



2025

STORYLAND STUDIOS
**Lasting
Impact**

Storyland
STUDIOS

Leading with Lasting Impact

Message from our Chief Creative Officer

“Welcome to Storyland's second Lasting Impact Report, where we explore what lasting impact means in practice and how it can drive positive change. Central to our approach is a belief in redemptive storytelling. While storytelling is often viewed as entertainment, we see it as a force that brings people together, restores purpose, and inspires meaningful change. This belief guides how we create experiences, build partnerships, and measure success. As our Lasting Impact Strategy evolves, we continue to strengthen our approach, embedding greater structure and accountability while building the relationships and insights needed to achieve our long-term goals.

At the heart of our mission is a commitment to creating lasting value for **people**, the **planet**, and the **communities** we serve.

Our efforts begin with people. We strive to foster a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment where colleagues can learn, grow, and thrive. As our greatest asset, our people are central to everything we do. Beyond our own teams, we actively engage with schools, colleges, and industry partners to inspire, support, and develop the next generation of talent.

We are equally committed to protecting the natural environment by reducing our environmental footprint and exploring opportunities to deliver more sustainable, resilient, and responsible solutions through our projects and operations.

Just as importantly, we recognize the vital role that attractions and public spaces play within their wider communities. Through our commitment to New Urbanism, our pro bono initiatives, and our work with a diverse range of purpose-driven organizations, we seek to create meaningful legacies that enhance well-being, celebrate culture, and contribute to long-term prosperity.

As you read this report, we hope it demonstrates not only the progress we have made, but also our ongoing commitment to learning, collaboration, and continuous improvement as we work toward creating a lasting positive impact.”

Mel McGowan – Storyland Chief Creative Officer



*Storyland's Vision:
To co-create a world that
could and should be through
the power of storytelling.*

An Overview Of Our Progress

\$126,000+

Donated to charity in 2025

24.4  KG

tCO2e in 2025 (Scope 1 & 2*)

7



Interns gaining valuable industry experience in 2025

146.5

Pro bono hours delivered in 2025

27

Thought leadership and awareness sessions

PASSION LED US HERE

**The carbon footprint is reported using the market-based methodology.*



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PURPOSE AND VISION

Our Structure

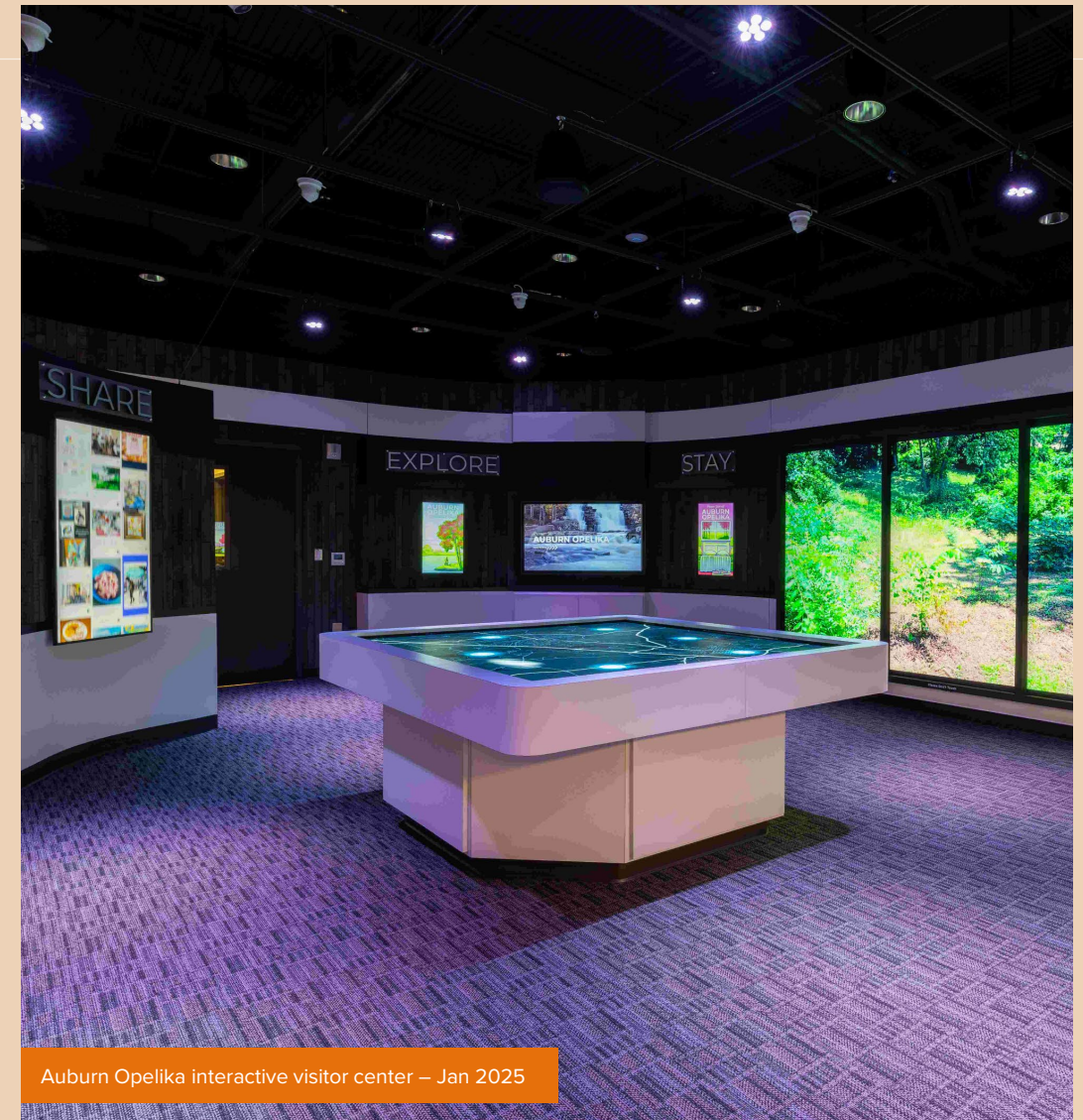
PURPOSE: We aim to maximize our impact both internally and across every client project. As a design agency, we have the power to deliver impactful stories that enhance the lasting, long-term impact in relation to three key pillars: People, Community, and Planet.

