UNFENCING THE FUTURE

Voices On How Indigenous and Non-Indigenous People and Organizations Can Work Together Toward Environmental and Conservation Goals

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WADO

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

BACKGROUND ON THE GUIDE

The goal of this project was to inform and support non-Indigenous conservation groups and conservation and environmental funders' staff and boards working with Indigenous communities. Its geographic focus is what is currently parts of the western contiguous United States, Alaska, and western Canada.

The topic is not a new one. Many other people and organizations have written about or are writing about this topic. For example, I recall reading *Context Is Everything: Reflections On Strengthening Partnerships Between the Philanthropic Community and Native Americans* in 2012. I recommend and refer to it with regularity. Relationships between Native Americans and the philanthropic community have improved and many of its observations remain relevant. This document follows a path created by others and hopefully builds on the contributions to the body of growing resources. Toward collaboration and what we call in Cherokee "gadugi," (helping each other), I hope this contribution will be useful.

A starting place for this guide is staff and leadership of organizations that are supported by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and Hewlett's suggested foundation colleagues. Most of the staff from environmental and conservation organizations and the funders featured in this guide are non-Indigenous. Perspectives of Indigenous organizations and staff working on environmental and conservation issues are also featured.

Recognizing that when we need to learn new information, we often seek out others we know who have undergone similar learning, this guide attempts to recount different journeys taken by organizations and staff. There are two general paths: the journeys of non-Indigenous organizations and funders to work with Indigenous communities or governments and the journeys of Indigenous people, non-profits, and government employees to work with non-Indigenous environmental and conversation organizations and/or funders. I have tried to focus on positive aspects and stories, hopefully modeling and showcasing entry points for those interested in working with Indigenous communities or strengthening existing work. Each participant reviewed their organization's draft for accuracy and clarity, with many providing content.

An Appendix is included for those who seek to learn more about the Indigenous experience of colonization and accompanying federal Indian law and policy in the United States and Canada and topics related to this guide, such as: considerations

for funders in supporting Indigenous communities; Tribal consultation in the U.S.; and collaboration guidelines that can serve as a model for Indigenous entities and environmental and conservation organizations and funders.

Notably, community members and constituents who have worked with participant organizations would lend an important perspective to this project. They would likely provide critical and helpful feedback about how the organizations featured can better support community interests, opportunities, and needs. Given the goal and the time available for this project, it was not possible to build the relationships that would have allowed for these perspectives to be included. To do that well would have meant a project spanning several years, in my estimation. I hope readers will take the time to learn about and incorporate these perspectives in their work.

I started this project having relationships with some participants, others not, and some relationships were longer-standing than others. I appreciate those whose perspectives are shared in this guide particularly because they were willing to make a relationship with me and this project—however new and short—in furtherance of its goal. For some organizations, this project was not a good fit and we did not have the time to build the relationships and trust that would have put everyone at ease. So it goes with relationships; the time is not always right for involvement. The writing of the guide took longer than projected, and I am grateful to Andrea Keller Helsel for believing that the timeline for this project needed to be what emerged. With even more time, I believe that more and stronger relationships could have been built, contributing to more nuanced stories and voices being shared.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At its core, this guide is about relationships. These are not relationships that may exist in the jargon of the non-profit or philanthropy worlds, usually termed "grants" and framed by "project periods." These are relationships dependent on time, listening, understanding someone else's perspective and desires, and letting go of power and control to work together respectfully and reciprocally.

It is about world views and how people with differing views and experiences can come together to first know each other. If the getting to know you part goes well, folks might identify common goals, then work together to advance some or all of them. As we look around the world, we see this is not easy work; struggles are ongoing for money, land, water, and what the land provides. Climate change is heightening and contributing to these struggles.

During my conversations to research and write this guide, key themes and points for environmental and conservation organizations and funders emerged. Here is a summary of them:

1) Importance of Relationships

- Get acquainted with Indigenous individuals and peoples you hope to work with. Ask what's happened in their communities and what's important to them. Listen to their responses and try to understand them.
- Don't expect Indigenous people to educate you about Indigenous history and issues broadly. There are reading lists, Indigenous consultants, and others who can assist you with your learning. Plan to pay people for their time and expertise. As you learn, examine any assumptions you may have about Indigenous peoples – Where did you learn them? Are they true? False? If so, how? Embrace cognitive dissonance.
- People comprise organizations. Real relationships must be built between people so that people and organizations can work together.
- Successful relationships and work often extend for decades. Be prepared to be there for the long-haul.

2) Be Inclusive and Respectful

- Indigenous communities and entities know what they need. Plan and do your work in a way that supports community involvement, decision-making, and self-determination. What you think the issue is may not be the issue that the community seeks to address; however, if the community addresses what they believe is important regarding the topic, they will likely also address your issue. Practice patience. Be willing to be flexible with your timeline and your definition of success.
- Work must include Indigenous people(s) from the design stage. Hint: Talk to Indigenous communities before you start planning your project. Do you like being included in things as an after-thought?
- Support Indigenous people taking the lead on work in their communities in real collaboration with your organization.
- Try not to be presumptuous. Just because you would do something one way, it may not be how others would do it or even be culturally appropriate. Think about the language you are using to describe your organization's work and programs/projects; consult with Indigenous peoples and communities you are working with to make sure it seems right to them. See if they have contributions or edits. Ask permission before making introductions, before inviting yourself to a meeting, making the schedule work around yours, sharing language that you have written, etc.
- If you make a mistake, be willing to admit it and do what you can to correct it. Mistakes are learning opportunities. Be honest.

3) Who Makes Decisions and Who Has Access to Who Makes Decisions Matters

- Leadership in environmental and conservation organization and philanthropy needs to look different: Indigenous people need to be on boards, in executive leadership, and directing programs. More than one Indigenous person in each of these areas is needed for diversity of thought and experience and to resist tokenization.
- Your board must be supportive of your organization working with Indigenous communities and organizations. This is because it takes time, staff, and resources to build relationships with Indigenous peoples and to be inclusive. It is not enough for staff to have this goal as staff likely do not approve organizational budgets and policies.

- Recognize the privilege, access, and power you may have as a non-Indigenous funder or environmental organization. Use your power for good – share it, make introductions. Help Indigenous peoples to have seats and voices at decision-making tables and in funding allocations (think government for environmental and conservation work). Fear not – Indigenous people tend not to focus on money and power as in Western society and will likely think how the group can benefit in their decision-making. This goes back to relationships and worldviews.

4) Challenge Your Thinking About Funding and Flexibility

- Be flexible – provide long-term, general operating support to Indigenous entities. Be in relationship – think about funding Indigenous governments and projects – don't think that only a 501c3 can be funded. Consider Indigenous intermediaries. (Note: In the U.S., Tribes are tax-exempt for funding purposes. Foundations may differ in how they choose to provide support to Tribal entities. For example, many foundations make general operating support to Tribal departments or programs. This document is not intended to provide legal advice; please check with your foundation's legal counsel for specific guidance.)
- Be willing to support land purchase and related costs, capital investments, and equipment costs. These expenditures are essential to communities and programs, yet very difficult to raise money for. Given the land theft and displacement experienced by Indigenous peoples, the important of purchasing land cannot be overstated.
- Try to be more flexible with time – it takes time to build a relationship. Projects may not go exactly to schedule and if something happens in an Indigenous community, that will likely take priority. Generally, wealth is measured by money in Western society; in Indigenous communities, wealth is measured in relationships. Translation: people will tend to their relationships before they may tend to grant paperwork. Due to community events, they may be unable to meet grant requirements and need project adjustments – try to be responsive and empathetic, consistent with nurturing a relationship.
- A few words about other funding: U.S.-based Tribes cannot tax so they lack the tax base enjoyed by county and state governments. The U.S. underfunds Indigenous governments and services, despite having signed treaties to provide these services in exchange for land; for example, per capita health care costs are higher for prison inmates than Indian Health Service patients. Some funding is only available to Tribes through competitive grant programs. States do not like to share their federal allocations with Tribes.

INTRODUCTION

My Cherokee grandfather Russell Porter Hester started college just before the Great Depression began. During the Depression, he sold his Indian allotment so that he could finish college. My mother tells a story that, while he was a student, he took a class where he was presented with this question on an exam: What was the most defining feature of the American West? He wrote a single word on the page, "fences," and turned in his exam. Reportedly, he received an "A."

Fences are a metaphor and an omnipresent physical marker of colonization and the accompanying world view that created what we currently call the United States and Canada. Fences, which followed surveying, contain the notion that land can be owned, sold, and divided into private parcels and others excluded from it – or contained within it. Fences contain the idea that landscapes and species can be separated from one another and somehow remain intact or – worse – that their failure to remain intact is not important. As a metaphor, it is powerful because it is straight-forward and easy to understand.

Segmenting land into parcels embodies the linear, Western-thinking that impedes and cuts off interconnection. It is a tool of colonialization, domestication, and the settler-colonial states that follow. Categorical parceling and breaking down is part of Western life: science; capitalism; the way people perceive the world around them, their role in it, and what is available for humans; federal policies; and the assimilation policies forced on Indigenous communities. In contrast, Indigenous worldviews recognize interdependence with the land, water, and air; this includes relationship with all beings – human and more-than-human.

BRIEF HISTORY

Imagine: In the late 1800s in the United States, remaining Tribal populations were largely confined to small land parcels that were a fraction of their original territory. Tribes had stewarded and lived in reciprocity with their territories – what some might today call "management." These practices were interrupted first by land loss through outright theft and coerced treaties. Then the General Allotment Act opened "surplus" Indian lands to expansive white settlement; this alone effected a loss of 90 million acres of Tribal territories.

Closely following Allotment, by the time his presidency ended in 1909, Theodore Roosevelt had designated 230 million acres of Tribal territories as protected landscapes, creating national forests, bird and game preserves, and national parks and monuments. Tribes were excluded from managing these areas and accessing them for hunting, gathering, ceremonial, and other purposes. National parks and notions of untouched "wilderness" – and later actual "wilderness" areas –physically separated Indigenous peoples from their traditional territories and psychologically removed Indigenous peoples from the consciousness of most Americans.

Tribal governments in their traditional or pre-colonization structures – affected by land losses, children lost to boarding schools, and imposed Christianity – were forced underground and challenged by the colonization process. It was in this environment that the Indian Reorganization Act (IRA) was passed in 1934. A positive effect of the IRA was that it ended the Allotment area. However, the IRA pushed the United States' political system upon Tribal governments, resulting in further disruption to Tribal governance structures, ways of being, and cultures. The IRA also encouraged paternalism by incentivizing Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) oversight in communities that adopted U.S.-style constitutions through funding, though the funding was – and remains – woefully inadequate.

