



Proceedings

SRRR Virtual Workshop March 21, 2023 White House Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge Centering Indigenous Knowledge in Federal Decision-Making on Land, Forests, Water and People

Link to the Video <https://youtu.be/EmZSxDSnN4Q>

Message from Robin Wall Kimmerer, Author *Braiding Sweetgrass*

Bringing people together around these important ideas will help advance our shared efforts on behalf of land and people. I'm grateful for your work; we are all called to acts of reciprocity with the living world and I'm glad we're in this together. I wish you all the best for the gathering.

Statement from Thomas Banyacya Jr, Kykotsmovi Village, Arizona

Firstly, thank you for your lifework. Kwa'kwai.

In the Hopi language Hopi refer to themselves as senom. People. The word Hopi is an adjective, meaning the concept and human actions of a positive, correct cosmological stance. The application and maintenance of that correct cosmological stance simplifies individuals' facility and agency to produce a sustainable and equitable life ethic and behavior. In Hopi ka-hopi describes the intentional or unintentional failure of individuals and groups to act and maintain a positive and correct cosmological stance with the resulting subsequent behavior malfunctions and destruction of biosystems and life.

The continuum that is called time, is life: cycles of cosmic systems that directly influence and impact human understanding and assessment of decisions that need to be made for the wellbeing and maintenance of human and all life.

The necessity to create equitable and sustainable alternatives to current dominant cultural and political human system defaults and practices is critical in order to produce a protocol for establishing proper and durable relationships between individuals, communities, governments, nations and the natural world, the cosmos. Thank you. Kwa'kwai.

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Opening Prayer: Grace Smith Yellowhammer



Thank you David, for inviting us.

First, I would like to introduce myself. My Navaho Diné name is Morning Star. My grandmother named me.

I was working in California when I was asked to come home to Arizona for a meeting with traditional chiefs and others invited by the Hopi. Leaders of different tribes wanted to choose someone to go to the United Nations. I was sitting way in the back with my mom and they pointed at me. I thought it was someone sitting behind me. I had never flown before and never been anywhere. My mother told me, “If they say you are chosen, you can't turn them down. These are medicine people. That's how I got involved.

I spoke to the United Nation 15 times including at the Earth Summit. Every time I spoke, I cried - because I needed help, I needed to understand. I was raised in traditional ways by my grandmother, my mother, and my uncle, who were all medicine people. This is how I became involved going to where we were called. That's how indigenous people become leaders in our traditional way of life. I was blessed by different medicine people in many tribes. So now I have a voice. In my own traditional way, I will pray to the Four Directions in my native tongue.

Grace offered a Navajo prayer then said in English: “Thank you to our Great Spirit. You have blessed us from the Four Direction. We pray to our water, Mother Earth. We pray for the four legged beings and for the different nations – Red, White and all colors of people who have arrived where we live. We are indigenous to this land here. We pray every morning, the elders, and the young people have learned how to pray and sing – that’s how they live. We pray for our animals and everything that has life with us. We are all related. We must be thankful for our food that comes from the Four Directions – the Earth and the Spirit.

The climate is changing. In 1972 we met with close to 3000 veterans in Washington, DC because they asked us to be there. They wanted to know so they could be more prepared. for it. We went there and I said a prayer. It has been really hard for us to tell what is been happening on our land as our Mother Earth is dug up for the minerals we call her liver. With our hearts and minds we pray they no longer will open her up. This has been so hard for us. We shed many tears for our people. Now we are together. What a powerful movement. We're sitting here talking to each other. That comes from great spirit, also. Spirit wants us to use in a good way everything we’ve learned. Great Sprit is educating us. You, you did not come on own as a volunteer. You were called. The Great Spirit has asked you to take part. That is why we have environmentalists, leading us in these ways and we join you in our prayers.

My prayer goes to the Four Directions, Great Spirit, we appreciate the love and the health you bless us with. And for my people in the Four Directions - all indigenous people. And also to all non-Indians, you are so kind hearted. You have been loving. Show your love respect to my people. We appreciate each one of you and I thank you.



Introduction: White House Indigenous Guidance for Federal Agencies

Recognizing the value of Indigenous Knowledge for managing lands, forests, rivers and sea, addressing a changing climate & more, the Office of Science & Technology & Council of Environmental Quality, released a guidance report in November, 2022 directing government agencies to incorporate Indigenous Knowledge into research, policies, and decision-making.

<https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/OSTP-CEQ-IK-Guidance.pdf>

“This Guidance is intended to promote and enable a Government-wide effort to improve recognition and inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge. It reaffirms that Agencies should recognize and, as appropriate, apply Indigenous Knowledge in decision making, research, and policies across the Federal Government. This guidance is founded on the understanding that multiple lines of evidence or ways of knowing can lead to better-informed decision making. Agencies should use this guidance to develop an approach to Indigenous Knowledge that is appropriate for the contexts and legal frameworks in which they operate, the Tribes and Indigenous Peoples with whom they partner, and the communities they serve.”

Understanding Indigenous Knowledge:

- Indigenous Knowledge is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by Tribes and Indigenous Peoples through interaction and experience with the environment.
- It is applied to phenomena across biological, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems.
- It can be developed over millennia, continues to develop, and includes understanding based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons, and skills passed from generation to generation.

White House Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge Sections:

- Introduction
- Overview of Indigenous Knowledge
 - Understanding Indigenous Knowledge
 - Indigenous Knowledge as Evidence
 - Illustrative List of Statutes Where Indigenous Knowledge is Relevant
- Growing and Maintaining Relationships
- Applying Indigenous Knowledge
 - Promising Practices in Federal Processes
 - Opportunities to Include Indigenous Knowledge in Federal Contexts

White House Perspective:

Gretchen Goldman, Assistant Director for Environmental Science, Engineering, Policy & Justice

White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP)



Ms. Goldman declared that she was speaking from the Washington, DC region, the ancestral homelands of Anacostia (Nacotchtank) and Piscataway peoples. She led the development of the [guidance for federal agencies on indigenous knowledge](#) that was published in December 2022 jointly by the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP), and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). This guidance was developed through an extensive process that included many perspectives and voices. Why did the White House lead the development and distribution of a government-wide guidance on indigenous knowledge?

First, because it is a good thing to do. The guidance allows for a broader evidence base for federal activities. The Whitehouse had received direct requests from tribal leaders for federal guidance around indigenous knowledge. It was important to have an equitable and inclusive process to develop the guidance. They worked hard to make the guidance readable and easy to understand. They wanted to be clear that they were building on the great work that's been done both in and outside of government.

There are several federal directives to which this guidance is directly responsive:

- [Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government](#), Executive Order 13985, January 20, 2021.
- [Memorandum on Uniform Standards for Tribal Consultation](#) requires agencies to submit detailed plans of action to implement the policies and directives of Executive Order 13175, November 9, 2000.
- [The Tribal Consultation Presidential Memorandum](#), November 30, 2022.

Process of Engagement:

To develop this guidance, the [White House OSTP did an extensive engagement](#) process over a year, engaging more than 100 tribes, more than 1000 individuals and organizations through a variety of meetings and outreach. This is a typical for a White House document. They created a



photo credit: Waiwai Collective

working group that's comprised of more than 25 federal agencies and departments. They conducted three tribal consultations. The last of those tribal consultations shared a draft of the guidance with tribal leaders to get input on the way that the guidance would be framed and the language and the scope and inclusion. They held two Hawaiian and Pacific Islander roundtables and a native and indigenous youth roundtable. And they held a public listening session in addition to taking written comments from the public and tribal leaders. They

released the guidance last year at the [White House Tribal Nations Summit](#) November 30 – December 1, 2022. Included in that package was the guidance itself for federal agencies and

departments, and an implementation memorandum from the director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, and the Council on Environmental Quality chair.