VISION: We exist because redemptive storytelling transforms lives.

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE: We are committed to embedding lasting impact into the core of our business. Our governance process includes:

- **Engagement:** All colleagues are encouraged to contribute ideas related to lasting impact through a dedicated Slack channel.
- **Collaboration:** Practice leaders are actively consulted in the development of new sustainability initiatives to ensure alignment with operational priorities and sector expertise.
- **Client Alignment:** Our project directors and project teams are engaged to support client-facing lasting impact efforts on a project-by-project basis.
- **Strategic Oversight:** Our Lasting Impact strategy and all associated initiatives are subject to review and approval by our executive board.
- **Leadership:** A designated sustainability lead is responsible for driving the sustainability strategy forward, coordinating cross-functional efforts, and reporting progress to the Executive Board.

This structure ensures transparency, inclusivity, and effective decision-making as we work toward our sustainability goals.

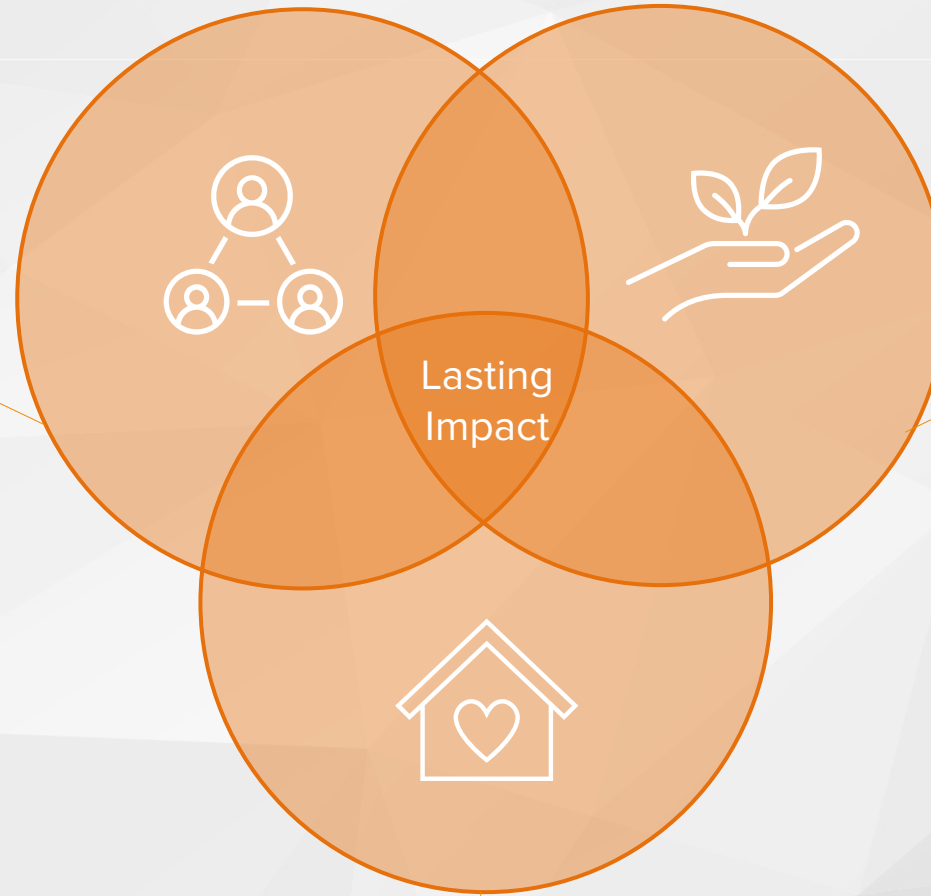


Auburn Opelika interactive visitor center – Jan 2025

Our Aims

People

OUR IMPACT ON PEOPLE FOCUSES ON SKILLS DEVELOPMENT; TRAINING; COLLEAGUE ENGAGEMENT; MENTORING – THIS EXTENDS BEYOND OUR OWN ORGANIZATION, TO OUR INFLUENCE AND SUPPORT FOR THE NEXT GENERATION OF TALENT.



Planet

WE AIM TO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON OUR PLANET – THROUGH BOTH OUR ACTIONS AS AN ORGANIZATION, AND OUR WORK ON CLIENT PROJECTS.

Community

HOW DO OUR STORIES AFFECT COMMUNITIES? HOW DO OUR PROJECTS IMPACT LIVES? COMMUNITY IS AT THE HEART OF OUR BUSINESS.