The IRA and Tribes' coerced adoption of U.S.-style constitutions created a legal framework for Tribes to do business with outside entities, though Tribal leaders were unfamiliar with Western economic principles, instruments, and tax structures. This framework, given the isolation and poverty of many communities due to ongoing treaty abrogations and underfunding, created a ripe environment for land and water theft and coercion and underpayment for resources by the U.S. government and corporations. These dealings often exacerbated divides between traditional Tribal leaders and elected ones. Many governments continued deal-making, choosing an extractive economy to augment the inadequacies of the BIA economy for their people; as in most situations with money and power, some dealings were corrupt. In many communities, ongoing scarcity of resources and internal community divisions still contribute to and foster lateral oppression.

For many non-Indigenous peoples, their experience of the country's rapid expansion included an awareness of the availability of cheap Indian land, advertised through the Homestead Act and others, and the near-extermination of buffalo to make way for cattle and farms. Indians were largely portrayed as heathen, savage, or children

of the wilderness. Many non-Indians believed that Tribal people were inferior and would simply disappear or be absorbed into the dominant culture. Some may have seen Indigenous peoples suffering and attributed it to lack of character and laziness, rather than the consequences of the theft of their lands, lifeways, and cultures.

Given this, it is not hard to see how early conservation organizations, which began in the 1930s, did not conceive that Tribal governments and communities should or would be part of their work. It was during this time that the first federal conservation funding policies were implemented. There have been – and today there are – over 40 federal natural resource funding programs that omit or exclude Tribes. (Source: http://atnitribes.org/climatechange/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Tribal-Climate-Change-Principles_9-23-2015.pdf) Similarly, it is not hard to see how philanthropic institutions, much of whose wealth derived from Tribal lands, did not envision Indigenous communities as important to support.

Despite this history, today we – non-Indigenous and Indigenous peoples – have the ability to tell ourselves and those we work with different stories about who we are, who we work with, what we do, and why we do it. I hope you will enjoy and find helpful the journeys and perspectives of the people and organizations that follow.

PAUL G. ALLEN FAMILY FOUNDATION

"I noticed that the more successful projects had Tribes as a part of the work and, often, Tribes were leading that work."

BACKGROUND

Founded by philanthropists Jody Allen and her brother, the late Paul Allen, the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation supports a global portfolio of frontline partners working to preserve ocean health, protect wildlife, and strengthen communities. As an early technologist and the co-founder of Microsoft, Paul believed in the power of technology, science, and the arts to expand horizons, save and improve lives around the world, and help solve some of the planet's most difficult challenges. From an early age the two committed themselves to building a future that was different. (Source: https://pgafamilyfoundation.org/)

"THERE'S NOT A DISTINCTION BETWEEN TRIBES AND CONSERVATIONISTS"

"I started working on salmon conservation and as I learned more, it became clear that salmon and conservation included Tribes," said Anji Moraes, Senior Program Officer on behalf of the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation. The foundation's awareness internally "has been a progression," she noted. "I don't think anyone thought the question was whether or not to fund Tribes. We wanted to get the money where it was needed and we recognized that this was the best way to go." As part of her work with science, technology partnerships, and grants managements, Anji supports select Indigenous-led salmon conservation efforts in Alaska and the Pacific Northwest. Their support has included efforts to support dam removal and opposing the Pebble Mine [in Alaska].

Later she commented on some of her work. Anji noted that as part of their dam removal work, she has supported non-Indigenous environmental organizations and Tribal governments, and there was an instance where she "asked [the NGO] to work with the Tribe. We also granted to the Tribe. . . . There was common knowledge to share. I was playing the funder role; I didn't have expertise in the field. I was able to do that because both organizations knew me."

Anji recounted her experience in coming to understand the importance and benefit of working with Tribes. "I had conversations with Tribal representatives. I've been to meetings with a large number of stakeholders and some of them were Tribes. Casual

conversations at those meetings have made the connections clear for me. In the Northwest, Tribes and salmon are imbedded in life. For many Native people there, it seemed there is no separation between salmon, conservation, and way of life."

Undertaking her own research and learning was also important. Anji looked at projects that had been funded – or not – by the foundation. "I noticed that the more successful projects had Tribes as a part of the work and, often, Tribes were leading that work," she said. Her recently completed Master's in Environmental Studies was "framed in a bio-regional approach that involved cross-disciplinary work in policy, science, and law. I learned about the history of the region and the fish wars."

Anji emphasized the positive role that funder affinity groups can play for those thinking about supporting Indigenous-led conservation and environmental efforts. "I recently joined the board of the Biodiversity Funders Group and I also co-chair the Marine Conservation sub-committee. Attending annual meetings and hearing others' journeys has been helpful and influenced my thinking," she reflected.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA INDIGENOUS TRANSBOUNDARY COMMISSION

Connecting Through Stories: When the Salmon Spoke

BACKGROUND

For many Indigenous peoples, borders imposed by federal, provincial, state, and local settler-colonial jurisdictions have disconnected territories, waters, families, and communities. One such landscape is the Stikine River watershed, which has its origins in what is currently British Columbia (B.C.), Canada, and meets the sea in what is currently Alaska, United States.

The Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC) is a consortium of fifteen sovereign Tribal nations located in Southeast Alaska and is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. It started in April 2014. SEITC seeks to protect the vital and sacred rivers that sustain their communities and culture. Member Tribal governments are the Chilkat Indian Village, Craig Tribal Association, Douglas Indian Association, Hydaburg Cooperative Association, Ketchikan Indian Community, Klawock Cooperative Association, Metlakatla Indian Community, Organized Village of Kake, Organized Village of Kasaan, Organized Village of Saxman, Petersburg Indian Association, Sitka Tribe of Alaska, Wrangell Cooperative Association, Yakutat Tlingit Tribe, and Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska. (Source: http://www.seitc.org/about)

WHEN THE SALMON SPOKE

In collaboration with long-time partner Salmon Beyond Borders and director Ryan Conarro, in 2018, Tis Peterman (Tlingit/Tahltan, U.S.), Special Events Consultant at SEITC, began working on a film project that would connect the story of communities in B.C. and Alaska. When the Salmon Spoke, presented by SEITC and Ping Chong + Company, in collaboration with SkeenaWild Conservation Trust and Salmon Beyond Borders, premiered online on May 31, 2020. The production is led by Tis Peterman, Annita McPhee (Tahltan, Tlingit, Canada), and Creative Director/Producer Ryan Conarro. It connects the life stories of community members of the Stikine River – coastal Tlingit and Haida communities and inland Tahltan communities of Alaska and B.C. – along with images and Indigenous music and visual art. (Source: https://www.salmonbeyondborders.org/when-the-salmon-spoke-and-the-salmon-wauwau.html)

When the Salmon Spoke's story begins in the mid-1860s with eight storytellers and two narrators. Tis explained that it tells "the story of how these people were connected to place, to each other across place, divided by the border, and the impacts of mining to the environment – the tension between local jobs and protecting places – the stories and relationships." Declining wild salmon populations and climate change are also essential elements of the story. The production moves forward in time to the work that SEITC does today to protect waters and lands from the effects of mining and transboundary pollution. "People got involved in the project to meet family across borders, to tell about fishing. I wanted to protect the Stikine when I heard about the Mt. Polley mine disaster," Tis recalled. Frederick Olsen, Jr. (Haida), Executive Director of SEITC, observed, *"When the Salmon Spoke* puts a face on the river. It's harder to wipe out when you see the people connected to it."

Importantly for the participants, *When the Salmon Spoke* follows the example of salmon themselves. Community stories tell of how different salmon species worked together to spawn at different times for each others' survival. The stories impress the importance of finding a solution to a problem that works for everyone. This lesson of working together is important for the people to follow. Tis noted, "We are dealing with tough issues. We have to figure out how to keep doing [this work]. If Indigenous peoples work together, we can come up with solutions."

When When the Salmon Spoke was conceived in 2018, it was intended to be a live production that would show in each territory, then tour. The idea was to bring the voices of people from places affected by projects such as mining to policy makers. With the pandemic, "people didn't cling to how it was 'supposed' to be," reflected Fred. "It's important also that the people who [were] involved have remained involved. They are in the videos and they work together. They have continued with each other." This underscores the importance of relationships and the relationships that have been built – and strengthened – through the production. Also, family relations and knowledge have been uncovered by participants – even among people who have known each other their whole lives – further strengthening relationships and the work.

The importance of relationships and talking cannot be overstated. A key element of *When the Salmon Spoke* is what follows. Several storytellers and the creative director/producer gathered for a "wauwau." "The term 'wauwau' means 'a conversation' in the Chinook trading language, which once connected Indigenous and non-Indigenous traders along the great salmon rivers including the Stikine, Skeena, Nass, and Fraser beginning hundreds of years ago." (Source: https://www.salmonbeyondborders.org/when-the-salmon-spoke-and-the-salmon-wauwau.html) The Salmon Wauwau roundtable discussion allowed viewers to ask questions of the participants and additional time for storytellers to share their perspectives on issues facing the Stikine River, the land, and solutions.

ALASKA VENTURE FUND

"I never met a system. I only know people."

BACKGROUND

The Alaska Venture Fund (AVF) began in 2018. They offer community leaders the resources they need to create lasting change. Through partnerships, they connect doers with experts and the funding necessary to activate their ideas. AVF works to shift resources so that communities have the tools and support they need to develop and nurture bold sustainable solutions. AVF's team acts as connectors, backing Alaska efforts that are consistent with AVF's principles, such as "sustainability in Alaska begins with equity for Indigenous Peoples." They work at the intersection of what matters most in Alaska today: climate change, Indigenous sovereignty, the prosperity of all peoples, and the health of lands and waters. Their goal is always to create solutions with broad-based impact, building powerful coalitions across communities and cultures. (Source: https://alaskaventure.org/approach/)

HOW ALASKA VENTURE FUND OPERATES AND WHAT THAT OFFERS INDIGENOUS-LED ORGANIZATIONS

AVF is fiscally sponsored by New Venture Fund (NVF). AVF extends that fiscal sponsorship to the projects and coalitions that they host. NVF's policies keep programmatic decision-making in the hands of project directors while ensuring that all activities are compliant with non-profit law. AVF extends these same policies to its projects. Unlike some fiscal sponsors, which make decisions for the projects they support, AVF does not do that so long as projects are following the law. NVF does no fundraising; AVF fundraises for itself and the projects it supports.