The document begins with an in-depth understanding of indigenous knowledge. Indigenous knowledge is a body of observations, oral and written knowledge, innovations, practices, and beliefs developed by tribes and indigenous people through interaction and experience with the

environment. It's applied to phenomena across biological, physical, social, cultural, and spiritual systems. And it can be developed over millennia, it continues to develop and includes understanding based on evidence acquired through direct contact with the environment, and long-term experiences, as well as extensive observations, lessons and skills passed from generation to generation. Indigenous knowledge is often place-based and may differ accordingly.



Next, the guidance addresses several contexts around federal activities because the audience for the guidance is federal employees, they wanted to really have a lot of content about exactly how this would apply in contexts in which people are working and thinking about what it is. What does it mean for what they do? Their intent is to stimulate action to integrate indigenous knowledge into federal policies, practices and actions. The guidance describes promising practices for including indigenous knowledge in federal processes, and how to appropriately engage around sensitive indigenous knowledge. This includes thinking about navigating that in the context of federal disclosure requirements and obligations that federal employees have around data and sharing and public access to information. Some indigenous knowledge is closely held, so may come in conflict with public disclosure standards.

The guidance addresses more specifically about many kinds of federal activities, including federal rulemaking, research, design, and conducting of research, grant-making and other federal funding opportunities, as well as highly influential scientific assessments, which is a specific legal category of types of documents. An example you might have heard of is the National Climate Assessment. The guidance addresses indigenous knowledge in the context of regulatory activities. There are several places in federal regulation where indigenous knowledge can and should be included when appropriate. It also describes different statutory Act requirements where indigenous knowledge may be relevant.

The first appendix includes examples of times where indigenous knowledge was included, and there was collaboration between the federal government and tribes and indigenous peoples. These are short examples, but they wanted to make sure to show how this can be done, how it can be done well. What does it really look like to think about this in the context of federal activities? These were all written to reflect both the federal perspective, as well as the perspective of the tribe or indigenous community that was involved in that example. They wanted to make sure that they were using examples where the outcome of the partnership was mutually beneficial. With the guidance release, they included an implementation memorandum about how they wanted the guidance to be used, asking federal agencies to implement it. One step was to establish a subcommittee on indigenous knowledge under the National Science and

Technology Council. OSTP created a standing group at the White House level that is orchestrating this across agencies and working with agencies to implement the guidance more thoroughly. To create a community of practice and help to advance this work, they work with the White House Council on Native American Affairs whose mission is to lead collaborative inter-agency work across the Executive Branch for regular and meaningful Tribal-Federal engagement, and to foster an all-of-government approach in meeting treaty and trust obligations to Tribes. Agencies are requested to make progress reports due on May 30, 2023. This provides an opportunity to look at progress and to identify issues to help us move forward to get the guidance implemented across the government. They see this as the first step in advancing this across the government. They are looking forward to implementation and seeing how far they can advance this in the future to make sure that indigenous knowledge can be recognized and included and elevated wherever possible.

Question from Marianna Grossman, Respondent: I was very moved by all the work you did to include indigenous people in the conversation about creating the, the guidance, and I noticed that you mentioned about sensitive knowledge. There certainly parts of indigenous knowledge from my superficial understanding that are, ceremonies and other knowledge that that's kind of private. It is an interesting bridge to build. How do you practically introduce that knowledge? The guidance recognizes that there are lots of different types of indigenous knowledge and perspectives, depending on what groups or tribes are participating. So it's not like there's one kind of received information that's the same everywhere. How do you manage that relationship between the sensitive information and the variety of information to come up with a policy that federal employees can actually implement?

Gretchen Goldman: We thought a lot about this while we were developing the guidance, because of those broad ranges of contexts in which this could happen, and the different agency processes and the different kinds of knowledge and the different levels of sensitivity. The guidance is necessarily pretty high level. It's giving best practices, things to think about, here's the broad context in which this exists, and where you might think about how it applies at your agency. Because it would be hard right to get into those kinds of details. And it would almost certainly not apply to the whole government. We think of this as the foundation that is laying the groundwork for agencies to take the steps to decide how that works at their agency and works with tribes and indigenous communities to decide what makes sense in the different contexts. That is one reason why the implementation of this is really important. We didn't want to be too prescriptive on some of those things that are going to really be different in different places. There is a lot of opportunity now to think about, what does this actually look like at agencies? What were the places where we see real opportunities to advance this, that might not be happening now?

With respect to the sensitivity of indigenous knowledge, I think it is a real challenge when we think about federal work. We wanted to acknowledge when we are subject to Freedom of Information Act and other open records laws that require disclosure of information. In thinking about this topic there is more work to do to think about how can we address that in this in these spaces, so people have a sense of opportunities here? I think, one option is to think about what is possible in a particular context. I think there are many contexts where I or any federal employee doesn't need to know the details of the knowledge for it to be considered in a process. One example is around different kinds of permitting where sacred sites are located. I don't need to know what is sacred about that site. But if you can create a process where it is recognized, and it

is respected, if a tribe tells a federal employee who is making a decision that this is an area that is important to us, if that could be sufficient to move the process and respect that. Are there ways to navigate the process where there doesn't need to be disclosure of things that that people don't want to disclose?

Question from Marianna Grossman, Respondent: And I think one of the things that I've seen is that there can be real conflicts between traditional practices and needs and for example, pumped hydro or putting solar or wind into sacred lands. You are putting in roads, disturbing the landscape, changing migratory patterns for plants and animals and insects and for the human beings who are using those lands. So how do you deal with a conflict between Native practices and needs like on the Columbia River where there's a pumped hydro would destroy a sacred site? How do you balance those conflicts?

Gretchen Goldman: Those are the big challenges, right? How we think about that. You mentioned a lot of renewables. But I think it's also important to note, I mean, that's how there's been a ton of those challenges forever on all kinds of extractive industries and fossil fuel development efforts. We need to do better. We need to think about how to balance these different efforts. There are broader conversations at the federal level, and other levels of government and thinking about what it looks like to reform how we make those decisions around permits and building. It is something that we're going to figure out. In the guidance, we do talk about the process by which you engage with tribes around these kinds of issues at a high level. So, making sure that there's early engagement, that there's frequent engagement, that there's opportunities for exchange of information, both directions, and that these conversations are relationship-building is really a key component of it. It isn't just something that is suddenly dropped on a community that they didn't know about. So, I think there are a lot of opportunities to be more transparent about what's happening, to be clear about things that are coming. We need to continue working on how to address those really tough ones.

Question from Marianna Grossman, Respondent: I'm curious, how does this propagate through the government? How do the federal government agencies find out about this guidance? And how do they learn how to integrate it and what they do? And not, as one of questioners asked in the hierarchical style where the government says, "we are here to help and we're going to be all groovy" But how are true partnerships established?

Gretchen Goldman: Yes, the guidance has been formally transmitted. We have been doing a lot of education and awareness building across federal agencies. It is being reinforced through several actions by the White House Council on Native American Affairs and other parts of the government that do that cross-agency coordination. We still have more than 25 federal agencies and departments engaged on this. It is a process. The government is not always known for being the fastest on things. But I'm confident we're going to get this implemented across federal agencies as it as we build more awareness and institutionalization new practices.

Marianna Grossman, Respondent: I'm personally extremely excited to see this guidance happening. And I'm deeply appreciative of your thorough and caring work. The number of people on this seminar is a testament to how important this work is. Thank you so much.

Questions from the Chat:

Question: The Guidance recommends training for employees - is there a PPT available with the key points of each section of the guidance we could use to share out with our colleagues?

Answer: Yes. Gretchen Goldman's PowerPoint deck is available as a pdf as part of these proceedings.

OSTP is developing training materials on the Guidance and how agencies can integrate it into their policies and practices. How do you plan to monitor agency/tribal progress in this?

How do we make sure to not continue implying power dynamics when we talk about inclusion? this seems to continue the hierarchy of Indigenous Knowledge being less valuable than Western Science.

How are the best practices of free, prior, informed consent being be integrated into the guidance?

It seems a little disjointed if the agencies have discretion on how this guidance should be taken into consideration. Perhaps to help this guidance along is to it needs to parallel consultation in the form where tribes are influential to decision making

Are there broad guidelines in the guidance around ESG investing at all levels?