IMPACT REVIEW 2025

People



Our Impact On People

Our commitment to creating a positive, meaningful experience for our people is paramount. When our employees feel supported, inspired, and connected to their work, we can create a true lasting impact - not just within our organization, but with our clients across both cause and commerce.

7 Interns
in 2025

10 Employees celebrating
milestone anniversaries

10 Webinars, podcasts
and presentations



People

SKILLS + OPPORTUNITIES

7 INTERNS IN 2025



MADDY MCGOWAN
PRODUCTION DESIGN
COORDINATOR



LIBERTY WRIGHT
STRATEGIC
DEVELOPMENT INTERN



EWAN MCGOWAN
JR. DEVELOPER INTERN



MICHAEL BORGEN
PROJECT MANAGEMENT INTERN



BRAYDEN WILL
DESIGN INTERN



ANDREW NIEDZIELA
MARKETING INTERN



ABBY KOENIG
ILLUSTRATOR INTERN

People

SKILLS + OPPORTUNITIES



Spotlighting Our Interns

Abby Koenig – Illustration

I joined Storyland as an illustration intern while starting my BFA in Entertainment Design. My position has been a fantastic usher into the world of themed design – I learn better in real situations and on the job itself.

I have my mentor Johnny Davis and manager Juliane Ramadan to thank for my swift adjustment, alongside the rest of the creative team – their support has been invaluable to my development in the space. They've carried me through difficult times and continue to push me forward in adding new skills to my toolbox.

Many of the projects I've been able to put my hat into the ring for have not gone public yet, but I've

been given several opportunities to work on concepts within my personal interests, which is always a blast. Getting to witness the team at work from the first client meeting through to later concepts is always a pleasure.

In my time with Storyland, I've had the chance to work with a decent majority of our team, which has been lovely. Every lovely coworker I've done work for or with has been patient and understanding throughout the whole process – the culture has an emphasis on taking care of one another first and foremost.

I've adored working for my team at Storyland; talking to them makes any day a little brighter.

People

SKILLS + OPPORTUNITIES



Spotlighting Our Interns

Andrew Niedziela – Marketing

From the moment I began at Storyland, I understood one thing - it's a place that amplifies your strengths, listens to your interests, and appreciates your insight.

The culture is something completely unique, organically formed through its founding, and perpetuated by the character of the people it attracts. I appreciate my peers and the leaders around me every day, because I know that they're invested in me, not just professionally, but personally, and that's an invaluable feeling.

Since day one, I've been encouraged and believed in. That's inspired confidence, learning (through success and failure), and innovation, all of which have played a part in my professional growth. The talent I encounter daily is often shocking.

Working in marketing, I'm privileged to hear the genuinely awesome insights and perspectives our team carry into, and out of, every project. Sometimes, when catching up with a given Storylander on a project, I have to remember that beyond my awe of their understanding and interest in the topic, I'm working to capture the details of the project, but then I often realize that those are actually one and the same!

When I joined Storyland, I quickly found myself able to explore many facets of the company - that gave me the opportunity, and then the confidence, to follow the path I not only most enjoyed, but found myself most effective in. That for me represents the personability of Storyland I earlier mentioned. What I often find is that Storylanders' titles aren't just what they do, they're closer to who they are and what they're passionate about. That's truly such an encouraging thing to see.

People

MILESTONE
ANNIVERSARIES
IN 2025

CELEBRATING 5 YEARS



Daryl McMullen
Digital Manager



Long Pham
Senior Developer



Frank Grau
Illustrator Designer



Jessica McKinley
Accounts Receivable



Freddy Martin
Executive Producer



Ben Thompson
CEO, Storyland
Locations

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



Shawn Stewart
Vice President of
Strategic Storytelling

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS +



Ed McGowan
(22 yrs)
Senior Designer



Richard Boyda
(23 yrs)
Interactive Media

People

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT OUTSIDE THE ORGANIZATION

Storyland is regularly asked to participate in skills and careers-based presentations to school, colleges, and education settings.



Spotlight: Storyland Chief Innovation Officer **Matt Ferguson** on the Power of Storytelling in Sports Experiences

In April 2025, Storyland Chief Innovation Officer Matt Ferguson delivered a guest lecture to a Sports & Hospitality class at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, exploring the power of storytelling in shaping memorable sports experiences.

Drawing on Storyland's approach to experience design, Matt shared how sports venues can elevate guest engagement by embedding narrative into the hospitality journey—transforming events into immersive, emotionally resonant experiences that extend beyond the game itself.

Presenting in such an iconic setting for sport—the Dean E. Smith Center, home to Michael Jordan and numerous national championships—made the opportunity especially meaningful. Matt was honored to contribute to the academic dialogue at one of the country's most storied sports institutions.

Inspiring the next generation of storytellers is central to Storyland's mission. We extend our sincere thanks to Dr. C. A. Tuggle for the invitation and the opportunity to engage with future leaders in sports and hospitality.

People

THEMED ATTRACTION PODCAST

8

Themed Attraction
Podcast Episodes in
2025



The Themed Attraction Podcast is dedicated to showcasing theme park industry knowledge, history, and innovations through in-depth interviews with the masters of the craft.

Its purpose is to showcase **careers / career routes**, help listeners build an understanding of our industry, and give a glimpse behind the scenes of incredible projects and experiences.