Erin Dovichin, Managing Partner at AVF, notes that AVF is important because it is responding to the "problem of scale." She notes that, "Alaska projects are often very small and many can't afford the costs of fiscal sponsorship, particularly at start-up." Many fiscal sponsors require a certain budget threshold or projects to provide a fundraising forecast. These requirements may impede projects from forming. "We provide a different economy of scale because AVF doesn't require these things. Plus, projects can utilize staff's expertise in getting projects off the ground. Many fiscal sponsors may come with rigid expectations and some sponsors get too involved in project decision-making. This may not be suited to Indigenous leadership styles. We

wanted to create something more flexible." This flexibility can be especially important for Indigenous leaders who are often involved in work that is re-Indigenizing knowledge and values, which implicitly supports healing from colonial, imposed structures.

"Alaska is a unique geography," Erin emphasized, "and AVF has a sense of the needs. . . . AVF is trying to make structures work better and do less harm, opening space for talented folks to do projects they want to do." Often non-profit structures and procedures are inconsistent with Indigenous values and ways of working. Historically and presently, for example, Indigenous knowledge extraction and appropriation has proceeded largely unchecked and with little, if any, accountability. Erin explained, "We have been able to work with NVF to modify contracts and grant agreements for our work with Indigenous peoples. For example, we've worked to eliminate terms that put ownership of grant products in AVF's or NVF's hands or gave NVF the ability to insert itself into project work [when not legally warranted]. Indigenous individuals' (or Tribes' or other grantees') knowledge remains theirs." Similarly, there are benefits to projects of not having a classic fiduciary board, which is often at odds culturally with Indigenous ways of operating.

RELATIONSHIPS UNDERLIE SYSTEMS CHANGE: *"I NEVER MET A SYSTEM. I ONLY KNOW PEOPLE."*

"I'm very fortunate to be a part of these conversations, but the terms that we tend to use aren't part of the vernacular at the local level," observed Jonella Larson White (Yupik), Partner at Alaska Venture Fund. "Recently, my mother, who is 80 and Yupik, asked me what I do for work. I had just finished a three-day workshop on systems change and she asked me, 'What is that?' I tried to explain system change as best I could to my mother and when I finished, she said, 'I never met a system. I only know people.'" Jonella paused. "Her response was profound for me. It came from a place of the importance of relationships and narrative shift. It's hard to have a conversation about systems change without people because people are involved."

Jonella, who joined AVF in 2019, noted that one thing she really values about AVF is that what they connect on as a team is much more than systems change. It's spending time on things happening at the local level. "It's much more localized and less theoretical. We are fortunate to bring relations-based conversations to the public, due to our relationship to people and their relationships to the land." Our "framework allows us to be focused and it allows us to be extremely accountable. It's not who we want to be, it's who we are."

A RELATIONAL APPROACH

Some people may have good intentions, but they come from rigid institutions and bring this approach to the relationships they try to form, making them transactional. For example, they may want to talk about Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), but not have behavior that matches these values.

Jonella related that she recently had a great meeting with a group that is working on climate change issues. She noted that there was a "need to start at a different level. It is about coming to the discussions as your whole self and not as a position. Right from the get-go, I didn't get the feeling that these people were coming to the conversation emphasizing their institutions and their positions. It was more about who they are as people, then how they see the importance of the work they are doing." She went on, "The other thing was that when they introduced themselves and their organization, they asked for recommendations of Indigenous people to participate from our community. Then they reached out to those people and have returned to them with different phases of the project. They didn't come with preconceived notions. They weren't telling people how to do the work. They acknowledged that this work was emerging and they wanted to have people design with them before they unveiled anything."

Jonella observed, "The people from our communities who we recommended actually helped them. The organization trusted us to recommend people in the community who we trust. As a result, they ended up with a good framework." So much of what underlies work between Indigenous communities and non-Indigenous environmental and conservation organizations is getting to know individuals. "Seeing that they wanted to involve Indigenous perspectives, right from the beginning, was important," she said.

Such a process takes time to unfold and a willingness to adjust processes based on the responses and schedules of those with whom you are trying to work. Operating on a fixed timetable set by only one organization is likely to be unsuccessful. Rather, adjusting for the availability of others – and the process of starting to build relationships and trust – are fundamental elements that can help work succeed, as well as navigate challenges and opportunities that arise down the road. Jonella recalled, "Farhad Ebrahimi from the Chorus Foundation notes that it's important to 'work at the speed of trust, transparency, and communication.' Our concept of time is critically important, but in many ways it's created a space and removal from the relationship that we need with each other and with the planet."

THE CLIMATE CRISIS AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

"If we really want to get out of climate crisis," Jonella added, "Indigenous people have the framework and the localized relationships with the land to contribute to critical conversations and solutions. When we consider the 'climate crisis,' it is important to understand that it is more of a 'relationship crisis' – may people have the opportunity to strengthen their relationships with the land and with each other. Indigenous peoples still have localized relationships with their lands and environment that can show a way forward. We have the approaches for what's needed in our communities so people can own their own energy, food, and shelter. There is an incredible opportunity for humanity to learn right now from diverse Indigenous frameworks that have been disrupted. The opportunity in front of us is in investing in the Indigenous leaders who are working to rebuild and strengthen their communities though frameworks that stem from cultural values." She was quick to note that it is incorrect to generalize and say that all Indigenous people live by these values, but that the opportunities are there for people. "Alaska has a generation of people who are growing up activating values that span generations while connected to the land and creating opportunity."

VETTING FUNDERS AND UPHOLDING INDIGENOUS VALUES

When it comes to vetting funders to AVF, Jonella said, our "leadership doesn't simply talk about it. They have shown how to navigate through it. . . . We recently took a stance where we stood up on behalf of Indigenous voices, listening to people from our communities." In that instance, it became clear that there was a misunderstanding of Alaska Native cultural values and differences and that communication to the funder and subsequent correction was needed.

POST-PANDEMIC

For many Indigenous communities, the pandemic brought into sharp relief structural inequities that have long been a part of many people's lives. Many identify the time we are living in as one of prophecy. Between climate chaos and the COVID-19 pandemic, it is clear to many that Mother Earth is urging human beings to live differently.

Jonella reflected on the past year, "We went through such a huge shift in 2020. There were so many important conversations related to social and climate justice happening, even over Zoom.

"I hope that funders who were a part of these really important discussions with Indigenous peoples or people of color don't see this pandemic as a vacation," she said.

“As we get back into social interactions, I hope those conversations aren’t diminished in any way. . . . We’ve seen and experienced way too much for us to go back. Some people will be in different places about the shifts that need to occur. We are at an opportune time to interrogate and rethink inequitable systems within our communities that perpetuate an imbalance of power while we support and invest in leadership who are culturally aware and critically conscious of the unique challenges we are faced with. In Central Yupik, people talk about becoming aware as human beings: ‘ellangneq,’ means to become aware as a human being.”

Additional materials from Alaska Venture Fund here and in the Appendix:

[Partner, multiple ventures. Profile] Nikoosh Carlo is leading the drive for climate change solutions created by and for Indigenous communities.

[Aywaa Storyhouse – Narrative & Indigenous climate solutions] Following the North Wind: Indigenous Leadership in Alaska Offers a Model for Climate Resilience

THE GORDON AND BETTY MOORE FOUNDATION

"Philanthropy is supposed to be society's venture capital."

BACKGROUND

The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation was created in 2000. Gordon and Betty Moore have been contributing to science, technology, education, and conservation for decades. Gordon has been committed to scientific discovery and technological progress throughout his career. As a leader in the semiconductor industry, Gordon helped shape what we now recognize as Silicon Valley and the technology sector. He co-founded Fairchild Semiconductor in 1957 and then Intel Corporation, creator of the world's first microprocessor, in 1968. He became Intel's president and chief executive officer in 1975 and held that post until elected chairman and chief executive officer in 1979 and chairman emeritus in 1997. A prediction made by Gordon in 1965, later dubbed "Moore's Law," became a guiding principle for the delivery of ever more powerful semiconductor chips at proportionally lower costs. (Source: https://www.moore.org/about/our-founders)

MOORE'S MARINE CONSERVATION INITIATIVE

Through the Marine Conservation Initiative, Moore Foundation works to support healthy and resilient ocean ecosystems that will sustain future generations in the North American Arctic and British Columbia. The Initiative is authorized through 2024 and works to advance habitat protection, science-based sustainable fisheries management, and enabling conditions such as public policy and the rules and regulatory provisions that facilitate the first two areas. (Source: https://www.moore.org/initiative-strategy-detail?initiativeId=marine-conservation-initiative)

The foundation's mandate is conservation, and it recognizes that for conservation efforts to be effective in places where Indigenous communities are located, Indigenous communities must be involved from the design-stage of projects.

THE IMPORTANCE OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSERVATION FUNDERS WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In talking with Harvey Fineberg, President of The Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, about how supporting Indigenous communities' work is important to the goals of the foundation, he noted that, "Moore is not defined in terms of a social justice agenda. Moore is set up to achieve outcomes in specific domains, and the environment is one

of those. We invest to achieve impact . . . in the best possible way." While support for Indigenous communities is not in and of itself the stated goal of the foundation, from the foundation's perspective, this support is often critical to accomplishing its conservation and other goals.

Harvey observed, "It takes time for people to get to know and trust one another. You need the right people and the right motive. Someone has to reach out on both sides. People have to be challenged in how they are doing things. You don't need everyone involved or on board, but you need bridge builders. Bridge builders are precious resources." Later he reflected, "Philanthropy is supposed to be society's venture capital. Environmental and conservation work today has an opportunity, and seizing that opportunity frequently involves Indigenous communities. There needs to be a partnership with philanthropy – there can be no more waiting."

He went on to articulate several reasons to support Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led work. The first is historic injustice and the notion that some "foundations are committed to doing what they can to mitigate those historic injustices." The second is one that is "important to anyone working in environment and conservation. Conservation goals intersect repeatedly with Indigenous peoples' interests, presence, and capacity. For example, when Moore began working in the Andes and Amazon, we began with places to conserve. That evolved to focus on mosaics of interconnected landscapes. As the focus evolved, the roles and rights of Indigenous peoples became vital to the work."