How do you recognize and value the different ways in which knowledge is generated? Especially in an era where knowledge is concentrated in citation indexes, twitter amplifications, and google links?

Federal agencies working in Minnesota recently approved a pipeline across tribal lands without their approval. It doesn't seem like anything has changed.

Some thoughts on sacred: An aspect in our natural world (including the larger cosmos) that is felt or believed to be of a higher order of functional good. It is something whose higher order functionality we dare not undercut or we may suffer consequences we can't imagine at the moment. Under this definition a carrying capacity limit can be called sacred. The functionality of a carrying capacity limit should be honored.

Indigenous Knowledge in Federal Activities

Applying Indigenous Knowledge in Federal Contexts

- Promising practices for inclusion of Indigenous Knowledge in Federal processes
- Appropriately engaging around sensitive Indigenous Knowledge

Including Indigenous Knowledge in Federal Research, Policy, and Decision making

- Rulemaking
- Research Design
- Grant making and other Federal Funding Opportunities
- Highly Influential Scientific Assessments, e.g. The National Climate Assessment

Indigenous Knowledge in Regulatory Activities

Application in Specific Statutory Contexts

- Endangered Species Act
- National Environmental Policy Act
- Marine Mammal Protection Act
- Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act
- Information Quality Act
- Evidence Act
- National Historic Preservation Act
- Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

Guidance Implementation Memorandum

Establishment of the Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge under the National Science and Technology Council

- Tasked with coordinating Guidance implementation with the White House Council on Native American Affairs
- Serve as a community of practice and shared learning space for agencies
- Continue work to elevating Indigenous Knowledge in Federal decision making.
- Agency progress reports on guidance implementation due in 180 days (May 30, 2023)
 - NSTC Subcommittee on Indigenous Knowledge will use progress reports to identify and help address cross-cutting challenges and coordinate implementation



White House Tribal Nations Summit
2022 [White House Tribal Nations](#) Summit on
November 30th and December 1st, 2022



Indigenous Knowledge in Global Climate
Science, Policy, and Action
(COP27 11/15/22)

Felicia Wright, Deputy Director, American Indian Environmental Office, Office of International and Tribal Affairs, EPA.

Felicia Wright thanked the group for the opportunity to talk about EPA's plans following the release of this guidance. EPA is committed to and supportive of this guidance. She believes that it helps EPA invigorate and coalesce along with the rest of the federal government to continue looking at indigenous knowledge and doing it in the right way.

There is a strong and natural tie between EPA and indigenous knowledge. The high level approach of the guidance sets a great framework to deepen the work within EPA, particularly including indigenous knowledge in research and decision making.

EPA is a regulatory agency with a mission to protect human health and the environment, and has different functions from some of the other federal agencies. It is still formalizing how to apply and promote the indigenous knowledge guidance to its work. As a starting point, they are looking at past examples of how indigenous knowledge informed EPA policy and decisions, and discuss what this can teach more broadly into the future.

One of the first things the American Indian Environmental Office is doing is developing training to encourage the application of indigenous knowledge agency wide, in a careful, consistent and respectful manner. At EPA, many people are not familiar with these ideas, and others, especially our tribal employees, have a deeper knowledge.

EPA is striving to create an understanding of the diversity that exists between and within tribes, emphasizing the importance of honest and transparent communication.

EPA RULEMAKING INCORPORATING INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE

Water Quality Standards

Tribal consultations to establish federal baseline water quality standards for Indian reservations

Office of Water developing guidance for the Clean Water Act, Section 106, with a specific section and language supporting indigenous knowledge with respect to water quality standards development, and how it can be supported through the grant program.

Cross Agency, Climate Adaptation Planning,

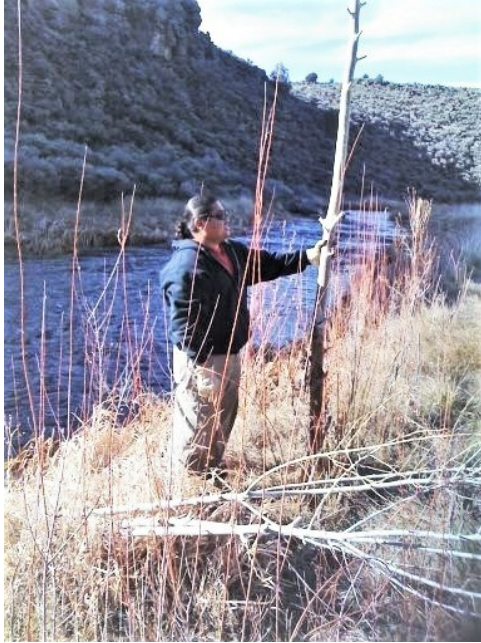
EPA consulted with tribes on the role of indigenous knowledge in addressing climate impacts in finalizing the agency wide climate adaptation implementation plans.

A focus on indigenous knowledge in EPA wide training on climate work.

Tribal Environmental Capacity Building Grant and General Assistance Programs

Several opportunities where tribes can fund indigenous knowledge related activities. Could include:

- tribal beneficial uses for water quality
- gathering cultural knowledge stories from elders to teach the community about environmental protection.
- a tribe developing a process for how it wants to share indigenous knowledge with EPA.



We are working to define, and begin to unpack the meaning and the use of indigenous knowledge and have already heard back from a number of tribes. Some, for example, asking why it should be called indigenous knowledge and not indigenous science? EPA will need to identify what it means within the context of the guidance and EPA's work, and to develop a process for receiving it in a consistent way.

Comments from Respondent: Anecita Agustinez, Tribal Policy Advisor, CA Department of Water Resources (DWR): Thank you for that rundown on behalf of EPA. It is so important to see the elevation of indigenous knowledge in the EPA federal space. I know many tribes have treatment as a state. But has there been some thought about the ability to work with state governments and programs? Could there be adoption of the guidance for state implementation?

Felicia Wright: States have an important role in implementing the federal statutes and we have already gotten questions about it. Sharing the training and federal guidance

with other co-regulatory partners will be critical.

Anecita Agustinez: What is the policy in terms of intellectual property, data sovereignty issues?

Felicia Wright: We've been working with EPA's E-Enterprise for the Environment, a collaborative partnership through which EPA, federal, state, and tribal partners work together using a transformative model of shared governance. They look at a variety of issues related to information and the policies around it. Data sovereignty is one of the topics and we'd be happy to report out on it as we gain some traction.

Anecita Agustinez: Has compensation of technical expertise been thought about?

Felicia Wright: We have had discussions around compensating tribal experts. It has to be looked at in the context of what we can do as a federal regulatory agency, what that means.

Anecita Agustinez: I would like to suggest that there might be two-part trainings for federal and state agencies. One on the practical realm of how to address the best practices and establish the guidance and policies. And a parallel training from the tribes themselves to the state and the federal agencies.

Comments from the Chat during Felicia Wright's talk

It is going to take years for non-Tribal & non-Indigenous Peoples to understand, appreciate and respect Indigenous Knowledge/Science. One training, one guidance manual, will not suffice. It is a completely different perspective or worldview and agency staff at every level and the wider public will need to understand that.

As a member of one of EPA's Tribal Partnership Groups, there is a problem with the agency accepting Tribal knowledge without quantification. The general process is for staff to 'listen' but then ignore/dismiss. Will this guidance help to address meaningful inclusion?

A comprehensive training on the understanding of tribal sovereignty should precede any attempt at developing a training on Traditional Knowledge. Appropriate consultation with

sovereign tribal nations has always been a concern for tribes. Enabling someone not fully versed within a specific culture to determine the appropriate use of that Traditional Knowledge has the possibility of demeaning that information.

How do we make sure to not continue implying power dynamics when we talk about inclusion? This seems to continue the hierarchy of Indigenous Knowledge being less valuable than Western knowledge. Is there also a need for an effort to ensure knowledge created outside these relationships - usually driven by commercial interests - will not subordinate the indigenous wisdom of relationships with each other, other species, ecosystems, and our public and private institutions?

