

## Panel Discussion: Climate Storytelling Fellowship

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Stories serve to make sense of a complex world and the roles we play within it. As our society faces the immediate existential threat of the climate crisis, a need for new stories has never been more apparent. The dominant stories of extraction, exploitation, and anthropocentrism will not sustain us. Instead, we must search for and uplift stories of connection, collaboration, and justice, for us, our non-human cohabitants, and the ecosystems that make life on Earth possible. Climate storytelling is a process of empowerment that gives voice to an often unvoiced struggle. Every individual has been impacted by the climate crisis, whether it is through the trauma of extreme weather events, or the somber loss of bird song and seasonal rhythms. Talking about these personal experiences brings the overwhelming scale of the crisis into focus, making it easier to conceptualize for the storyteller themselves and their listeners. This lends agency to both the storyteller and listener, as stories of grief and what *has been* become stories of hope and what *could be*.

In this panel, four [students](#) from the [UBC Climate Storytelling Fellowship](#) will discuss their fellowship experience, from learning how to tell their own climate stories and interviewing others involved in climate justice activism, to creating their own creative climate communications projects. They will also reflect on their personal motivations and goals for their own climate justice journeys; and discuss the roles that young people can and should play in a hopeful climate movement. In addition to telling their own climate stories, panelists will discuss what they learned from their interviewees' climate stories, and how this experience in storytelling influenced or changed their relationship to and viewpoint on the climate emergency. Panelists will consider if and how storytelling allowed them and their interviewees to feel differently about the realities of climate action, and whether this will lead to consequential differences in behaviours and decisions going forward. Through these personal reflections and conversations, the audience will hear evidence-based illustrations and examples that demonstrate how it is crucially important we tell new stories in order to meet the challenge of the climate crisis.

### About the Panelists



**Esmé Decker** is majoring in Honours English Literature & Language at UBC Vancouver, with a minor in Environment and Society. For 3 years they worked with the UBC Climate Hub on their Youth Climate Ambassadors Project, training student facilitators and delivering climate storytelling workshops in elementary/secondary school classrooms and community programs to foster hope and motivation for climate action, and have continued workshop consultation work with Be The Change Earth Alliance's educational resources. This summer, along with contributing to the Climate Storytelling Fellowship, they have been participating in a graduate seminar on coastal studies

and literature. Esmé plans to be a high school English teacher to foster communication, critical thinking, and storytelling skills for future generations in order to help fight the crises of our present and future.



**Annabelle Liao** graduated from UBC Vancouver in May 2024 with a BSc in Global Resource Systems with a specialization in Sustainability & Social Impact. As someone who works for Vancity's Climate Strategy and Performance team researching the uptake of different climate financing tools, along with co-leading the COP29 Project Team for the NGO ClimaTalk, she sees immeasurable value in the power of impactful communication. This is what propelled her to join the Climate Hope Storytelling Fellowship – to continue building capacity in connecting with diverse individuals working towards climate action while documenting the journey!



**Caroline Stampiaka** graduated from UBC Vancouver in May 2024 with an Honours degree in Anthropology. As an incoming UBC Anthropology MA student, she will research the sustainable tradition of migratory beekeeping in Greece, focusing on the challenges beekeepers are facing due to climate change. She is participating in this fellowship because she is passionate about ethnographic interviews and motivated to help make climate change issues tangible and actionable. With a commitment to environmental advocacy and upholding the principles of climate justice, she wants to inspire positive change and leave a meaningful impact.



**Sherry Yu** graduated from UBC Vancouver in May 2024 with a double major in English and Political Science. She is currently a JD candidate at the Peter A. Allard School of Law at UBC, with a focus on Indigenous and Environmental law. Born in Vancouver, BC, and raised for a year in Kunming, China, the geopolitics of these places have greatly influenced how she understands climate justice. Sherry became interested in climate writing with the intersectional nature of her degree — much of her research is through an explorative framework analyzing the relationship between climate justice and decolonialism. Beyond academia, in her spare time, Sherry enjoys travelling, urban sketching, reading, and taking her dog to the local park.

### About the Moderator



**Patricia Lane**, mediator, arbitrator, and retired lawyer, was the longest serving member of the Sierra Club Board and still serves in a variety of capacities. She has been studying effective climate communication since 2010 when she helped to found [LeadNow.ca](https://www.leadnow.ca/). She co-founded [GVAT – Victoria](https://www.gvat-victoria.ca/) a coalition of 30 organisations representing 60,000 people working on issues of common concern including climate fairness. She has taught climate communications courses for Vancouver Island Elder College, Nanaimo Green Faith, SPEC Vancouver, Sierra Club BC, Greater Victoria Acting Together, University of Victoria Continuing Education, and other groups. She is loosely affiliated with [Climate Access](https://climateaccess.ca/) and Re:Climate at Carleton University and relies heavily on their work. Patricia provides advice on effective climate communications for a variety of organizations and as “Canada’s Most Hopeful Climate Columnist” writes a weekly column for [National Observer](https://www.nationalobserver.com/) profiling people making a difference in climate change.