"Part of our strategy is working with 'strategic relevance,'" Harvey explained. "We want to help strengthen [communities' and governments' abilities] to achieve their goals that overlap with ours." He added, "Full partnership is an important component of success – this is a major opportunity for Moore. Whenever an interest of a foundation intersects the interests, special knowledge, or otherwise affects an Indigenous population, it's important to work with that population. An example of this is the combination of science and Indigenous knowledge regarding changes in sea ice in the Arctic. This work combines long-term Indigenous knowledge and science, premised on each having a comparative advantage. Philanthropy should be the leading edge in such innovative combinations – not the trailing tail."

DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION

With respect to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), Denny Takahashi-Kelso, Program Director, Marine Conservation, noted that the Foundation is developing "an action plan and articulating it at the highest level. The idea is to shape our grantmaking work to incorporate DEI practices that are critical for achieving the foundation's objectives."

THE IMPORTANCE OF WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

SUPPORTING INDIGENOUS GOVERNMENTS THROUGH INDIGENOUS INTERMEDIARIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA

"First Nations are a substantial power in British Columbia," Denny noted. "The Nations with whom we work have never settled their Indigenous rights of use, title, and occupancy. Consequently, they retain key governing powers that we respect. Meaghan Calcari Campbell, Program Officer, Marine Conservation, observed similarly, noting, "In British Columbia, Indigenous communities are driving home solutions. In many instances, hereditary chiefs and elected band councils are still connected with shared visions for the Nations, despite the ongoing process of colonization." Meaghan listed the north Pacific sub-regions of what is currently called British Columbia where Moore prioritized grantmaking: the north Pacific – including the central coast, north coast, north Vancouver Island, and Haida Gwaii. She noted that, at the time in the region, there were 18 First Nations engaged in some type of marine planning initiatives, a shared priority of the foundation. "We were interested in supporting the work of all 18 Nations," she remembered. At the time, though, as a relatively new U.S.-based foundation creating its legal and grantmaking systems, it was thought it might be difficult to make 18 separate grants in a respectful way while balancing international grant administration requirements. Meaghan went on, "I also knew that it would take time to establish and sustain direct relationships with 18 different communities, and I also was not sure what kind of relationships each of those Nations had an interest in with us. In this region, First Nations had organized themselves into alliances. These aggregates have representatives from each of their member Nations and speak only on consensus. Finding an Indigenous-led aggregate that represented these Nations was a real bonus to be able to support the work of the Nations, and to learn and develop relationships over time."

"In 2006, we made our first grant to the aggregate, followed by grants to several others, which was exciting," Meaghan said. "We've been able to contribute over $30M directly to these entities since then, which they redistribute evenly to each First Nations

community. We have also made direct grants to two Nations along the way. These grants were smaller and for specific projects. These went well and yet we have kept on the established route of the Indigenous-led intermediaries for the significant majority of the support." Meaghan reflected on the period of 2005-2006 and noted, "We developed relationships while developing the grant." However, ideally, we would have "focused on relationship first."

GETTING ACQUAINTED WITH ARCTIC INDIGENOUS CULTURES

"When I started at Moore, I was tasked with exploring whether our initiative's grantmaking strategies could help advance marine conservation in the North American Arctic. I had never worked in the Arctic before. I had a keen interest in the Arctic and its people, and I was interested in this place that was enduring rapid social and ecological changes," remembered Mary Turnipseed, Program Officer, Marine Conservation. "But I didn't know about the governance structures or land claims of Alaska and Northern Canada, and I didn't know nearly enough about Arctic Indigenous cultures. I set out in a deliberate way to learn as much as I could so that I could build strong relationships with Northern partners."

Mary reflected, "At the time I felt like my goal was to get to a place where I felt 100 percent comfortable as a grantmaker and as a non-Indigenous person operating in cross-cultural settings. I came to realize that was the wrong goal. Today, I've accepted that I will never feel 100 percent comfortable navigating the power dynamics inherent to the grantmaker-partner relationship, much less when it is across different cultures. That doesn't mean I'm not trying to listen hard and do better work though."

"It's so basic but honest-to-goodness, the humility factor in this work, especially with Indigenous partners in the North, the humility part is enormous," Mary went on. "How do we do this work well as grantmakers without being grounded in humility?"

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF ALASKA NATIVE ASSOCIATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS

"We often make grants to non-Indigenous entities that have deep, trusted relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations. In this case, they will make sub-grants to Indigenous-led entities to co-lead and/or help achieve the grant outcomes. Wherever possible, though, we prefer making grants directly to Indigenous organizations that will be doing the work." Mary offered the example of the foundation's grant to Kawerak, Inc., an Alaska Native non-profit regional corporation that provides services throughout the Bering Strait Region, to participate in the North Pacific Management

Council. The Council makes recommendations to National Marine Fisheries Service (also referred to as National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] Fisheries). Mary explained, "The Council was going to put together a plan to better manage the Bering Sea, and Moore supported Kawerak's participation in that." The work includes two Action Modules: building climate science into Bering Sea fisheries management and bringing Indigenous traditional knowledge about the ecosystem and the uses that communities have made of ecosystem resources into the decision-making process. The Council has initiated both Action Modules, and taskforces have been created to accomplish their tasks in the next 2-3 years. (Source: https://www.npfmc.org/fishery-management-plan-team/bsfep/) This process is incorporating "not only western science but also making sure that subsistence uses and the traditional knowledge of coastal communities are included in discussions," said Mary.

Mary also described working with Indigenous knowledge holders who were observing climate change in a very direct way – some have been hunting on the ice for 50-60 years. "We had a proposal from Columbia University's Lamont Doherty Earth Observatory to do remote sensing work on the ice with drones. We said, 'Sounds like a good idea, but there are Indigenous knowledge holders who can help guide what you do with this technology. They can share what they've observed, what's changed,'" she said. "They made a sub-grant to the Native Village of Kotzebue to support the engagement of its Environmental Program and a Council of local Indigenous knowledge holders." As a result, the Village was a co-investigator on the research project, titled *Ikaagvik Sikukun* (Iñupiaq for "ice bridges"), and involved in the design process from the very beginning. This was important so that the Village members could pose the right questions from their perspective. Denny observed, "Instead of what has been kind of a practice in Western science field resources – show up and ask for blessing – or worse, no conversation and ask for it to be endorsed . . . this is a step toward recognizing their knowledge and putting it on the same plane as Western science. It's only powerful if people are involved and co-leading at the beginning of the discussion." Columbia is now setting up a new climate school using the model created with *Ikaagvik Sikukun* as a way to structure research that takes place in Indigenous communities, on Indigenous lands, or where Indigenous peoples have special expertise.

Funding *Ikaagvik Sikukun* involved collaboration between the Marine Conservation Initiative and Science Department teams at Moore. Denny notes, our "work with the Science team, which is different from Environmental Conservation, is some of the most exciting." The *Ikaagvik Sikukun* project was designed to "to serve the Village's goals and

scientists' goals," said Mary. "In supporting the co-production of knowledge, . . . [t]he tension of coming together to figure out overlap and identify 'Where is the Venn Diagram?' can be hard to navigate, but we have leeway within Moore's approach to strategic philanthropy to find these overlaps."

HOW FUNDERS CAN HELP INDIGENOUS ENTITIES MAKE FUNDING CONNECTIONS

Indigenous governments, non-profit organizations, and community members often lack access to funders and philanthropic institutions. Mary observed that in her work, particularly in the last couple years, there has been a potential to support Indigenous grantees in connecting with other funders. "I think there is an awakening that is happening among some philanthropic organizations about the opportunity and need to provide more support to Indigenous entities. I've been reaching out to other funders a lot lately – being comfortable with the power that I do hold and using it – to try to make connections between them and some of my Indigenous partners and then very quickly transferring it to Indigenous partners to take it from there."

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION

"You can't just care about wildlife on public or private land. You have to care on Tribal land also."

BACKGROUND

J.N. "Ding" Darling's dream became reality in 1936 when he convinced President Franklin Roosevelt to convene more than 2,000 conservationists – farmers, hunters, anglers, garden club members, and other outdoor enthusiasts – from across the country to the first North American Wildlife Conference at the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. There the General Wildlife Federation (changed two years later to the National Wildlife Federation) was formed with the idea of uniting sportsmen and all outdoor and wildlife enthusiasts behind the common goal of conservation. Ding became the first president of the organization. His vision to unite conservationists continued as the National Wildlife Federation succeeded in passing many laws and policies at the national level.

This first conference energized and motivated participants to organize federations in their home states. These state affiliates would become the backbone of National Wildlife Federation. Today, the National Wildlife Federation operates from offices across the country, including its headquarters in Reston, Virginia; a National Advocacy Center in Washington, D.C.; and seven regional centers. The Federation works with 53 state and territory affiliates—autonomous, nonprofit organizations that take the lead in state and local conservation efforts and collaborate with the National Wildlife Federation to conduct grassroots activities on national issues.
(Sources: https://www.nwf.org/About-Us/History and https://www.nwf.org/About-Us/Regional-Centers-and-Affiliates)

WORK WITH WIND RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION

Tom Dougherty became involved with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF) through the Wyoming Wildlife Federation. In 1979-1980, he was president of the Wyoming Wildlife Federation. Tom described the state federation as a "hook and bullet organization." One day, he received a call from a man who said that the head of Wyoming Game and Fish Department had told him to call Tom. His name was Richard Baldes and he wanted to establish a game code on the Wind River Indian Reservation (WRIR).

Richard, an Eastern Shoshone Tribal member, worked for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a biologist. Part of his work was to maintain and establish wildlife populations on the reservation. Since there was no game code, if an animal was found on the reservation, it could be killed at any time and there were no limitations as to how many animals a person could kill or "take." Consequently, there was an overharvest of game animals. There were no pronghorn antelope on the reservation and the presence of elk was short-lived. Bighorn sheep were also extirpated from the WRIR prior to 1984, and other ungulate populations were diminishing.

According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs, "approximately 56.2 million acres are held in trust by the United States for various Indian [T]ribes and individuals." (Source: https://www.bia.gov/frequently-asked-questions) This is just less than a quarter of the land, noted earlier, that Teddy Roosevelt set aside for conservation. When Richard called Tom, most conservation groups had expressed no interest in Tribal lands, including NWF. Tom related to me, "The game code got my attention. You can't just care about wildlife on public or private land. You have to care on Tribal land also. You can't call yourself a conservation organization and not deal with Tribal lands."

WIND RIVER RESERVATION – BACKGROUND

The Eastern Shoshone Tribe, now living on the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming, has been living, some say, in the Wind River mountain range and its environs for some 12,000 years. By the early 1800s, the Eastern Shoshone band ranged along the eastern slope of the Rocky Mountains from southwestern Wyoming to southwestern Montana. In the 1860s, the band camped for most of the year in the Wind River Valley, which the Shoshones call "Warm Valley," moving to the Fort Bridger area in Wyoming for the summer months.