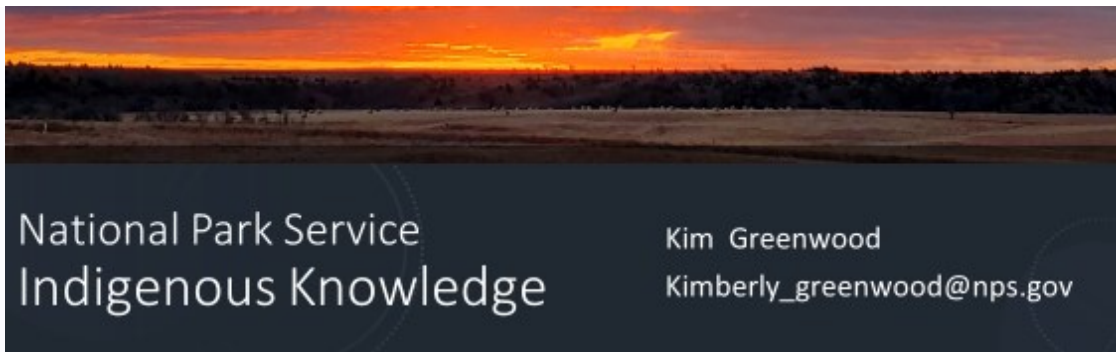
The Tribal reserved rights regulation is very unspecific on who is considered and included. It seems like many California Tribes could be left out due to not having Treaty rights. California also continues to insist that most Tribe's do not have rights. How are agencies going to deal with states such as California where the state has fought to make sure treaties and treaty rights do not exist?

I wonder to what degree the training you're working towards might be designed in a way such that other Agencies (like NOAA) might be able to use it as well. Perhaps there might be segments that can be custom tailored (by different agencies) for their specific needs.

It is not up to State or Federal governments to determine what is TEK. It is a part of who we are as indigenous people

I wish this could be adopted at the state level: "Executive Order 13175 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments) – Directing Federal agencies to engage in meaningful government-to-government consultation with Indian Tribes, provide regulatory and statutory waivers to Indian Tribes to increase flexible policy approaches at the Tribal level, and use consensual mechanisms for developing regulations on issues relating to Tribal self- government, Tribal trust resources, or Indian Tribal treaty and other rights."

It would be helpful/appreciated if there could be a more explicit connection between 1) the soon to be finalized CEQ NEPA guidelines that speak to climate and environmental justice; 2) any upcoming EJ/Justice40/CEJST guidance, and 3) the Environmental Justice Scorecard - to this IK guidance. Examples could be progressing the CEJST tool to address issues that land in non-adjacent areas like tribal headwaters, sacred sites, tribal headwaters, and/or cultural keystone species habitat.



**National Park Service Indigenous Knowledge:
Kin Greenwood, Regional Cultural Anthropologist, NPS**

Kim Greenwood said that she has been talking about traditional/Indigenous ecological knowledge and how to communicate information it to employees for over a decade. When she transferred to the National Park Service (NPS), they formulated this vision with respect to Indigenous knowledge (IK):

National Park Service Vision Regarding Indigenous Knowledge

- To respectfully consider Indigenous Knowledge and collaborate with Indigenous Peoples to the extent they individually desire, to care for these ecosystems (parks).
- Doing so will honor tribal sovereignty, advance self-determination, and initiate healing of historic trauma for removal from ancestral lands.
- Federal employees will gain a greater understanding of the Indigenous Peoples who shaped these lands and learn how they stewarded all that inhabited them.

We acknowledge that our parks sit on ancestral lands of tribes and we have a robust tribal consultation process with the Tribes. In addition, we have a cultural anthropology program, where we engage tribes and in processes with the parks. We see the Guidance on IK as a continuation and enhancement of the existing efforts that that we have in place.

We are participating on the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) and Department of the Interior (DOI) committees regarding Indigenous Knowledge. We plan to roll out a National Park Service Indigenous Knowledge community of practice. This is an opportunity to involve the anthropologists in the Park Service and the western scientists in the Natural Resources programs at our parks and in our regions. Dorothy Fire Cloud, the NPS National Native American Liaison is planning to initiate consultation on our plant gathering regulations. We will consult with the Tribes to see what is working well, what is not working so well and how we can change regulations with Indigenous knowledge to make the process work better.

In three years, we plan to develop National Park Service-specific Indigenous knowledge guidance and training with the assistance of Indigenous peoples after the Dept. Of the Interior guidance and trainings have been released. We won't recreate what already has been done but will see if there's anything we need to customize for our particular purposes within our agency.

We define success as Indigenous Knowledge being incorporated throughout all parks, documents and projects within the National Park Service. We look forward to reporting our efforts in the report to OSTP that is due at the end of May. Of the four committees established by the science and technology and policy group, we are actively involved in the Community Learning and

Training Subcommittee. We may engage in other committees as well. For the Department of the Interior Indigenous knowledge group, NPS has been actively involved in the development of the manual chapter. The manual should be released by the end of the year. In addition, the Department of the Interior is anticipating establishing two committees, one to work on specific guidance for learning and engaging with Indigenous peoples with Indigenous knowledge and another that will involve training of our employees. It is agreed by everybody on these committees that we want to involve Indigenous scholars in these processes.

We have a website that serves as a repository of information about Indigenous knowledge that is open for anyone to contribute information as well as to use as a resource. We look forward to seeing how we can use that in our later efforts.



NPS - Concerns

Respect for Indigenous Peoples decisions without pressure. Obtaining Free Prior and Informed Consent

Reciprocity for paying tribal elders/knowledge holders for their subject matter expertise

Protection of knowledge / Freedom of Information Act

We have three primary concerns as shown in the slide above. The third point on the protection of knowledge is a concern because we must comply with the Freedom of Information Act, which is important for transparency of government processes and decision making. Although, at times, this may make it so that Indigenous peoples may not be able to share as much information as they would like with regards to the different projects taking place on national parks.

NPS Implementation

Sweetgrass @ Acadia

Cultural burning @ Sequoia Kings Canyon

Elk herds @ Redwoods

Deer grass/white root sedge @ Pinnacles



David Rheinheimer, Colorado River Board of California Respondent: Thank you, Kim for that great overview of what you've done. It seems you have a long history of working with the tribes. In the comments are some questions about efficacy. I'm interested in the lessons learned that you might be able to contribute to this process. I want to ask if you see any opportunities in this Guidance that might push the Park Service to integrate IK beyond what you've already done?

Kim Greenwood: Memos are coming from OSTP, from DOI, and from within the National Park Service that are definitely indicators to parks, to regional management, and to the NPS as a

whole that remind us that we have Indigenous peoples to collaborate with who can help us with these processes. We have partners out there who can help us and who better than the Indigenous peoples who managed this land for thousands of years before NPS was created.

David Berry: Let me echo David Rheinheimer's thanks, Kim. We're early in this process for the federal agencies so I salute those who joined us to provide us with a window on their process and their priorities and their commitments to have this be valuable input to policymaking. And I'm finding that significant and moving.

Comments from the Chat during Kim Greenwood's talk

Cesar Montez: click => <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/tek/index.htm>

J Dallas Gudgell: TEK guidance is nice. How about "actual" land management. Is there meaningful movement toward official tribal government(s) Co-Stewardship management or Co-Management of federal lands with federal agencies? TEK appears to speak directly to co-stewardship management of federal lands. Tribal management together with DOI and USDA for health of ecosystems rather than arbitrary boundaries - state, county, NPS parks etc. One example: The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem with bears, wolves, bison and other wildlife whose habitat is both Park Service and Forest Service.

John Wells: What do we do when IK information and advice goes against, a community's local economic development goals? How can Agencies navigate conflicting directions?

Thomas Banyacya Jr: Being involved deeply in these issues for many years, Thomas would like to let those who may be interested know that he is available as a consultant and facilitator for these areas and issues. Contact: thomasbanyacyajr@gmail.com

Suzanne Fluharty- USA, NTTC: But what about protection of actions that allow humans on the landscape as stewards- NPS allowing the harvesting of resources? Do you have a timeline when DOI Guidance and Training will be released? Noted your timeline of 3yrs from now establishing NPS training (building upon theirs).