Each episode features conversations with respected and award-winning theme park experts and innovators telling their personal stories of attraction development from the ground up. Episodes focus on the variety of disciplines utilized to develop an attraction or park from blue sky to sketchbook, from design to dedication day.

The show is hosted by Storyland Studios' Chief Creative Officer, Mel McGowan, and our Executive Producer Freddy Martin.



The podcast is produced by Dr. Barry Hill, an author and professor of audio engineering at Lebanon Valley College. The Themed Attraction Podcast is one of the features of ThemedAttraction.com, a theme park industry news and information site providing interviews, stories, and insights about themed entertainment design.

People

TEA MASTERS

4 TEA Masters Webinars



Proposed by the Past Presidents Council and established by the TEA International Board in 2018, the TEA MASTERS programme recognizes individuals who are truly “Masters of Their Craft.” It celebrates a select group of creators, designers, engineers, producers, and leaders whose contributions have shaped and advanced the themed entertainment industry. Interviewed by Storyland’s CCO Mel McGowan, in partnership with the TEA, these spotlight sessions aim to:

- Elevate and humanise the Masters
Move beyond recognition to storytelling—revealing the journeys, philosophies, and defining moments behind each TEA Master’s work.
- Capture and share industry insight
Translate excellence into accessible knowledge, showcasing the creative thinking, technical expertise, and problem-solving that drive outstanding projects.
- Extend impact beyond the moment
Build on existing spotlight presentations to create a year-round platform that engages the wider industry and broadens awareness of the programme.
- Support education, dialogue, and diversity
Provide a valuable learning resource for members, NextGen, and students, while promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration and reflecting the diversity of talent shaping themed entertainment.

Community



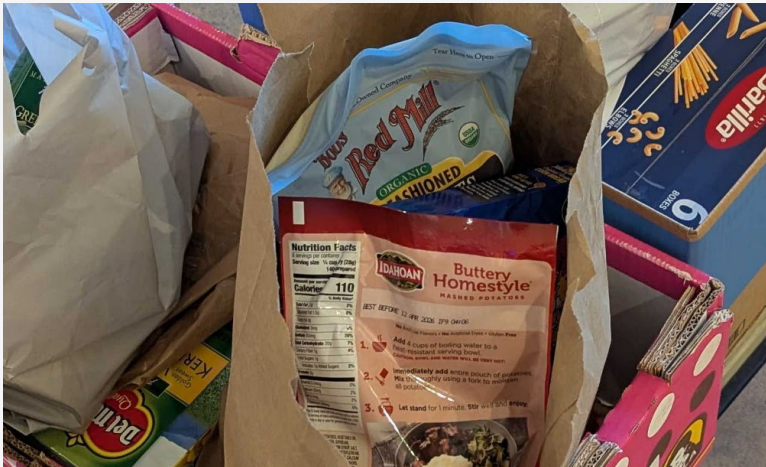
Our Impact On Community

We seek to impact the communities we work in, whether engaging with local suppliers to develop economic growth, working with charities to deliver community benefits, developing experiences that bring communities together, or planning spaces to connect people with each other.

69 Cause-based clients

10 Presentations and webinars delivered to our industries.

146.5 Pro bono hours



Community

CAUSE-BASED WORK

A sample of our non-profit and cause-based clients in 2025 included:

MSCFOUNDATION
m
sc


bethany children's
HEALTH CENTER

AUBURN
OPELIKA
t o u r i s m

CNU
CONGRESS FOR THE
NEW URBANISM

 Orange County
rescue
mission

 Chester
Zoo



 TRILITH
FOUNDATION

 GRANT TOWN™

 NORTHSHORE
.CHURCH

 museum
of the
Bible



Wycliffe®
Foundation

 saddleback church

YouVersion

COMMUNITY

CHARITY DONATION

\$126,000

Donated by the McGowan Partnership Fund to various charities, on behalf of Storyland Studios.



Atlas Free®

CHARITY SPOTLIGHT: One of the organizations supported by these charity donations in 2025 was Atlas Free

Atlas Free is building a global movement that specializes in finding and accelerating the most effective frontline initiatives and creating resources and tools to scale the fight against human trafficking.

Key stats about this organization include:

- They work with over 140 Network Members across 67 countries to fight sex trafficking daily.
- An incredible 1,658,126 people have been impacted through aftercare, prevention, outreach, awareness, and intervention programs since the organisation started in 2012.
- Over 500 unique programs holistically combating trafficking and scaling the global movement.
- 11,613 people set free from human trafficking in 2025 alone
- 227 safe homes operating globally for people to begin to rebuild their lives

COMMUNITY

FOOD DRIVE

In 2025, local food banks were busier than ever.

In October, we led a food drive for Crossroads Christian Church for you – for their amazing program ‘Project Hope’ (formerly the Food Pantry).

Project Hope is a program which walks alongside anyone who is struggling to keep food on their table and is determined to find stability. We collected donations at our Corona head office to deliver to this fantastic cause.

“This was one of those moments where our core value, ‘Elevate and Serve the Needs of Others’ really hit home. A small act of generosity can mean the world to someone who’s struggling and opportunities to donate encourage our team to show up not just for each other, but for our community too.”

RAQUEL RYAN – HR MANAGER, PEOPLE & CULTURE



Community

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL AUBURN OPELIKA

Storyland helped Auburn Opelika Tourism to showcase their city in a new, engaging way, showing visitors how many amazing things Auburn Opelika has to offer.