The first treaty of Ft. Bridger (1863) set the rough boundaries for the Shoshone Reservation, later called the Wind River Reservation. The treaty allowed the Eastern Shoshone a territory of about 44,672,000 acres, covering parts of the states of Utah, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, and Colorado. The second treaty of Ft. Bridger (1868) fixed boundaries to a much smaller area of 2,774,400 acres in west central Wyoming. As a result of the Brunot Cession of 1874, the Wind River Reservation was further diminished in return for a sum of $25,000 and the southern gold-rich portion of the reservation was ceded. The rush of miners near South Pass in the early 1860s marked the first major wave of American encroachment into the Wind River-Sweet Water region. (Source: https://easternshoshone.org/about/)

The Northern Arapaho Tribe of Wyoming is one of four groups of Arapaho who originally occupied the headwaters of the Arkansas and Platte Rivers. They speak a variation of the Algonquin language, and are that people's most southwest extension. Culturally, they are Plains Indians, but socially and historically distinct. After signing the Treaty of 1851, the Arapaho and Cheyenne shared land encompassing one-sixth of Wyoming, one-quarter of Colorado and parts of western Kansas and Nebraska. Later, when the Treaty of 1868 left the Northern Arapaho without a land base, they were placed with the Shoshone in west central Wyoming, on the Wind River Reservation. Both the Northern Arapaho and Eastern Shoshone are federally recognized tribes. (Source: https://northernarapaho.com/history/)

ESTABLISHING A TRIBAL GAME CODE AT WIND RIVER

From that first phone call, Richard and Tom began to work together to pass a game code. Initially, Tom said, "The Shoshone were supportive, the Arapaho were not. We convinced the Arapaho that the game code was in their best interest. . . . I was able to help with things that Richard couldn't because of my autonomy from government."

From that point forward, I wondered, "Why isn't NWF doing these things and helping? It was important to get board members who were Indigenous and other board members who were sympathetic to Indigenous issues," Tom said. "I find that the older I get everything has some form of political connotation – you have to have someone willing to play in that. Wyoming Wildlife Federation had a history of being hook and bullet – they were wildlife conservationists on public and private lands only – wanted nothing to do with reservation lands. I found this to be the case all over."

"There were a lot of state introduced resolutions that went to the federal level that did not recognize Tribes or Tribal sovereignty – they were racist," Tom observed. "State affiliates of NWF were very ignorant of Tribal sovereignty. Issues like with Wind River – probably some of the greatest wildlife habitat in the continental U.S., but it had no wildlife because of over-harvest. . . . The Wyoming Wildlife Federation became very vocal in trying to get the Tribal game code passed," Tom remembered. "It was a slice and dice kind of thing. We finally passed the game code, and Richard and I became quite good friends."

RELATIONSHIPS WITH INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, COGNITIVE DISSONANCE, AND ELEMENTS OF RELATIONSHIPS

Tom reflected that he is now 76 years old and grew up in Cheyenne, Wyoming. His mother's admonition was always to "'stay away from those Indians.' I grew up with that predilection – that there was something different about Indians." He went on, "It wasn't until I got to know many Tribal members that I realized that I was like a lot of the Wildlife Federation people – I was grossly uninformed about Tribal sovereignty, culture, and customs, and this was based in ignorance. There has to be someone who turns on the light and Richard Baldes did that for me."

Many Americans, especially in the early half of the Twentieth Century, came to know Indigenous peoples through stereotyped roles such as those in Hollywood Westerns, incomplete and inaccurate school history books, and the Thanksgiving holiday. As noted previously, some may have seen Indigenous people suffering and attributed it to lack of character and laziness, rather than the consequences of the theft of their lands, lifeways, and cultures. The establishment and expansion of what is currently called the United States would not have been possible without Indigenous lands. The country's history demonstrates that reconciling theft from other, equal humans is very difficult to do and may risk subverting personal beliefs, some families' histories, and the national myth.

"Many people in conservation have never experienced cognitive dissonance," observed Jason Baldes, Eastern Shoshone Tribal member and Tribal Buffalo Representative, Tribal Buffalo Program Manager for the Tribal Partnerships Program of the National Wildlife Federation, and Richard Baldes' son. Cognitive dissonance, according to Merriam-Webster, is "psychological conflict resulting from incongruous beliefs and attitudes held simultaneously." (Source: https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/cognitive%20dissonance) "I taught a class and required students to spend more than a day on a reservation. People have to be willing to step out of their comfort zone. Allow yourself to step outside of your own mind frame. Travel does that. Going to Mexico does that. Being able to understand that there are other ways of knowing."

Mescalero Apache Tribal member and NWF Director at Large, Arthur "Butch" Blazer's career has provided him a comprehensive vantage point. He worked on behalf of Mescalero fish and wildlife, as New Mexico State Forester, and as Deputy Undersecretary of Natural Resources and Environment at the United States Department of Agriculture. Following, he was elected President of the Mescalero Apache Tribe. He joined the NWF board a year ago (June 2020) and was re-elected to a three-year term. Butch said, "I have seen a lot of ignorance. You only know what you know – if you've never had any

interaction with Tribes, you don't know about them. Governor Richardson hired me to run the State Forestry program. I was hired because I had a strong background in resource management, but I was really hired because the Governor wanted someone to bring people together." Butch's experience again underscores the importance of building and sustaining relationships. "It wasn't that people didn't want to work with Tribes, but they didn't know how. There is a lot of hidden history in this country," he says. "People don't understand the value of Tribal sovereignty and Indian self-determination. . . . Tribes need to have a seat at the table."

"People ask me how to reach out to Tribal people and I tell them 'like you would anyone,'" said Garrit Voggesser, NWF's National Director for Tribal Partnerships. Earlier he posed the question, "'What are the fundamental approaches to listening and not speaking?' You have to build relationships and friendships – then partner to build toward shared goals. Some people are intimidated by going to a Tribal community and making a relationship. Other conservation organizations ask us, 'How have you developed your program?' It starts by saying 'I have an issue, let's have a conversation.'"

The importance of building a relationship cannot be overstated, fundamental as it is to most Indigenous people's world views and ways of being. Indigenous communities rely on relationships and kinship. For environmental and conservation organizations and funders, it's important to involve Tribal communities and organizations from the beginning – before a project is designed. It's respectful. Asking, then listening to Tribal people about what their interests and needs are is crucial to designing a project that meets the needs of all participants. This approach helps to identify other practitioners and participants. Committing to give and take going forward – reciprocity – and problem-solving are subsequent essential ingredients.

When asked what he would share with readers, Tom said, "I used to tell people, 'don't try and become an Indian because you can't do it.' There are so many people who are sympathetic – they feel they have to adopt some of the culture. . . . You can't try to become one of them." Tom also advised, "never lie. It's either a tough truth or don't say anything. You can't gain someone's respect if you don't treat them honestly. Tribal councils have tough questions sometimes. The only way forward is to cut through and lay it on the line."

Kent Salazar, Chair of the NWF Board, shared similar sentiments. "How do we get to know those who are different [than us]? What is the process?" An organization may say "they don't come to our meetings. Well, do you invite them? Or ask why they

don't come?" There may be cultural events conflicting with meetings or other reasons that prohibit attendance. We "need to create safe spaces." Kent reflected, "For funders supporting NGOs who say they work with communities: What are their touch points with communities? How do you work with them?"

Brian Kurzel, Regional Executive Director of the NWF's Rocky Mountain Regional Center, observed that paying attention to processes and approaches is crucial for relationships. "We can be really good at the 'what,' but we also have to pay attention to the 'how.' How we work – processes – things like doing our work more authentically, not assuming things, and who represents the work to funders. What about the way we do business [needs to change]? What policies need to change?" he observed. "There has to be vulnerability on both sides. . . . Mistakes aren't the problem, ignoring them is."

In a subsequent conversation, Brian reflected on the synergy of non-Tribal and Tribal organizations working together. "What is the role for NWF to elevate Tribal issues? We are trying to figure that out. We hope to have the right principles and help support and hire Tribal people in this work. We want to move from being an ally and help to build power. We're looking at how we can leverage our access and privilege." Later, he noted the concepts of strategy and resources. "What is the value of an NGO? [Sometimes] it relates to how money comes to them and fundraising concepts. [A certain entity may want] to raise the money. Scarcity versus wealth."

The juxtaposition of scarcity versus wealth seems directly tied to sharing power. In most non-Indigenous communities, wealth means holding and controlling an abundance of resources. In most Indigenous communities, wealth means relationships and the ability to share with others. Brian reflected, "If NWF is a trusted partner, maybe there are times where that can help the work go further but, also, can resources go to Tribal communities (Tribal governments, NGOs)? This can weave together a tapestry of partners – everyone builds power, uses [available] levers."

SELF-EXAMINATION, WORKING WITH TRIBES TO RETURN BUFFALO AND LAND

After the Wind River Tribal Game Code was passed, Tom observed, "I wanted to help [NWF] not be color-blind. I was an affiliate and supposed to recruit for Indigenous peoples, women, Hispanic people – I knew we would be in trouble if we didn't recruit more diverse members." Tom was successful in getting folks from NWF to come to Wind River, go into the high country, and meet people – Richard, Jason, and others. He worked to put three Indigenous people, including Richard, on NWF's board in six years. "I believed there was a void in conservation organizations' involvement in Tribal

communities." He also worked to start NWF's Tribal Lands program. "We got involved in water issues." (In-stream flows on Wind River's Big Horn River were litigated for decades and NWF paid legal bills.) Tom eventually became the Office Director in Boulder, Colorado, then the Western Director of NWF. "I had enough oomph that I was able to get other offices plugged in."