Felicia Wright: What do you think of NPS Approach for EPA's training? Would EPA wait as well using DOI information or generate its own?

Randy Hayes: US State Department/ US Agency for International Development and US Peace Corps do a lot federally on as it pertains to your comment on "worldview trainings" including cross-cultural competencies, diversity and inclusion etc.

Honna Steissberg: Replying to "In work in northern ..." Unfortunately, definitions and legal processes usually are dominated by commercial knowledge...

Suzanne Fluharty- USA, NTTC: Replying to "but what about protection..." too many times, tribal members have been arrested for trespassing.

Eleanor LeCain: How can ANY extraction of fossil fuels etc. in national parks be reconciled with consulting Indigenous Knowledge? How much power is given to Indigenous Knowledge?

Marianna Grossman: How can any federal agency allow oil pipelines across waterways be acceptable on native lands (or anywhere for that matter)?

Reed Robinson, Director Office of Tribal Relations US Forest Service
reed.robinson@usda.gov, 202-384-2558.

Reed Robinson introduced himself as Lakota from Sicangu, otherwise known as the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. He greeted the group with the observation that it was the first day after the spring equinox, and that the Spring Equinox is important to indigenous people all over the world.

He sees the new guidance as providing an opportunity for the federal government to understand indigenous knowledge in a different way. If you are a federal employee, you swore an oath to protect the Constitution of the United States. Article Six of the Constitution states that treaties are the supreme law of the land, and Robinson noted that there is plenty of information on traditional knowledge in those treaties. But in order for indigenous knowledge to take hold in these agencies, a lot of education will be needed.



WITAYAS

DIRECTORATE

Directs Office of Tribal Relations and collaborates with other Executive Branch organizations

CO-STEWARDSHIP

Manages partnerships and oversees execution of Tribal authorities

OPERATIONS

Establishes and maintains Washington Office relationships

ENGAGEMENT

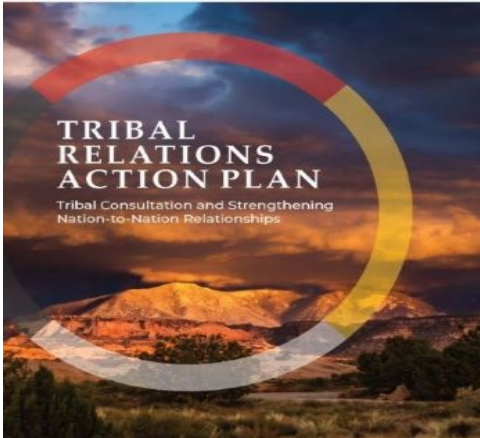
Establishes and maintains relationships with regions, field units, Tribes, and the public

The Forest Service Office of Tribal Relations is organized using the idea of Witaya, “group” in Lakota. The structure is to ensure that they are not siloed as an organization, that everything's connected, and they are working together. The Office has also incorporated the virtues of compassion, courage, gratitude, honesty, humility, wisdom and respect.

The Forest Service has around 130 pages of policy that were put in place in 2016. And within that policy, there is already a good start on an agency perspective, and implementation of IK: Indigenous Knowledge, or TEK: Traditional Ecological Knowledge. They also have an app that anyone can use to find the laws and policies, including the cultural and heritage cooperation authority, which protects tribal knowledge, as well as laws that protects tribal knowledge against FOIA. It is available through Google, Apple, or other services.

USFS Tribal Relations App





If you look under the Forest Service, and you pull up [Tribal Action Plan](#), you'll see actions to strengthen tribal consultation and nation to nation relationships. The plan is not aspirational, each action is assigned to different parts of the organization, responsible parties, and due dates. And the Forest Service has over \$4 billion funding in the by-partisan infrastructure law inflation Reduction Act.

The Forest Service Action Plan on Strengthening Tribal Consultations and Nation-to-Nation Relationships commits the Forest Service to expanding the respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge. Deliverables include:

- Policy updates for the Forest Service.
- Guidance on the application of Subject matter relevant Indigenous Knowledge in research products.
- Education for staff on Indigenous Knowledge, policy, processes, prioritization, and land management applications.
- Consolidated best practices for applying Indigenous Knowledge.
- Direction on including Tribal Liaison input in incident action plans and incident management teams.
- Identification of issues surrounding privacy protection, intellectual property, and physical protection of indigenous knowledge.
- Support for Indigenous Knowledge through participatory research on topics of joint interest

Robinson stresses that the Forest Service doesn't look at Indian country as cultural resources to be managed by archaeologist and anthropologist. They work with Indian country as contemporary nations, one to one. The Office of Tribal Relations is committed to serve the USDA Forest Service mission in a manner that respects and strengthens tribal sovereignty. He shared that when he wakes up every day, when his team wakes up every day, they make a commitment to not diminish tribal sovereignty, nor allow the diminishment of tribal sovereignty.

Discussion

Rich Juricich, Principal Engineer at Colorado River Board of California: What are some of the key challenges or successes for the Forest Service working with tribes and incorporating cultural knowledge, indigenous knowledge into your activities.

Reed Robinson: In Indian Country, unlike many other groups, the tribes have a political and legal nexus to the federal government. So focusing on that is critical. The education behind this is lacking and needs to be developed, but I don't want to see non-Indian third parties providing training to our staff.

We need to look to the future. We didn't wait for Indian preference hiring, we created a tribal hiring advisory group. So the Office of Tribal Relations was able to bring on high level staff at the GS 14,13 level, straight out of tribal government. But there is an uncomfortable component to that, we don't want to create a brain drain on Indian country, so we need to consider that as well.

We brought on staff members from the Menominee Nation, the Pueblo of Laguna, and the Shoshone Bannock tribe, these are leadership positions in addition to mine. So, this is significant horsepower for an organization that is flexing right now. We have a through-line of leadership commitment. And right now, the opportunities far exceed the barriers. I look at a barrier, and I go through it, over it under it. I don't want to go around it. So right now it's time for positive action. So I say Hoka Hey, let's get ready!

Comments from the Chat during Reed Robinson's talk

Same question to both DOI, and now DOA. Is there a meaningful move to setting up official tribal government(s) Co-Stewardship management or Co-Management of federal lands together with federal agencies? Seems the DOI answer was, yes. What is DOA's answer? TEK, in my view, appears to speak directly to a long needed official co-stewardship management of federal lands. Tribal management together with DOI and DOA in terms of overall health of interconnected ecosystems rather than arbitrary boundary lines - state, county, NPS parks etc. One example is the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem in terms of grizzly bears, wolves, bison and other wildlife whose habitat is both Park Service and Forest Service.

Tribal Co-Stewardship federal land management will go a long way to honor treaties.

Working with the Tribes – Thousands of Years of Indigenous Science
James E Charles, President, James E. Charles Law/ President Volya Solutions
(jcharles@volyasolutions.com).



Thanks for inviting me. It's an honor and a pleasure. I'm humbled by those who are here and participating; from Grace Smith Yellowhammer all the way to Reed and the others participating.

I'm not with an agency so this is a big shift in perspectives. I work with Tribes; I'm a consultant and attorney

working with Tribes on environmental issues, governance, sovereignty, government-to-government relationships, and occasionally I do federal agency training.

It is my understanding that we would have many agency folks participating today, and I was asked to share some of my experience working with Tribes. I will try and be brief due to time. Listening to the four agencies and the White House talk, I'm reminded of a question an agency staffer asked me at a FEMA panel: "Why should agencies and NGOs even bother engaging with Tribes?" Stated in another way for purposes of today's conversation, "why should anybody take this Guidance (White House Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge) seriously?" I look at it (the answer) simply, and Gretchen touched on this in her talk. If you wanted to look at it from an informed decision-making perspective, science is the systematic study of the physical and the natural world through observations. Well, Tribes bring thousands of years of observation, understanding and awareness of the natural world to the table.