“We were looking for a way to engage with people, and help them to see Auburn-Opelika differently. We wanted much more than a visitor’s center; we wanted something that would be an attraction itself, to surprise and delight guests from all over the world and inspire exploration, longer stays, and return trips. We wanted to encourage visitors to explore and spend more time engaging with everything our community has to offer.

The Auburn-Opelika Visitor Experience represents a meaningful milestone and reflects a significant investment in the future of tourism in Auburn Opelika. For many years, we operated from a space that did not support our needs, so moving into the Chamber of Commerce building, and being able to incorporate this experience within it, was an important step forward in our growth and development. It brought new energy to Auburn-Opelika Tourism and created a sense of excitement and pride among stakeholders and the wider community.

The journey to delivery required a strong commitment from our board, particularly as the project evolved. Continuing with that investment was not always easy, but it reflected our belief in what the experience could achieve.”



Auburn Opelika Tourism

Community

CLIENT TESTIMONIAL AUBURN OPELIKA



Auburn Opelika Tourism

Seeing people encounter the space for the first time, their sense of joy and engagement, demonstrated how effectively the experience brings ideas to life.

One of our mayors came into the experience on opening day and stood watching the first interaction - the lights dimmed, the video began, and he was visibly in awe, eyes wide, momentarily speechless. He simply said, *"I can't believe we have this here. I can't believe you did this."*

A key part of the experience is how it reflects our local heritage. It highlights stories and perspectives that are not widely known or easily found, allowing us to share more of the depth and character of Auburn-Opelika. In doing so, it encourages visitors to look beyond the surface and connect more meaningfully with the destination.

We also placed importance on ensuring the space would be sustainable over time. The systems and technologies used throughout the experience have been designed to be highly energy efficient, supporting responsible operation as we continue to welcome visitors.

The collaborative nature of the project played an important role in its success. The responsiveness, care, and strong working relationships developed between Auburn-Opelika Tourism and Storyland were meaningful to us and contributed to a positive overall experience as we worked as partners to deliver something of lasting value for our community.

ROBYN L. BRIDGES | PRESIDENT & CEO | AUBURN-OPELIKA TOURISM



MEL MCGOWAN

CNU BOARD DIRECTOR

In April 2025, we were delighted to celebrate Co-founder and Chief Creative Officer Mel McGowan, AICP, DBIA, LEED AP, being appointed to Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU)'s Board of Directors.

The Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the design of cities and towns to create stronger, healthier communities. For more than 30 years, CNU has brought together professionals and advocates who support better urban development. Through practical design principles and community action, CNU helps people create places that are more sustainable, accessible, and equitable.

"I'm thankful for the opportunity to give back to this community and its leadership. "This multidisciplinary approach is the only way to really make things happen. It's not just about an architect with a better design or better vision. You've got to be about economics, politics, design, and vision casting. And that models the approach Storyland is founded on, as well."

"Storytelling is the foundation — that shared reality and collective vision of what the future should be."

Mel McGowan, Co-Founder and CCO, Storyland Studios

Planet



Our Impact On The Planet

We want to have a positive impact on the planet and encourage others to do the same.

Whether that's through our own, internal footprint, or developing sustainable designs that enable clients to have a positive impact. Our commitment to sustainable design isn't just a goal; it's embedded in everything we do.

24.4 metric tons of carbon (scope 1+2 2025)

3 Thought-leadership presentations relating to the environment.

4 Lasting Impact interviews



Planet

OUR CARBON FOOTPRINT

Storyland Studios has committed to tracking and reducing its carbon emissions across its business. Currently, our scope 1 and 2 emissions are 24.4 Total metric tons of CO₂e in 2025 (Scope 1 & 2). This represents a decrease of 24.2%, against our 2024 baseline year.

This is a low level of emissions for a business of our size, achieved by:

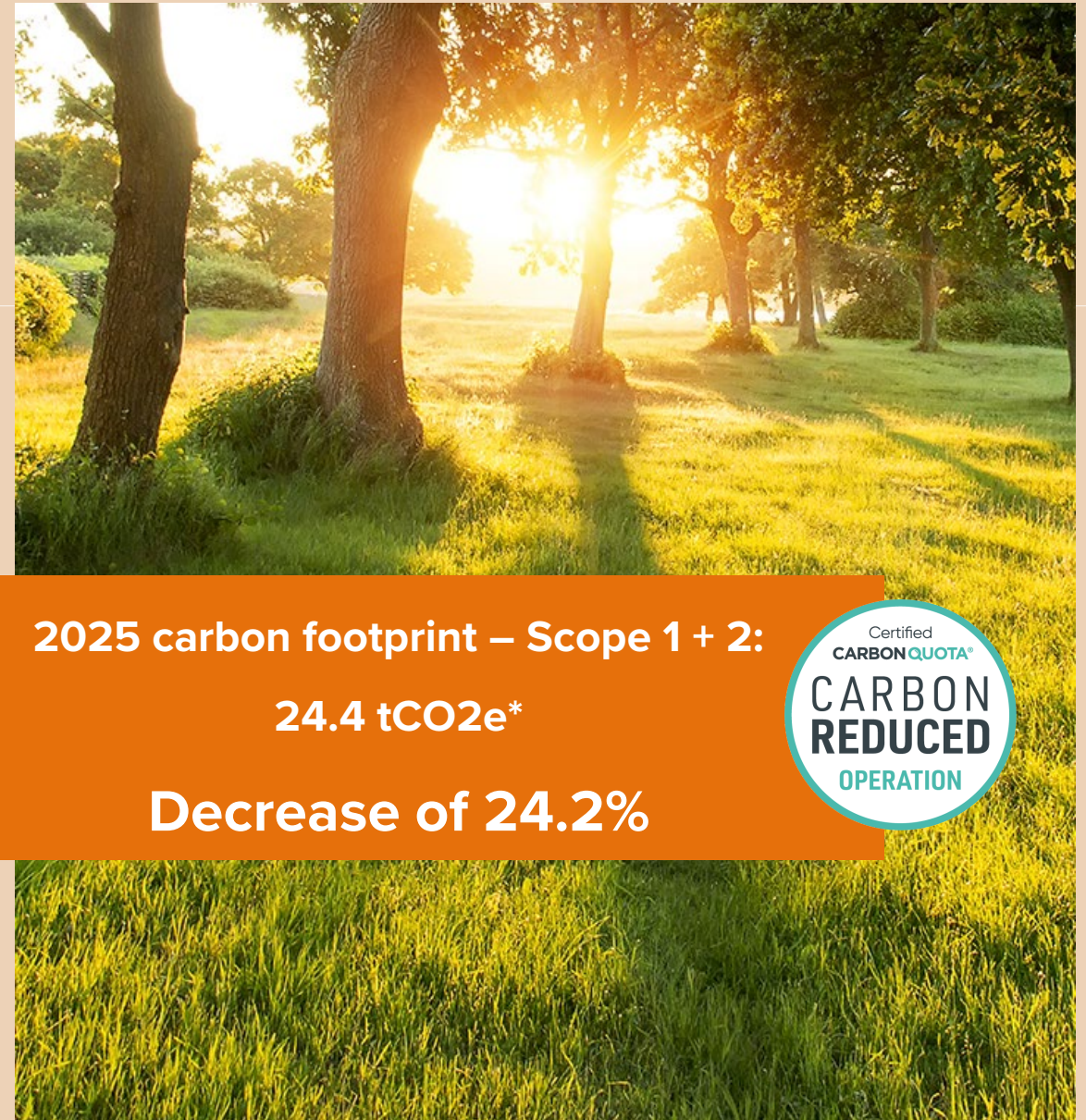
- Remote and hybrid working policy
- Electric company cars
- Reduced need for air conditioningg refrigerant

We are working with CarbonQuota to measure and reduce our carbon footprint (Certified: CarbonQuota 2025).

NOTES

- *Reported emissions exclude two company-owned vehicles identified in 2026, as insufficient historical data prevented retrospective estimation.*
- *The 2024 Scope 1 and 2 emissions figure has been restated from 34.2 tCO₂e following correction of utility data attributed to an incorrect location. The revised figure for 2024 is. 32.2 for market based emissions.*

**The carbon footprint is reported using the market-based methodology.*



Planet

SPOTLIGHT ON THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

In May 2025, our Chief Creative Officer, Mel McGowan, and Director of Project Development, Marie Rayner, presented at the SATE conference at Blackpool Pleasure Beach, contributing to industry dialogue on the future of sustainable placemaking.

Drawing on New Urbanism principles and sustainable design practices, the session examined how thoughtful, long-term design can create immersive destinations that are environmentally responsible, socially valuable and built for lasting impact.



SATE Europe

Planet

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: MSC FOUNDATION

Storyland Studios is collaborating with MSC Cruises and the MSC Foundation to design a new pavilion at the Marine Conservation Center on Ocean Cay in The Bahamas.