Specifically, NWF has partnered with Tribes on water issues since the mid-1980s, with a focus on the Colorado River for the last eighteen years. The Colorado River work focuses on protecting Tribal priorities and access to the ecological and cultural resources of the river. Protecting Tribal rights has become increasingly critical over the last fifteen years with drought, climate change, population growth, and squabbles over access to water in the Colorado River Basin. Ensuring Tribes have a seat at the table in water management decisions made by the federal government and seven Basin states has become increasing critical. One of the key dilemmas has been that most of the 31 Colorado River Tribes have not used their full water right allocations, and thus the states have become dependent on Tribal water. Now, many Tribes are asserting their full rights. For this reason and many others, water, particularly Colorado River water, will likely be a significant environmental and societal challenge.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, NWF became concerned about the lack of scientific management of Yellowstone's buffalo population, the last free-roaming wild herd in the U.S. In particular, NWF believed that Yellowstone buffalo offered a source to start new conservation herds, rather than see the buffalo shot or sent to slaughter when they migrated outside the Park. In 1997, NWF signed a memorandum of understanding with the Intertribal Bison Cooperative (ITBC), the first conservation agreement between an environmental organization and an inter-Tribal group, to advocate for the return of wild buffalo to Tribal lands. NWF and ITBC proposed a common-sense solution to the decades old practice of shooting and slaughtering buffalo as they exited Yellowstone National Park – a pasture facility where buffalo could be rounded up, deemed healthy, and then reintroduced to Tribal and public lands. (Source: https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Regional/Rocky-Mountain/NWF-Tribal-Bison-Vision_Final_May-2016.ashx)

"Nation-wide, we passed resolutions that recognized Tribal sovereignty. We got very involved in buffalo reintroduction on Tribal lands," said Tom. He retired ten years ago, but he notes, "[We] want to get something going on all of the Tribal lands that had buffalo – Wind River and other places." Tom reflected, "[Later], NWF hired Jason; that was a dream of mine. My grandest dream is to have free ranging buffalo on Wind River. The habitat on Wind River is probably superior to Yellowstone National Park for buffalo.

I tell Richard that I hope I live long enough to see the buffalo take down the fence because there will be no bringing them back."

Jason describes the work to bring buffalo back to the land as "decolonizing land use." The land that the Shoshone buffalo are currently on is fee land that was purchased by the Tribe in the late 1980s. In 2014, that land was designated by leadership as the location to start the [buffalo] \ population. In 2016, buffalo returned. The Tribe has since doubled the land base for the buffalo.

Seedkeeper Rowen White writes, "The Indigenous concept of Rematriation refers to reclaiming of ancestral remains, spirituality, culture, knowledge and resources, instead of the more Patriarchally associated Repatriation. It simply means back to Mother Earth, a return to our origins, to life and co-creation, rather than Patriarchal destruction and colonization, a reclamation of germination, of the life giving force of the Divine Female." (Source: https://emergencemagazine.org/feature/corn-tastes-better/)

"We're rematriating the land through buffalo restoration. Land rematriation is perhaps a more appropriate way to describe the decolonizing aspects of land back," says Jason. "Communal lands (riparian areas and river bottoms of the Big Wind River) were stolen through the General Allotment Act, creating privatized fee lands bought and sold by white people. Fee lands purchased back by the Tribe will undergo the 'land-into-trust' process." (For more on the "fee to trust" process, see: https://www.bia.gov/bia/ots/fee-to-trust.)

The fee land slated for the land-to-trust process was purchased by a foundation through partnership with the Tribal Partnerships Program of the National Wildlife Federation. Jason poses a question, "So is there receptivity to land purchase?" This is an important question for Tribes and foundations. In a recent NWF webinar Garrit noted, "the biggest challenge right now is . . . not actually the availability of buffalo out there, it's the availability of just the infrastructure and land base." (*Buffalo Conservation Gone Virtual: NWF's Vision to Restore Buffalo to Tribal Lands:* https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Bison/Tribal-Lands) The ability to purchase land is critical for Tribal communities and supports many areas of work. Foundations that support land purchase will be supporting ecological integrity, cultural practices, health and well-being, environmental justice, and food sovereignty, in addition to land back.

Tribes may be challenged to find funds for land purchase and foundations can make a tremendous difference in Tribal communities by helping Tribes to reacquire land. Jason observed, "The Shoshone Tribe is taking this more seriously. It sees the potential with land back and land rematriation to restore what was lost. The Cobell settlement dollars are being used by Tribes to reduce the restrictions imposed by heirship fractionization, not buying fee lands removed from the Allotment Act. No other U.S. government entity is working to buy fee lands for land-to-trust status. Philosophically, maybe recognize this as a way to reconcile injustice. Tribes can manage for ecological sustainability."

He went on, "The grassroots community – the folks who powwow, Sundance, carry out traditional activities – these are the people who have disproportionately lost due to colonization. We have to make lands accessible to our own people." Earlier he noted, "Most of the people on the reservation are under 30. We're talking about land decolonization. Not only decolonizing our way of thinking and being, but also how we decolonize the use of our lands. These young people have to understand that to be able to practice our sovereignty and self-determination in the future. We want to host people to reconnect them with the buffalo – see their wallows and the importance for habitat, learn about their behavior, understand disease management, microbial factors, reconnect them with the cultural foundation that has been missing. Wind River could be a quarantine for Yellowstone National Park [buffalo], certify them as 'disease free,' and then make them available to other partner Tribes." He went on, "Pronghorn antelope, bighorn sheep are wildlife. This is not how buffalo get treated. Buffalo are fenced, tagged, rounded up, vaccinated, etc. People have to relearn what it looks like to see buffalo on the land."

"Ultimately, there is a bigger opportunity than simply buying fee lands and including them in individual Tribal buffalo expansion efforts. We should manage the buffalo under our own laws," says Jason. "In our community, some people can't focus on bigger issues because they get caught in smaller ones. The [Wind River] Tribes don't always get along. The buffalo helps the Tribes to heal and the land to heal. It's ecological integrity, the restoration of a keystone species, and this overlaps with Traditional Ecological Knowledge." Jason continued, "We have been working on lease agreements, MOUs, or outright land buy-back for land for buffalo habitat. There is a 70,000 acre parcel that is bounded by two highways and two rivers. We hope to retire the grazing leases on this acreage." The fee land purchased will eventually go to trust, returning to the Tribe's land base as Tribal land. This is the next big step, but the process is not complete until buffalo are recognized and treated as wildlife, through language in the Tribal Game Code.

"This will take resolutions by both the Shoshone and Arapaho Tribes and a tremendous amount of community support from both Tribes. Additionally, it will take some time to change land use prioritization from livestock to ecological integrity (on Tribal land) with keystone species restoration."

"NWF has recognized since NWF leadership came to Wind River that this Tribal work is important. My dad was on the board for many years – Tribal representation fosters relationships with Tribes. For me, it's a dream job to work towards restoring buffalo as wildlife," Jason said.

In 2012, after twenty years of hard work and legal battles, NWF and Tribal partners succeeded in convincing the state of Montana to transfer 64 Yellowstone buffalo to the Fort Peck Tribes in Montana. The next fall, 34 of those Yellowstone buffalo were transferred to the Fort Belknap Tribes in Montana to start their own herd. Then, in another landmark victory in November 2014, they successfully transferred another 136 Yellowstone buffalo to Fort Peck.

The political opposition to the return of the buffalo seemed insurmountable, as buffalo were – and are – portrayed as a threat to domestic livestock. Importantly, grazing buffalo are competition for grazing cattle. Cattle ranchers contend that buffalo transmitting brucellosis to cattle is a risk, even though no documented cases of this exist. Overcoming these challenges was a significant conservation milestone and opened the doors today to moving wild buffalo onto additional large landscapes. (Source: https://www.nwf.org/~/media/PDFs/Regional/Rocky-Mountain/NWF-Tribal-Bison-Vision_Final_May-2016.ashx)

During the last six years, the National Wildlife Federation has worked with Tribal governments and others to return more than 250 buffalo to Tribal lands, ensuring Tribal connections to buffalo for generations to come. By bringing buffalo back to reservations, landscape, habitat, and a diversity of animal species is being revitalized, while also re-establishing Native Americans' cultural and historic connections to animals and the land. The National Wildlife Federation and Tribes share a common vision of returning buffalo to historical habitat and restoring Native Americans' cultural connections to them. (Source: https://www.nwf.org/Our-Work/Wildlife-Conservation/Bison/Tribal-Lands)

HELPING FOSTER JUSTICE AND FAIRNESS

CONSERVATION FUNDING NATIONALLY

There are over 40 federal natural resource funding programs that Tribes have been and are excluded from. Examples include the Coastal Zone Management Act, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Cooperative Endangered Species Conservation Fund, among others. These exclusions operate by statutory omission, express prohibition, or exclusion in program implementation. (Source: http://atnitribes.org/climatechange/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Tribal-Climate-Change-Principles_9-23-2015.pdf)

"I learned pretty quickly about the history of exclusion – purposefully or accidentally of Tribes," said Garrit of conservation funding in the United States. "Two that come to mind are the funds related to Fish and Wildlife Conservation: Pittman-Robertson and Dingle-Johnson. "These are the most important federal fish and wildlife conservation dollars," he says. "Millions of dollars go to the states each year for natural resources and wildlife conservation. Tribes were specifically excluded. So you have 90 years of millions going to the states."

The Pittman-Robertson Wildlife Restoration Act provides funding for states and territories to support wildlife restoration, conservation, and hunter education and safety programs. The Dingle-Johnson Act provides Federal aid to the States for management and restoration of fish having "material value in connection with sport or recreation in the marine and/or fresh waters of the United States." In addition, amendments to the Act provide funds to the states for aquatic education, wetlands restoration, boat safety and clean vessel sanitation devices, and a non-trailerable boat program.

One could argue that Tribes can work with states to access funds, "but," says Garrit, "this subverts Tribal sovereignty." To ask Tribes to receive state funding undermines the nation-to-nation relationship that exists between Tribal governments and the U.S. government. Further, due to the history of federal Indian law and policy and settler-colonialism in the U.S., the likelihood for most state governments to work with Tribal nations to receive a portion of their federal allocations is slim.

Tribes' omission from federal legislation for environmental and conservation efforts has and continues to undermine their efforts to exercise stewardship – what some might term conservation practices – as well as sovereignty and self-determination on their lands, waters, and the beings who depend on them. Changes at the federal level would assist Tribal efforts to achieve their goals and likely enhance local and regional efforts where a Tribe(s) is involved.

Relatedly, the urgency of climate change has resulted in limited improvement of the federal government's approach. Garrit described an effort started in 2006 by the National Congress of American Indians, Native American Rights Fund, National Wildlife Federation, and the now-defunct National Tribal Environmental Council. Congress was discussing climate change and this coalition along with Tribes and Tribal organizations did what is referred to as "and Tribes" advocacy. This is the effort to add "and Tribes" to legislation and educate Congress as to why their inclusion is important. "The climate discussions fell apart in 2011, but the same groups pushed the Obama administration to provide money for climate mitigation and adaptation to Tribes," said Garrit. They "ultimately got $11 million per year to fund a newly formed BIA climate program. It took a few years."