When I'm working with Tribes, and trying to coordinate with agencies, one of the questions I ask is "how can anyone, especially Western scientists, ignore thousands of years of observations and say that they did a complete or competent job?" Turning that point into language agencies speak, if an agency makes a decision without meaningfully considering traditional knowledge and the Tribes' perspectives, then how can we honestly say that decision is based on sound science or the best available science because it would be missing an important line of evidence. Also, from a practical perspective, whatever the issue is, whether the issue is on a local, state, national or global level, Tribes are a part of the community. They have a right to be there and have a voice that's heard and meaningfully considered.

To add perspective, a few years ago, the World Bank did some research on indigenous folks around the world. The World Bank found that Tribal communities utilize [approximately] over 22% of the world's land surface They are stewards of [roughly] 80% of the world's biodiversity and are located in or adjacent to [approximately] 85% of the world's protected areas. Therefore, Tribes are essential stakeholders and have to be part of the conversation. Leaving a Tribe out is like preparing for a car race and only putting three wheels on the car and still expecting to win.

I was also asked to share some lessons that I've learned over the years. I will try and cut this short as I know we are behind schedule. This is not a "how to." I don't believe in telling people how to do things. I like to share my story and my experience and hear peoples' stories and

experience. Together we learn from each other and grow together and move forward together. For me, traditional knowledge and working with Tribes starts with trust. You cannot engage with a Tribe, much less have traditional knowledge shared with you if you've haven't earned that trust. So, the question I am often asked is, "how do you build trust?" I can tell you, from my perspective, what has helped me build the trust necessary to work in Indian Country for over two decades.

[First] When I see agencies and institutions engaged with Tribes it is usually in the course of their job and European-centric cultures approach such relationships like it is transaction; i.e., a business relationship/business like. What I would recommend to folks listening on this call and are working with the agencies or are thinking about engaging Tribes, do not treat it like a transaction. Treat that engagement like a relationship, because that's what it is...you're working for people; a community...and you have to be invested in that community. You have to understand the people you're serving, because it's about service - not a transaction. I respectfully recommend those who want to engage with the Tribes to approach it from a mindset of an opportunity rather than a perfunctory view. You're not checking off a box.

[Second] I also respectfully recommend people to understand that since it's a relationship, you must relate. When I use the word "relate," I'm careful to not say "understand" because we can never understand an issue from the perspective of a Seminole Tribal member or from an Aquinnah Tribal member because we are not Seminole or Aquinnah. However, we can use our personal experiences to relate. I'll give you example how I've done that in my own personal life. My family...we're Ukrainian...and those of you that have worked in Indian country or are a part of Indian country, you know that many, if not most, Tribes are fighting to preserve their language. It's a struggle, overcoming decades of federal Indian policy and today's distractions. Well, when I was a child, my Babusya (Ukrainian for "grandma") tried to teach me Ukrainian. My response was, "Grandma/Babusya, why should I care? I don't live in Ukraine. It will never matter to me." Now I'm a father of a four-year-old son, Myroslav Paisii, my pride and joy. I'm trying to teach him the language and why it's important. Trying to ensure that he doesn't make the same mistakes I made as a kid with my Grandmother...and guess what- he doesn't want to listen, and he's not interested in learning the language. So that personal experience helps me relate with a Tribe that's fighting to preserve its language. I use that personal experience to relate to the youth, because I was them at one point not wanting to learn, and I can relate to the elders and the parents who are trying to pass that important tradition on because I'm now that parent. So, I highly recommend folks find a way to relate because relating allows you to connect, and that's how you start building familiarity and trust.

I would also recommend, from my experience, to avoid appropriation. Western European cultures...we like to accumulate knowledge, and I'm European...we like to accumulate knowledge and make it ours. We have to appreciate that traditional knowledge/oral traditions are not commodities...are not fungible. We can't make them proprietary; they belong to the Tribe.

[Third], also, when you're engaging with a Tribe, you may not be ready to hear what they have to say. I'm reminded of a Seminole Elder telling me something and I asked, "why didn't you tell me this before?" He said, "You were not ready to hear it." I asked him, "what do you mean?" He replied, "just because you have something important to say doesn't mean you say it now. You wait until the person you are talking to is ready to hear and understand it...and you weren't ready to hear before." So, when you're engaged with Tribes, it's important to understand that they are oftentimes teaching you, and they won't teach you a lesson until you're ready to hear it. We need

to appreciate that. We may want that information now, but they will be the ones who tell us when we are ready to hear it.

Further, I respectfully suggest for the agencies that are listening, some knowledge can't be shared. We talked about the concern information can be exploited, appropriated, and other sins, but some information simply cannot be shared. For example, a Tribe I work with in the Southeast believes that if they tell an outsider why a medicinal plant has medicinal or ceremonial value, it loses that value if shared outside of the Tribe. We have to acknowledge that sometimes the only thing that can be told is that a place or plant is important...and we have to respect that and trust where the Tribes are coming from (acting in good faith).

Traditional knowledge is often worded or framed in the perspective of “complementing” Western science. The Guidance reminds us that you don't have to use another line of knowledge to validate traditional knowledge. The term “complimentary” invokes a meaning as if traditional knowledge is an “accessory;” that is not how we should view the Tribal voice. We need to appreciate traditional knowledge/oral traditions as being an integral/constituent part of the overall body of knowledge we all should and must be considering when addressing environmental issues today...it is the only way to address the impacts in a complete, meaningful manner.

I want to thank the Office of Science and Technology Policy for their efforts to elevate tribal voices, I really commend it. I respectfully say though, the real test is how it is going to be implemented, and how it survives political change. So, I hope that we can build off this momentum, everyone, and have this be a positive step forward and elevating the Tribal voice.

I want to acknowledge I am speaking from Florida, the home and lands of the Seminole Tribe of Florida and the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and their ancestors.

Additional comments and examples submitted by James Charles.

Suggestions for Working with Tribes:

a. Acknowledging the Tribal presence as an equal, sovereign voice

- i. For example, I was once asked to talk with a power company about working with Tribes. The company wanted to know how to “deal” with Tribes. All their top executives were in the meeting. I asked when was the last time they met with a given Tribe on their Reservation. Turns out that in the last 40 years, the company had never met with any Tribes in their area much less visit their Reservations. I then asked how they approach their relationships with local, state, and national governments. The response was a detailed plan including multiple face-to-face contacts early and often on the given government’s turf. I asked why they didn’t approach Tribal governments the same way (i.e., why not give the Tribal governments the same respect and consideration as the local, state, and federal governments). After about 2-3 minutes of complete silence, realization started to set in that the root of their “bad” relationship with Tribes stemmed from their lack of understanding and/or appreciation that Tribes are sovereign governments. It was a bit of a “look in the mirror” self-awareness kind of moment for the company (for most of the executives; there were still a few that did not get the point).

1. Lesson learned: it is often easier for agencies & NGO to blame Tribes, but often the core problem is how these agencies & NGO's approach engaging with Tribes...treat Tribes as sovereign nations with all the respect and consideration deserved

b. Their (Tribes) inclusion should not be treated as perfunctory

c. Ask more questions and no dictating

- i. For generations, the federal government/colonists have been telling Tribes how they should do things as if they have not been thriving here for thousands of years before colonization... Stop being paternalistic and be respectful and open to their input/collaboration
- ii. Ask questions to learn from Tribes rather than using the time to tell Tribes what to do

II. Tribal Traditions/knowledge Summary

a. Words are important...including Traditional Knowledge in decision-making is often framed as “complimenting” western science (European science)

- i. The connotation of “compliment” is often viewed as something akin to an accessory like “the hat compliments the outfit”
 - ii. I think we need to appreciate traditional knowledge/oral traditions as being an integral/constituent part of the overall body of knowledge we all should be considering when addressing environmental issues today...it is essential to addressing the impacts in a complete, meaningful manner
1. Traditional knowledge is sound science/competent and substantial evidence
 2. Traditional knowledge does not have to be validated by another line of evidence/knowledge (does not have to be validated by western science)

a. For example, I was working for a Tribe in connection with a large-scale environmental restoration project the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers was doing. The Tribe's oral traditions told of burials in the project action area. The Corps did not seriously consider the Tribe's oral traditions because it could not be validated by western science modeling. So, the Corps sent archeologists out to survey the areas in question. All but one shovel test found evidence of burials across three sites (each site being several acres in size and multiple shove tests per site). In this example, traditional knowledge was superior to western science. If the agency had respected it as such, the disturbance of several burials could have been avoided.

iii. I hope this White House Guidance on Indigenous Knowledge is a positive step forward in changing how the federal government views and values such knowledge

1. So, a big thank you to the Office of Science of Science and Technology Policy for their efforts to elevate the indigenous voice

2. The Guidance is very encouraging
 - a. I respectfully caution though...the real test will be how well it is implemented and whether it survives political change
 - b. I also hope there will be some training developed and offered to agencies
 - i. If you are familiar with working with Tribes, you can appreciate much of the advice offered in the Guidance. However, if your experience is limited, I suspect some of the advice offered will not readily jump out to you as being important...making training critical
 - ii. I also respectfully suggest outside training. Agency staff training agency staff on Tribal relations usually encourages the status quo and not positive change.

