <https://pic.twitter.com/wPGZsmW1zX>

For hosted events, host cities can connect organizers to nature/wildlife NGOs and recommend tying those in to legacy efforts. When host cities bring suggestions/solutions/conditions and resources this can & will happen.

For fixed-venue sports: consult, partner w local nature NGOs to discover opportunities. Esp now while fans are idle and could be enlisted for local restoration projects. Double win-more meaningful than distant offsets; fans more connected to benefits

Planting gardens, using local plants, providing educational materials. Tons of great examples ... this is one of our favs <https://3blmedia.com/News/Target-Center-Teams-Local-Teen-Promote-Biodiversity-and-Native-Bee-Conservation...>

Use your network. Connect with folks who have a biodiversity/ecology background, like BASIS director and @SportEcoGroup advisory board member, Dr. Russ Seymour (he's got a PhD in biodiversity management!) or local nature conservation groups

There's a natural fit between sport & the natural environment (pun intended). @MLB can do something to make this connection w/ their Field of Dreams game or the @NHL & @NHLGreen can do with the outdoor games. Or like @drhershkowitz and @SandSI_org w/ Artic game.

Regardless of the process the result is consistent - The more people engage in the natural environment and have access to physical activity the more likely they will push for environmental protection. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10584-019-02635-y...>

Further as people get more exposed to nature the less they see nature or biodiversity as a means of engaging their activity but rather as an end that needs protection and preservation

Q4: In what ways can sport raise more public awareness about nature and conservation?

Just have to get started! Helps though to focus on locally relevant topics. This is a fun example: <https://blogs.worldbank.org/nasikiliza/using-a-rhino-mascot-and-school-sports-to-raise-awareness-on-wildlife-conservation...>

There are so many amazing communicators in the world of conservation. Ideally link up with local organisations and work with them on the comms & broader education

Focus on grassroots play & physical activity of playing the sport. Another highlight the surrounding area & use place identity to boost your brand- Ex. [@SFGiants](#) can play off the proximity to [@MuirWoodsNPS](#) or [@YosemiteNPS](#) - enjoy nature & bring the Giants along.

Another example - [@Mariners](#) [@Seahawks](#) [@ReignFC](#) [@SeattleStorm](#) [@seattlesounders](#) can do the same and highlight [@OlympicNational](#) or highlight healthy salmon populations to orca health and how their concessions help address any issues.

I recommend - for a start - sticking with familiar language for people (fans). Nature is a word everyone understands. Biodiversity starts to take people outside their comfort zone/make them unsure they can be part of the conversation

Been thinking lots on how golf for example could become resilient ecosystem to regenerate nature in years 2come. Golf Courses go from reducing its high impacts to actually becoming natural 'oasis' when climate crisis will kick in

-> A sport like golf has nothing to lose from embracing [#naturalsolutions](#)....

6 reasons for golfers to support naturalisation	
1	Greenkeepers can prioritise Naturalising some areas means greenkeepers can focus on the areas that matter most - tees, fairways, greens and bunkers!
2	Join the best of the best Some of the worlds more revered courses are the most natural! Why is that?
3	Enhanced experience Natural vegetation can add colour, texture and stimulation, enhancing the golfing landscape.
4	A stronger club going forward Maintenance savings help with overall profitability of the club, and can be allocated to other essential maintenance and future investments.
5	Longer-term protection Helping your club overcome challenges such as drainage, flooding, extreme heat and drought, and opening possibilities for grants for natural solutions to wider problems.
6	Pride and reputation Naturalising the golfing landscape and boosting biodiversity can help transform image and generate pride and positive publicity amongst members and the community.

 www.sustainable.golf

Show high profile athletes' workouts outside not just in sanitized gyms with prof equipment. The [@NHL #Vancouver @Canucks](#) Sedin twins highlighted area trails in their run

It would be great to see sports teams / bodies who HAVE done great biodiversity work share it with their fans - more boldly than a page on the website - really sing about it

Q5: We know that conservation groups are fighting for survival during lockdown, in what ways might sport help raise funds for them, right now?

Sports organisations can work with [#conservation](#) groups to raise funds TOGETHER. Conservation groups tend to be highly creative, and will truly go out on a limb to make things happen. They are full of ideas and ready to go!

[@patagonia](#) for instance funds a lot of NGOs via: [https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/how-we-fund/...](https://eu.patagonia.com/gb/en/how-we-fund/)

Engage fans in local conservation projects -- plan now for when these can happen. [@LAGalaxy](#) of [@MLS](#) do beach cleanups. [@TimbersFC](#) [@ThornsFC](#) have done [#StandTogether](#) week w fans for a dozen yrs. [@SoundersFC](#) and [@NBA #Trees4Threes](#) bring fans into tree-planting

Fundraising projects / appeals are always welcome, but partnerships are the key. For clubs to back projects in their town / city, for NGBs to support national projects, for international federations to align with global causes...would be special

Thank You!

If you contributed to the [#SportPositive](#) Twitter Chat this week, thank you for being a part of it! If you didn't, I hope you find this document useful, and mark your diaries now to join us next week, **Tuesday, May 17th at 4-5pm UTC.**

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