The announcement of the Biden Administration's Executive Order for "Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful" – also known as "30x30" for its goal to conserve thirty percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030 – may be an opportunity to support Indigenous-led conservation efforts. However, it remains to be seen how and if meaningful government-to-government consultation will take place and what, if any, resources will be provided to Tribal governments and organizations for safeguarding lands and waters.

Currently, Garrit notes that NWF is working on two key pieces of legislation: Recovering America's Wildlife Act and the Tribal Wildlife Corridors Act. "We can't rectify historic injustices, but we can improve," he said. "We" – Tribal coalitions, Tribes, NWF, and others – "are trying to get a Tribal set-aside" [of funding]. "There is also a problem with existing funding. The Tribal Wildlife Grant Program has a budget of $5 million a year for 574 Tribes. Tribes compete for funding that is non-sustainable – funding is one year at a time. It's inadequate and needs to move toward a non-competitive process."

SUPPORTING TRIBAL COMMUNITIES AND THEIR SOLUTIONS THROUGH TRIBAL GOVERNMENT AND TRIBAL NON-PROFITS

As seen with implicit and explicit exclusion of Tribes from federal funding programs, the structure of Tribal governments following the Indian Reorganization Act, the land loss of the General Allotment Act (along with often sub-standard trust lands and the isolation of many reservations), and the general abrogation of treaty responsibilities by the United States government, Tribes are often stymied from envisioning long-term goals and effecting them. (See more historical context in the *Introduction* and *Appendix*.)

"Tribes have an 'apprehension that someone is coming to take,'" said Jason. "Programs often sound nice and shiny, but as Tribal governments change every other year, there is low sustainability. It's a common thread that people entering Tribal government have a steep learning curve. It's always difficult to sell what you're trying to do [to Tribes]." As it relates to "land conservation and environmental justice, it's good if NGOs and funders can work to empower Tribal organizations," he notes.

"All work is about relationships," he underscores. "Conservation organizations often want to make a pitch, but don't ask, what can we do for you? You have to sit down to dinner, have coffee, develop a relationship over time. [There are] very few places where that's happening."

Jason noted, "We have to acknowledge history. We have lost a tremendous amount of culture, spiritual practices, and our belief systems have been eroded with colonization. What can we do as sovereign entities? We still have social issues – these imposed systems haven't worked. We need to try something different and get tools to help our communities in a culturally relevant way. [For example,] the university system works to form students into what they want. Our grandmas and grandpas tell us to go get an education, but it's important to be grounded in cultural identity. 'Go there and get the tools necessary to come home and help your people' is what we often hear. Too often though, the university system and its institutional foundation takes them in and spits them out, without tools."

"The Wind River Tribes have limited financial resources – other Tribes may also – and often funds that are meant for one allocation get diverted to another. NGO's can help to create positive change by empowering Tribally-led organizations to work on behalf of the Tribes and communities. This is the reason why NWF has led successful efforts with Tribes in buffalo restoration."

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S TRIBAL PARTNERSHIPS PROGRAM AND THE LARGER VISION

NWF initiated what has become its Tribal Partnerships Program (TPP) in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The TPP engages in conservation by seeking common ground and authentic collaboration with Tribes that ensures the protection of vulnerable wildlife and habitat while advancing environmental and economic justice at the local, state, and national levels. (Source: *National Wildlife Federation – Tribal Partnerships Program Vision and Theory of Change.*)

In NWF's view, a successful TPP will serve as a national connector and network-builder that helps strategically elevate Tribal voices; a powerful advocate for increased Tribal influence and inclusion in decision-making and capacity-building; and an expert in Tribal conservation issues to the NGO community. Through these roles, the TPP will partner with Tribes to be conservation leaders at the local, regional, and national levels. This includes partnering with Tribes on the ground to restore species, habitat, and human-nature connections; regionally with Tribes and Tribal organizations implementing conservation solutions; and nationally by influencing decision-makers to engage and partner with Tribes in a manner that shapes national conservation strategies. NWF and their Tribal partners recognize that wildlife does not adhere to jurisdictional boundaries, and neither must their conservation strategies. Through this model, NWF and Tribes have the ability to achieve mutual conservation outcomes that persist for generations to come. (Source: *National Wildlife Federation – Tribal Partnerships Program Vision and Theory of Change.*)

NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION'S SHIFT TOWARD A NATIONAL TRIBAL STRATEGY

Since the mid-1980s, when they began work at the Wind River Reservation, NWF has recognized that for generations Indigenous communities and practitioners have stewarded natural resources through their knowledge, culture, and practice. Achieving the conservation and climate goals of the 21st century requires better understanding and recognition of this stewardship, reaffirmation of Tribal rights for resource conservation, and ensuring sufficient resources and capacity for policy advancements and on-the-ground efforts. NWF believes they will not be successful in meeting their conservation mission unless they support and work with Tribes and Indigenous communities to do this. Further, they believe that advancing their conservation goals requires that they honestly address their shortcomings. (Source: *Request for Proposals: Seeking Development of a National Tribal and Indigenous Partnerships Expansion Strategy for the National Wildlife Federation.*)

Consequently, NWF is building their National Tribal and Indigenous Partnerships Expansion Strategy (NTS) and continuing its self-examination – looking at where it has room to grow and examining its past. Garrit explained, with respect to Tribes, we "can't build a relationship without understanding history." Later, he reflected, "We have to understand history to deal with the present – [for] Tribes in particular. We also have to understand NWF. Where we came from so we can deal [with our history]. There is a lack of understanding of Tribal treaties. We need to see good work, help strengthen it, and discover where to learn and grow."

NWF's work to design their National Tribal Strategy is being led by Inclusive Community Consulting, LLC. Daisy Purdy, founder, observed that NWF's work as a white-led conservation organization has benefitted from their Tribal partnerships work. "They do have an emphasis on buffalo. Buffalo are an entry-point because they are a national conservation icon. Buffalo don't have to be politicized." Daisy noted that NWF is in the process of "data gathering – looking at what they've done, where they've done it, what they should do, etc. They are also looking at competencies and skills building – how NWF can better engage with Tribal communities – and how they go about prioritizing their work and navigating political elements (Tribal interests, the balance between affiliates and constituents, etc.)."

Kara Hernandez, who also works with Inclusive Community, has been speaking with NWF's board over the past few months. She outlined that they are examining four areas within NWF as part of the National Tribal Strategy: budget, policy, programming, and culture. Kara explained that, "NWF is very different because of the federation. At the board level, half of the board members are at-large. The other half of the board are affiliates, so they are voted on during the annual meeting in their region." This distinction is important because each affiliate of NWF looks very different. "Some may have zero staff [all volunteer], or only an Executive Director, while others have 25. Some outliers maybe have 100. Small affiliates may lack the staff time or money to focus on Tribal issues, despite an interest in learning more about Indigenous communities, their histories, and the possibilities inherent in collaboration." Therefore, the board is looking at realistic deliverables for the NTS outcomes that NWF has identified.

When asked why NWF does this work, the answers seem obvious enough: it is the right thing to do, the goals of NWF are similar to Tribes in many respects so it makes sense to work together to advance them, and it makes sense to support and sustain ecological and cultural values with Tribes. Garrit observes of NWF, "We are old, we have some influence. If we can do anything to support and be allies with Tribes – that's great. We don't want to overstate our influence, but we want to use our influence where we can, around values we share." He adds, "We start a relationship and maybe ultimately we do some work together. It's all relational – there's no way to do work without building a relationship."

Butch reflected on the beginning of his career after graduating from college in 1975. "I moved back to the reservation and there was lots of work to do but very little funding. Just BIA and Forestry. I was managing fish and wildlife and hoping for a trophy elk program." In the early 1980s, Butch helped established the Native American Fish &

Wildlife Society (NAFWS). In addition to NAFWS, circumstances nationally led to the creation of Tribal and intertribal organizations like the Intertribal Timber Council, the Intertribal Agriculture Council, and other Tribal natural resource organizations. These organizations provide training and education with and in communities.

Of NWF's efforts, Butch says, "There is a big potential for Tribes. Once NWF does this, others will see how to work with Tribes. Tribes control millions of acres. Fish and wildlife don't recognize boundaries and there is a need to manage across boundaries. . . . NWF is saying 'how can we help?'" It's "all about educating one another," he says. You "have to have a seat at the table," Butch adds. "It will take a while. NWF can be at the table for Tribes and get Tribes to the table."

Butch notes that, "Strategies are still being developed." He emphasizes, "I don't want Tribes thinking that the federation is trying to do what only Tribes can do, and I don't want to misrepresent what NWF will do. It's important to make every effort for Tribes to understand what the Federation is trying to do. I want Tribes to understand the tremendous potential of Federation's strategy."

Kent Salazar offered similar thoughts to Garrit and Butch. In telling me about his background, he recalled that he grew up with "the idea that it's important to stand up for other people and that it's important to help other people excel who do well." Asked if there was a moment when NWF's board decided the organization needs to work more with Tribal governments and organizations, he replied, "Five years ago. . . . We decided to update the organization's strategic plan – wildlife weren't thriving, insects were dying. Things were not doing well, based on science. Most of our affiliates are older, white men in their 60s. We started working at a national level and with our affiliates to diversify. Affiliates can chart their own path. We need everyone at the work, we have to mirror America to protect wild places and wildlife."

Kent noted that their next strategic plan revision will start in the second half of this year. "Language is not enough. We'll do more in the new strategic plan. We'll have standards for affiliates to be in NWF. We are trying to step up – we need women, we need people of color – not just Tribes, but others, too. We can't succeed without this."

KARUK TRIBE

Understanding Specific Tribes' Circumstances and Goals

BACKGROUND

The Karuk people have always resided in the mid-Klamath River region of the Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains in what is currently called northern California. With an Aboriginal Territory spanning an estimated 1.038 million acres, the Tribe occupied more than one hundred villages along the Klamath and Salmon Rivers and their tributaries. Today, Karuk trust lands, totaling 950 acres, are composed of individual and Tribal trust properties scattered along the Klamath River between Yreka and Orleans, California, with Tribal centers and administrative facilities located in Orleans, Somes Bar, Happy Camp, and Yreka. Nearly all of its Aboriginal Territory is located concurrent to lands administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Forest Service's (USFS) Klamath and Six Rivers National Forests.