Stan Bronson, Respondent: Thank you James. You do a lot of work with Tribes that are outside of Florida. When you have a Tribe like the Seminoles, with members in not only Florida, but also in Oklahoma, how do you get continuity across state lines if there are different perspectives on how they want to treat an issue.

James Charles: First, I think it's important to acknowledge that each Tribe is unique. Each has their beliefs, their own traditions and their own ways of doing things. Different Tribes may have relations...they may have some form of connection, and it may be stronger between some Tribes than others. I can tell you from my experience that you can't treat any Tribe in a one size fits all manner- they're all unique. Even if the issue is the same, you have to approach each Tribe differently. The problem is...is that sometimes agencies or NGOs want to treat Indian Country, as if it's one whole group. You have to respect that they each have their own separate culture, and their own separate ways of looking things and dealing with things. If there has to be coordination amongst multiple Tribes, you have to appreciate how they work with each other...sometimes it's a good working relationship and sometimes it is not. For example, a lot of the Tribes in the northeast have had their historical differences...sometimes those differences live on today in the modern-day business world. However, they typically work well together on environmental and cultural issues. But you can have a project where multiple Tribes are involved, and they don't work well together for whatever reason. So, you have to approach the issue differently and that makes it difficult on agencies when they have to consult with multiple Tribes...but I respectfully remind the agencies that (consulting with each Tribe that has an interest) this is a part of the Trust Responsibility; it is what they (the agencies/federal government) promised to do. So, it may be difficult, but not everything in life is easy.

David Berry: Thank you James. Time was short and if you have other comments, we can put them in the proceedings.

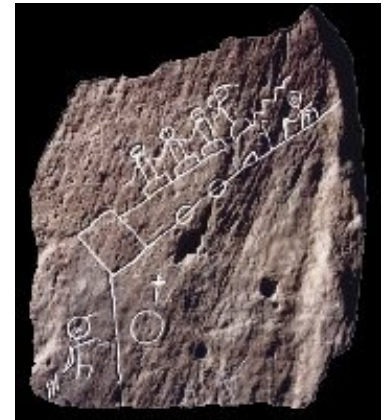
James Charles: I did not prepare a presentation; I approached this as an informal sharing of experiences and stories...but I did prepare talking points. If anybody wants to reach out and continue the conversation, I'm open to anybody that's participating to continue the conversation if they like.

A longstanding invitation: Indigenous Peoples' Guidance to Governments & Individuals on Living in Harmony, Awareness, Reciprocity & Presence with Nature

David Berry SRRR Director

You will notice that I inverted the workshop title for this talk. Indigenous peoples have been attempting to give guidance to governments and individuals for a long time on living in harmony, awareness, reciprocity and presence with nature in every policy area. Participating in this workshop is therefore honoring and responding to that invitation extended by Indigenous People. That matters to me and I think it matters to all of us. I'm going to tell you a brief story that took place over the last 30 years.

In Hopi country is a petroglyph known as Prophecy Rock. In 1948 Thomas Banyacya Sr. was asked by Hopi elders to deliver the message of that prophecy to the United Nations, Thomas Banyacya, Jr. is on this call. The Hopi elders saw the UN as the Great House of Mica where nations gathered to resolve problems without war. For decades between 1948 and 1992 with many Hopi Elders and others involved the UN Secretary General's Office finally invited Thomas and indigenous leaders from around the world to speak to the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Office Director told me that the messages of Thomas and the Hopi got the door open and led to the invitation.



Thomas said this was important because Nature doesn't directly speak to us and the animals don't speak. So what voice can we hear and understand that conveys the patterns of nature and depths of deeper spirit. Thomas asked listen to people who have not separated themselves from Nature and through their voice, nature itself can speak to us.

At the UN, Onondaga Chief Oren Lyons (right) and Thomas (left) held up a picture of prophecy rock and explained a key part of the prophecy - that the upper path is a path of high technology and high speed while the lower path remains in harmony with the Earth. He pointed to the lines connecting the two paths. If we don't ground ourselves, if we don't bring natural law and spirit



into it, the upper path moves into the jagged lines moving off into koyaanisqatsi or chaos – what the 1972 book, Limits to Growth calls overshoot and collapse. We've been hearing this warning from a lot of sources for many years. Thomas told the UN that they will see signs from Nature because they never had indigenous people from all the continent speak to the gathering of nations. The weather service called for a snowstorm that night but what came was a massive rain storm that closed major highways near the water in New York, the UN was flooded and closed the next day and several

houses were washed into the sea. The massive amount of energy released on the east coast from Maine to Florida, totaled more than a single hurricane but never had a name. When I returned to Virginia, there were 5 trees down in my yard – as an exclamation point.

In 1993, people who met through that UN meeting, responded to the vision of Sharon Franquemont for an event on the National Mall. The Prayer Vigil for the Earth began with one tipi and a few elders. Grace Smith Yellowhammer who did our opening prayer was seen as a Grandmother of this ongoing work.

The Vigil grew until it was many Tribal Elders from many countries and the Elders asked us to expand the event to invite all faiths and traditions to join us. Participants were asked to respond to two questions: 1. What do your traditions tell you about living in harmony with nature or creation or the ecosystem? 2. What is the calling to live in harmony with each other?

For 20 years, we also had unpublicized meetings with government officials. There was a high level meeting in the Indian Treaty Room, many in the White House Conference Center, a briefing of flag officers from every branch of the military at the Pentagon. Grace and Thomas were there. Each year we quietly met in different government agencies. One evening in a tipi, we had a circle of senior officials, many from agencies in this meeting. Several of them were Senate confirmed. They had teachings and ceremony from Grace and then spontaneously, a Lakota chief, came in. It was a moving deep conversation that had a lasting impact on everyone there.

Indigenous knowledge offers has one main point that is valuable to realize.

Sometimes a government agency asks a Tribe's Elders, leaders and scientists to comment or provide useful information on management of lands or forests or the placement of a road or pipeline. The topic might be management of a whole watershed or mitigating and adapting to a



big systemic challenge like climate. Indigenous Science has long taught that each topic is analogous to a thread in a whole blanket. We don't address them one at a time – they make up a fabric, a whole system. Today you heard several speakers say different ways that all life is interconnected. We are invited to act with integrity, awareness and respect for the entire living world, of which we are an



integral part. That too, is Native Science. Western Science has begun to take a holistic approach to the whole ecosystem. Only recently have we learned that that trees communicate with each – so we're making progress and perhaps now we have the ears and heart to hear Indigenous Knowledge. That's, that's my hope. I want thank everyone for being here. And thank you, Thomas Banyacya, for your ground-breaking message.

Comments from the Chat:

It's exciting to see federal agencies LISTENING to Indigenous Knowledge! Thanks for highlighting this for all of us, David and friends!

Wonderful! That was amazing!

Beautiful, so moving. Thank you.

I think what you are saying is spot on. There is a lot we don't know that we don't know that we don't know. What seems like solid rational science and management today may not be so solid or comforting in the future.