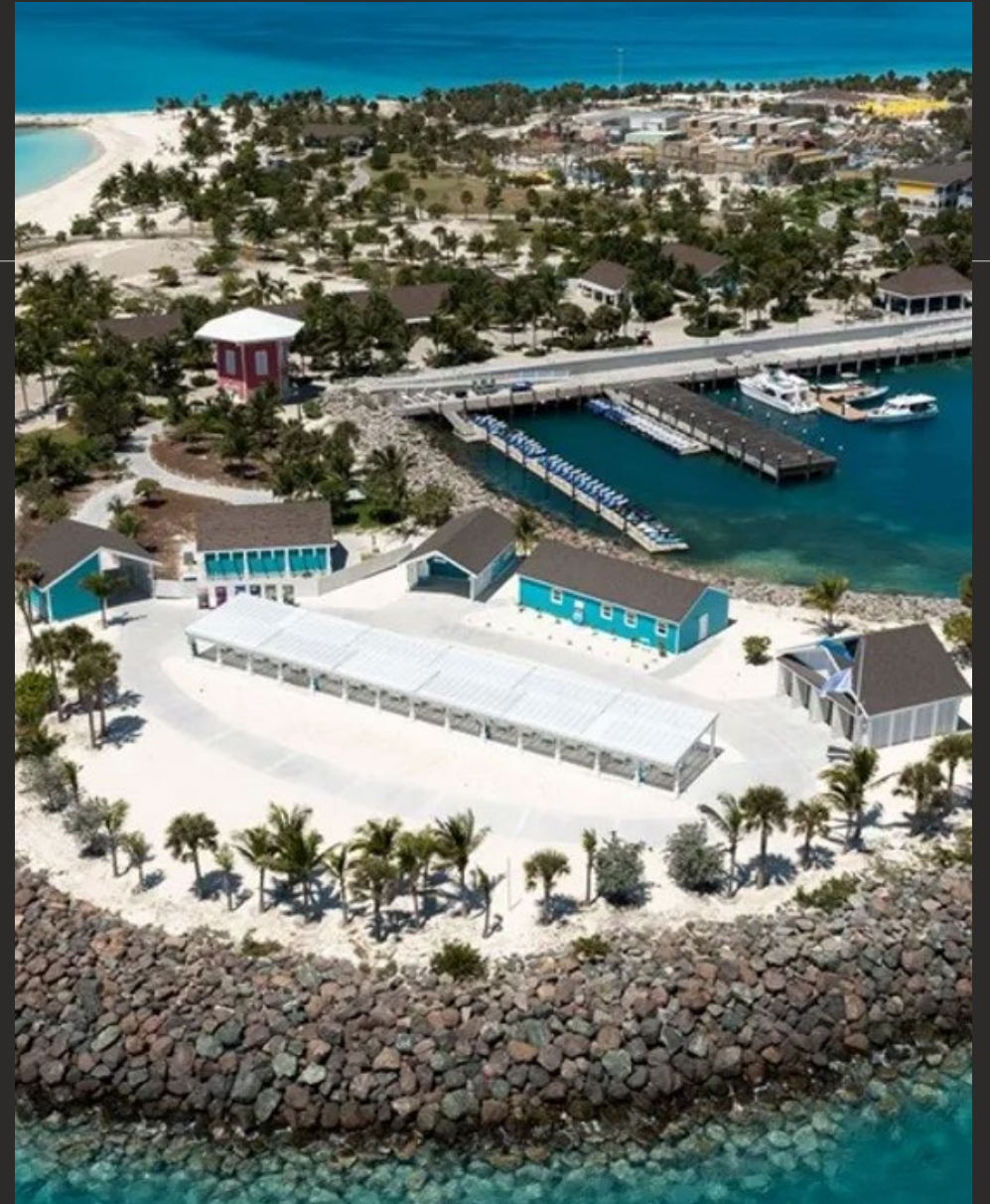
The MSC Foundation's Marine Conservation Center opened in April and serves as a base for biologists, scientists, students, and island visitors. The facility includes interactive pavilions, a lecture hall, a Bio Lab, and a land-based coral nursery.

The Center is the base for the MSC Foundation's Super Coral Reefs Programme and also offers educational opportunities for guests to explore the significance of the marine ecosystem and the vital need to conserve coral reefs.

"We are deeply aligned with the MSC Foundation's vision to restore the balance between people and nature,."

"This isn't just about building a facility; it's about designing a beacon for ocean stewardship. Our goal is to create a space that emotionally connects every visitor to the urgency and beauty of marine conservation, empowering them to become advocates for our planet's future."

Sean Featonby, Director Of Business Development at Storyland Studios.



Planet

THOUGHT LEADERSHIP + STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

In 2025, we conducted four Lasting Impact interviews, capturing inspiring stories from across the themed entertainment and architecture industry. Spanning resorts, repurposed malls, and theme parks, these insightful discussions offered a first-hand perspective on the challenges and successes faced by those addressing climate change every day.



“Sustainability isn’t about what we can do as individuals, it’s about what we can do together, and our Bluestone blueprint really feeds into this idea of sharing and learning and not being territorial.”

Marten Lewis - Director of Sustainability at Bluestone National Park Resort in Wales



“...together we can have the biggest impact possible. We will all benefit from these efforts because in the end, we all share the same planet.”

Javier Luengo Oroz - Head of Environmental Sustainability at Parques Reunidos



“We have this absolutely amazing opportunity to really be entertainment for everybody, to really create a positive impact on people, because we leave nobody behind.”

Choni Fernandez, Chief Sustainability Officer at Port Aventura



“The most valuable asset in our state is not oil and gas or sports teams, it’s our children! Brilliant potential leaders, pastors, doctors, parents, teachers, astronauts - as long as we’re wise and we invest.”

Chris Brewster, Board Chair for the Crossroads Renewal Project

Planet

KEY TRENDS

Environmental performance is rapidly shifting from a "back-of-house" consideration to a front-of-house focus. As investors increasingly scrutinize environmental performance, sustainable design can support broader ESG objectives and reporting requirements while creating opportunities for innovation and differentiation.

Leading destinations - including theme parks, attractions, and public spaces - are now using sustainability as a design narrative, operational strategy, and brand differentiator.

The three major themes we see as critical over the next 12 months include:



**SUSTAINABLE
DESIGN AS
VISIBLE
STORYTELLING**



**BIODIVERSITY
AS AN ASSET**



**EXTREME
WEATHER AS
A DESIGN
PARAMETER**

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AS VISIBLE STORYTELLING

Making sustainability visible helps visitors to understand the actions being taken, demonstrates ‘what is possible’, and creates opportunities for engagement. Transparency can shift sustainability from a hidden operational function into part of the visitor experience, helping us to have the biggest possible influence in encouraging others to improve their own lasting impact.