Open Discussion:

Mariana Grossman: Do any of the people from the agencies have responses to comments in the chat or what their fellow presenters have said?

Reed Robinson: I'm going to give you a perspective. It's always important to have situational awareness about how we got to where we are. We need to give the tribes the privilege of consultation, well in advance of public, Federal Register and public scoping. It is a privilege to work with tribes. No other country in the world has a legal and political relationship quite like this country with sovereign nations within a sovereign nation. It is also important to understand federal Indian law and policy because there's a dark side of federal Indian law based upon colonialism and conquest. That works against Indian country.

There is the problem within the federal government of the lack of a deep bench or any bench with counselors or solicitors who have a deep understanding of federal Indian law. There is a lack of situation awareness. When Europeans arrived, a colonial land management prescription was put upon the North American continent. Indians were removed off the land. And the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, the military, the Park Service, whoever, with all this land. With the Indians removed off the land, who comes in to claim the void - the environmental groups. And they're still at the trough. We need to make space for Indian country in a real way. We need to decolonize our thinking in order to make progress. It's not easy to do the concept of decolonization. But you can practice and practice makes perfect.

Marianna Grossman: Could you say a little bit more about decolonizing our thinking?

Reed Robinson: I gave you an example, when I introduced myself I showed you the Cangleska Wakan which is the Sacred Hoop or Medicine Wheel. That's decolonizing. If you if you ask for an org chart, that's what I'm going to send you and there may be some names in there, but it's not going to be a top down chart. The only thing top down that I focus on is the nation to nation relationship. Because decisions are made between leaders at the highest levels of government, and need to be pushed down to the field. It's not a bottom up situation when it's nation to nation.

Rhonda Kranz: A comment in the chat to remember that not all tribes have treaties. And not all tribes are federally. For the groups that don't have federal recognition how is that going to impact the ability to for the agencies to work with these groups following the guidance.

John Red Cloud: I have some insight I can share. I'm a member of Oglala Sioux Tribe, from Pine Ridge, South Dakota. This brings up the political boundaries the federal government set up when this democracy was put in place. The national borders are imaginary lines for a lot of native folks. Indigenous people could be on land that would be called the United States, Canada or Mexico. There are plenty of tribes which have vibrant and rich cultures, pageantry and language steeped deep in tradition and ceremony. They believe themselves and rightfully so, to be authentically indigenous. We started to look at some of the federal funding and some of the roundtable discussions much like this one, there's a lot said about being federally recognized. Often an indigenous person will be asked if they have their CIB card - Certificate of Indian Blood. This is something unique to indigenous folks in the United States. The tribe I come from, the Oglala Sioux Tribe here in Pine Ridge, we all have a U number. Some other tribes in the process of obtaining federal recognition may have state recognition but they are seeking federal recognition in order for cooperation with the federal government to take place.

Native people have a common understanding that we all represent our ancestors and we walk a path today that honors their wisdom, their plight, their sacrifices. Somehow we still are here today despite very pointed efforts at extermination, and the “save the man. kill the Indian” narrative. So, today, there's an ingrained distinction between tribal members. Often if you're not federally recognized, you're not able to obtain federal dollars. It doesn't make one group any less indigenous than another group just because they can't produce a Certificate of Indian Blood. So to me, the fact that we're all part of the same plight, Mexico or Canada, is a nuanced concept. I think we are playing by the rules of the mainstream. Thank you for allowing me to share.

David Berry: John, thank you very much for jumping in. That was that was right on time. Does anyone else wish to speak or is there something we should pull from the chat?

Kim Greenwood: There was a question in the chat with regard to extraction on national park lands. I would take a minute to answer that question. Our authorizing legislation is for conservation and preservation. So when people see extraction, like oil or something like that, it does raise concerns and questions. In general, the answer is we don't allow extraction, except when sometimes a park will be brought into the system when there's already something going on, or when it is donated and there is already a caveat to that land. For example, Lake Meredith National Recreation Area already had oil drilling in the area when it came into the Park Service in the 1970s. And so therefore, it continues. So there are exceptions to the rule of no extraction.

David Berry: Thank you for clarifying that, Kim.

Before we go to the Chief Henry Red Cloud and the closing prayer, a heartfelt thank you to everybody on this call. To the presenters, especially Grace Smith Yellowhammer and Chief Henry Red Cloud for opening and closing our meeting with traditional prayers to help us remember deeper, higher, broader levels. We heard government voices and indigenous voices. And James Charles reminded us that some peoples have not forgotten that they are also indigenous of somewhere. I also want to thank the people that came, who saw the title, looked at the agenda and said, I want to hear this. Because you have the opportunity with the information, your existing and new relationships, to think of the earth, all of its peoples and all your relations as you do whatever you do next.

This roundtable was founded in the spirit that we heard today. As a federal advisory committee during some previous administrations we had to wear a bit of a cloak and not sing every song too loud. I rejoice that we could have this meeting today and f6be more fully who we all really are

Anupam Saraph: Wonderful, Reed Robinson. With your example, you illustrate so well how commercial knowledge has colonized the wisdom of relationships.

Charlit Toledo, Suscol Intertribal: In California there are "terminated, exterminated or unrecognized tribes" These are gov't terms Most Ca tribes, if not all, no treaties were made.

Honna Steissberg: Thank you Reed Robinson. I want to make room, show respect, and get on the right road, for the seventh generation.

Sara Marriott: Thank you everyone for sharing with us today.

Closing Prayer: Chief Henry Red Cloud

Greetings to one and all. I embrace everybody with a warm heart. Let's gather to close this beautiful roundtable. I thank everybody involved, all the presenters, all the ones who shared and those who asked questions - I want to remind everyone that we're in this together. We need more of these roundtables. Because we people in the United States, we are the power, we can change things. We can combine our resources, our energy, and we can change legislation. If we step back in time to before 1920, women didn't have voting rights. The people changed legislation. This roundtable is a very good start on caring for the Earth. I'm honored to be part of it.

John covered quite a bit on what we're doing for solar energy with boots on the ground here at Red Cloud Renewable. Please look at our webpage, reach out to us to see how we can partner together to expand vision, our minds, our projects, and move forward. We only get this one chance and we don't want to be known as a generation that didn't do anything. We want to make that statement and to lessen our carbon moccasin prints. We want to move forward that way so future generations enjoy what we have.

So I'm going to close with a song and a prayer. These come from many generations of honoring the earth, and honoring all the gifts bestowed upon us. We have the resources that we need here - gifted to us to utilize to become a healthier people and nation. I'm going to ask for that blessing for us as we move forward, down this green path. And that way our minds are clear, our spirits and health are good. We come together as human beings, in partnership with the things we know. Send us a 21st century smoke signal, send an email and we'll respond.

The song and prayer are ancestral ways. I'm a fifth direct descendant of Mahpiya Luta, known as Chief Red Cloud, 1822 -1909. Everything we do has been set in prayer already, set in sacred motion. I'm moving forward – taking what we know. The gift of the Sun plays a huge role in our ancestral ways as it does today. Our language, songs, dance and ceremony are all based around the sun. We take this new way and honor that old way and then become sustainable, as well as being caretakers of the Earth. We're all in this together.

Crazy Horse, Lakota War Chief had a vision that Changlesha Wakonda, the Sacred Hoop of life was broken during the Indian Wars, but it was mended. There is no beginning and no ending in this Hoop of Life. In the center of that Hoop of Life was the tree of life, which fell over dead. The tree stood back up and started to grow leaves again, started to stand strong. Underneath the tree, all the nations, all the different colors of human beings. the white, the red, the black and the yellow. all gathered. We are at that point now so we're there. The Sacred Hoop is mended, the Tree of Life is back up strong and we as people are gathered around ensuring that future generations enjoy what we and our ancestors did. With that. I'm going into song and prayer.

Chief Henry Red Cloud said a prayer and sang the Lakota Mitakuye Oyasin song. He closed with "Oh Mitakuye Oyasin. We are all related. Thank you.