Sustainable features can also become attractions in their own right, enhancing the overall appeal of the destination. Whether it's a sensory garden, a rainwater-fed splash play area, a canopy walk, or a nature-based boat ride, environmental infrastructure can also serve as visitor-facing entertainment.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



SUSTAINABLE DESIGN AS VISIBLE STORYTELLING

We can incorporate sustainability as a visible feature of the design through:

- **Participation:** Use sustainability systems as part of the attraction experience e.g. kinetic flooring that powers lighting, visible renewable energy systems, or interactive exhibits that demonstrate water recycling and resource efficiency.
- **Materials Use:** Innovative materials can play an important role in both reducing environmental impact and reinforcing a project's sustainability narrative. Examples include self-healing concrete, living walls, compacted earth construction, and materials manufactured from recycled textiles. When thoughtfully integrated into the design, these materials can become a compelling part of your sustainability narrative and something that makes your destination unique.
- **Education:** As guests become more environmentally aware, there is growing interest in how attractions operate behind the scenes. Opening up sustainability initiatives, from water treatment and renewable energy systems to biodiversity enhancement programs, helps turn hidden infrastructure into learning opportunities.
- **Guidance:** Show visitors your journey - let them know how they can be involved with a clear call to action that pushes the impact of sustainability activity beyond the boundaries of the destination.
- **Gamification:** As attractions seek new ways to engage environmentally conscious audiences, sustainability can be integrated into loyalty programs and digital experiences. Rewarding positive behaviors through points, achievements, and exclusive access helps to transform sustainability into an engaging part of the visitor journey.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



BIODIVERSITY AS AN ASSET

Biodiversity plays a critical role in supporting ecosystem health, climate adaptation, carbon storage, water management, and long-term environmental resilience.

Legislation supporting and regulating how this biodiversity becomes embedded in projects is becoming more and more stringent, and extinction rates across the UK, EU and USA far exceed natural baselines.

Biodiversity should be viewed as natural capital rather than a cost. Well-designed ecosystems can contribute to climate resilience, reduce maintenance requirements, improve visitor comfort, and enhance visitor perception of a destination.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



BIODIVERSITY AS AN ASSET

Biodiversity as an asset can include:

- **Placemaking:** We can create iconic spaces with biodiversity - from distinctive planting palettes and habitat creation to locally inspired landscapes, we can create places with a stronger sense of identity.
- **Visitor Comfort:** Trees and plant life can create cooler temperatures, shade, shelter and natural water traps, all of which supports comfort levels. Studies consistently show that urban green infrastructure can lower both air and surface temperatures, improving comfort during warm weather.
- **Visitor Engagement:** Biodiversity is an excellent tool for engaging visitors in your sustainability narrative. Combining education talks, scavenger hunts, nature walks, and even night time wildlife experiences – biodiversity can add capacity and interest to a destination. Biodiversity can become a differentiator for your destination, and in doing so, can have a big influence on visitor awareness, knowledge, and actions.
- **Climate Resilience:** Biodiversity can act as functional infrastructure, helping mitigate flooding, reduce urban heat, improve water retention, enhance soil stability, and support ecosystem recovery following extreme weather events.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



EXTREME WEATHER AS A DESIGN PARAMETER

As climate patterns become more unpredictable, attractions and public spaces must be designed to maintain visitor comfort, safety and operational continuity under a wider range of weather conditions.

Extreme Heat: In addition to biodiversity measures such as trees and plants to provide shade and a cooling effect, we need to be prepared to increase opportunities for shaded, cooled and climate-controlled experiences. Looking to destinations such as Abu Dhabi and Dubai, where year-round theme parks and attractions operate in indoor spaces, this level of immersive shelter may become necessary as countries across the world facing increasingly frequent and intense heatwaves.

Flood Management: Innovations to manage flooding abound in urban design and theme parks/attractions, but they are becoming even more critical as flash floods increase. Design elements such as rain gardens, bioswales, retention ponds, permeable paving and multi-functional water plazas have uses across both civic and entertainment landscapes. In addition to preventing flood damage, designing for flood prevention also helps to reduce operational disruption/downtime and improves visitor comfort during heavy rainfall events.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



EXTREME WEATHER AS A DESIGN PARAMETER

Droughts: Water conservation will become increasingly important as droughts become more frequent. Measures such as rainwater harvesting, water recycling, and smart distribution systems can help reduce reliance on freshwater supplies. Landscapes can also be designed to cope with drier conditions through healthy soils, native and drought-tolerant planting, deep-rooted trees and shrubs, and efficient irrigation systems. Combined with features such as bioswales and permeable paving, these approaches help capture, store, and make the most of available rainfall.

Wind/Storms: High winds can damage infrastructure and affect visitor comfort. Careful design of signage, canopies, and other exposed elements is essential. Landscape buffers, layered planting, and thoughtful building arrangements can help reduce wind speeds, minimize wind tunnel effects, and create more comfortable outdoor spaces.

From a visitor perspective, creating shelter for including sheltered courtyards, protected seating, and sunken gardens, along with enclosed viewing areas provide respite.

Planet

TRENDS FOR THE FUTURE



EXTREME WEATHER AS A DESIGN PARAMETER

Fire: As wildfire risk increases in many regions, resilience should be built into both landscape and building design. Preventative measures can help reduce fire spread and minimize damage, including:

- Creating defensible spaces around buildings using vegetation-free zones and low-flammability planting.
- Using irrigated green buffers and fire-resistant groundcovers to help slow the spread of fire.
- Designing buildings and structures to withstand ember attack and radiant heat through features such as non-combustible cladding, fire-rated roofing materials, and tempered glazing.

These measures not only protect assets and infrastructure but can also improve safety for visitors and staff during extreme weather events.



2025