With rich natural endowments and a strong culture-based commitment to land stewardship, the Karuk subsistence economy thrived. Karuk environmental management shaped the region's ecological conditions for millennia. Through carefully observing natural processes, the Karuk developed management regimes based on a landscape-level ecosystem approach. Self-described as "fix the world people," the Karuk continue ceremonies that restore balance and renew the world. (Sources: https://karuktribeclimatechangeprojects.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/reduced-size_final-karuk-climate-adaptation-plan.pdf and https://www.cakex.org/documents/karuk-tribe-department-natural-resources-eco-cultural-resources-management-plan) For the past twenty years, the Karuk have fully engaged to remove dams on the Upper Klamath River to restore struggling salmon runs and the ecological health of their lifeblood river.

THE OPPORTUNITY FOR PHILANTHROPY AND TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

Tribal governments, most of which receive the bulk of their operating funds from the United States government – whether administered through the Self Governance Program or the Bureau of Indian Affairs – often do not receive support from philanthropy. There are a variety of possible reasons for this: a perception by philanthropy that Tribes cannot be funded (Tribes are non-taxable entities, just not under section 501(c)(3) of the tax code); that Tribes are financially provided for by the United States' government and/or receive significant gaming revenue; an unwillingness of

philanthropy to recognize Indigenous communities because so much of its wealth is derived from extraction in these communities; and a general lack of awareness on the part of philanthropy regarding Indigenous communities that stems from an American narrative that stereotypes and makes invisible Indigenous communities. Access to people in philanthropy – the ability to forge and sustain relationships – is also a barrier for Tribal people. Consequently, many Tribes have little to no experience working with philanthropy.

Federal administrations vary widely in their respect of Tribal governments as sovereign nations and their willingness to consult and engage Tribal governments in a government-to-government relationship. Diplomacy – and funding – with Tribes varies with presidential administrations and Congress. Within this unsteady funding landscape, philanthropy and, in particular, environmental and conservation funders have a tremendous opportunity to support and work with Tribal governments and communities on shared goals. Environmental and conservation funders can play an important role by first listening to the interests, needs, and opportunities of Tribal community leaders and members, making an effort to see and understand points of interconnection that may be described, and finding ways to support what is articulated.

"We've not had a lot of experience with foundations," said Bill Tripp, Karuk Tribal member and Director of Natural Resources and Environmental Policy. "It wasn't until the last few years that we started looking for a way to backfill [federal funding losses] with philanthropy."

Running aspects of Tribal government departments with philanthropic funds based around "strategies" and "theories of change" that may change every few years can be untenable for Tribes without foundations committing to flexible, long-term funding. For example, long-standing Karuk Department of Natural Resources (DNR) programs like fire management and fish habitat restoration work are products of the Tribe's relationship with their Aboriginal Territory that will not change.

FUNDRAISING AND INDIRECT COST RATES

Like city and county governments, Tribal governments provide a wide range of services to their constituents: natural resources management, public safety, health, education, cultural, and housing, to name a few. Tribes, in the U.S. though, do it without a tax base. Unlike state and local governments that levy taxes on land to pay for provided services, Tribes are prohibited by the federal government from doing so on either trust land or fee land that is already taxed by local government.

While non-profit organizations may be familiar with seeking private funding or even have dedicated staff for this purpose, Tribal governments often lack dedicated fundraising staff beyond a grant writer or two, if that. Consequently, they may not be able to respond to every opportunity that arises when supporting many Tribal departments through their writing. "We need staff to help build our fundraising," said Bill. Fundraising with foundation staff and grant writing are usually not the same skill sets. Tribal grant writers may also initially lack familiarity with philanthropy as a whole and with staff at particular funders.

Placing fundraising and reporting responsibilities on Tribal staff creates challenges. Bill notes, "Being in communication and trying to get a foot in the door takes time. . . . Asking program leads to take charge of developing those relationships is hard because then staff accomplishes less of the work they were hired to do."

"People generally don't understand the dynamics of indirect cost rates for Tribes," observed Bill. "We don't receive money from that indirect cost pool at DNR, but we have to duplicate office administration, human resources, etc. (DNR's staff is large, relies on grants that necessitate management and compliance, and is located in a different community than the main Tribal office.) We need to hire people to provide those functions and we have to be able to pay them, which is often not allowed in grants. Funders may assume these roles are covered, but they aren't."

Tribes negotiate an indirect cost rate every few years with the federal government for the federal grants they seek and often seek to apply this rate to grants from state or private sources. Thus, the indirect or administrative cost cap that a foundation may have may preclude Tribes from applying since a portion of costs cannot be expensed. For more, see: "Indirect Costs: A New Strategy for Tribes by Falmouth Institute," https://www.falmouthinstitute.com/consulting/FalmouthIDC_ANewStrategyforTribes.pdf)

This is another reason that general support grants – particularly multi-year grants – are helpful to Tribal governments. Foundations would do well to provide ample funding for not only project work to be carried out, but also the ancillary staffing that is needed to ensure a project's success. "Foundations have their programs and it may be hard for us to fashion a priority to fit with their program," Bill observed. "We have built some relationships and we hope those will be long lasting. We need that so we can be strategic. Federal priorities change with each administration. The buzzwords change

so we have to change to keep up. Philanthropy is a possibility, and it could help the Tribe to build systems of its own for areas like natural resources management and infrastructure."

SUPPORTING A HOLISTIC PICTURE: TRIBAL ENDOWMENTS, INFRASTRUCTURE, LAND PURCHASE, AND GENERAL SUPPORT

The Karuk Tribe created an endowment for eco-cultural revitalization fund so it could produce a buffer for when funding changes or challenges arise. Then the Tribe experienced catastrophic fires in summer 2020 along with COVID-19. Many Tribal members and staff lost homes in the Slater Fire. Irreplaceable cultural objects and personal belongings were lost. The Tribe has only raised approximately $140,000 in funds for the endowment fund so far. This figure needs to be in the millions of dollars in order to make meaningful change.

Before the arrival of miners, white settlers, loggers, and the creation of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), the Tribe extensively used fire to manage the forest. Fire suppression advanced by the USFS – which now controls the overwhelming majority of Karuk Aboriginal Territory and has resulted in increasing fire severity – is another chapter in the story of settler-colonialism and trauma inflicted on Indigenous communities. The Tribe's Department of Natural Resources has been a proponent of Tribal fire management for decades and drafted the *Karuk Tribe Department of Natural Resources Eco-Cultural Resources Management Plan* (2010) along with the *Karuk Tribe Climate Adaptation Plan* (2018).

"Fire resilience got hyper-romanticized and a lot of funders wanted to support Tribal fire management," said Bill. "It was great to get support for this work and we received three large project grants. Unfortunately, I had to send $100,000 grant back because we no longer have the staff and administrative support to carry out the grant projects. I don't know how we'll spend the money that remains." The losses from the pandemic and last year's Slater Fire have been devastating for the Karuk community. "We've had double digit staff loss," said Bill. "We need people and money for construction of homes and infrastructure so we can carry out grant programs. We currently have 7 positions advertised for hire at DNR and we are receiving zero applications. Not even for an entry level clerical technician." Project grants, though helpful, hinder departments' abilities to be nimble when circumstances change. General support grants best help organizations respond to challenges when they arise and continue work on projects and make progress toward long-term goals.

After the fire, some displaced staff left the area; many plan to rebuild. The Tribe's Aboriginal Territory is extremely rural and rugged, making the cost of re-building both expensive and logistically challenging. Bill explained, "We need to recruit people and we need to be able to offer them housing. We have to get these things in place to achieve our mission." Since there are few funding sources available for land acquisition, construction and infrastructure development or improvement, again, general support dollars made available to Tribes or Tribal departments from philanthropic funders could bring vital opportunities for communities.

The Tribe's endowment, if funded, could also generate revenue for land purchases and many other activities. Since re-gaining federal recognition in 1979, the Karuk have endeavored to purchase land in their Aboriginal Territory and place it back into trust so that they can manage it. Tribal trust land holdings are now 950 acres. "We had a chance to purchase two parcels, one of which was associated with our world renewal [ceremonial practices; the Karuk are self-described as "fix the world people"]. That parcel was $159,000. They sold in two days to a cash buyer from San Diego. We need to build funding on the front end so that we can respond to these opportunities. Farmland averages around $4,000 an acre, but this parcel was listed for over $17,000 per acre. We also want to expand our community farm. If we could cover the costs for operation, we can generate revenue that can go into this endowment fund and create a sustainable future." As Bill noted in this context, "Donations to our endowment would be helpful, as would the ability to invest a percentage of each grant award along with any associated program income in a sustainable future."

Bill went on, "We need to have a reserve." Tribes can work with foundations to secure money for land purchase, but those funds need to be in place early on to allow flexibility when land comes up for sale. This type of flexibility would allow the Karuk and other Tribes to better manage their territories and reach their environmental and conservation goals; doing so would also likely advance goals – where identified in advance and shared with Tribal organizations – of environmental and conservation funders. "For example, we are currently in discussions with a foundation to allocate about $166,000 to a project. We are looking to put much of it toward progressing cultural burning efforts, but about $75,000 is being put into the endowment fund and in doing this, we are agreeing to put the next two-five years of endowment spending toward progressing the outcomes of this project in whatever form that may be."

GREATER YELLOWSTONE COALITION

For too long, the Western conservation movement has excluded and ignored diverse voices and perspectives, causing harm and creating a weaker movement as a result.

BACKGROUND

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition (GYC) was founded in 1983 on a simple premise: an ecosystem will remain healthy and wild only if it is kept whole. For more than 37 years, they have worked to define and promote the concept of ecosystem management. Their offices, located in Montana, Wyoming, and Idaho, allow them to engage in a wide variety of efforts locally, regionally, and nationally to ensure Greater Yellowstone's lands, waters, wildlife are protected now and well into the future.

The Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem is a remarkable natural landscape. It is home to a complete array of native wildlife, the headwaters of the west, an important place in the history of conservation, and of deep importance to the First Nations who made this place home since time immemorial.

GYC' new strategic plan articulates their updated Vision, Mission, "This Land" statement, and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion statement:

Vision

We envision a Greater Yellowstone where wild nature flourishes, plant, animal, and human communities thrive in reciprocity, and all people work together to conserve this globally significant ecosystem.

Mission

To work with all people to protect the lands, waters, and wildlife of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, now and for future generations.

This Land

Long before the arrival of Europeans and the beginning of the Western conservation movement, the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem was stewarded by Indigenous people who viewed its lands, waters, and wildlife as sacred. The Indigenous way of caring for the land acknowledged its life-giving energy, was centered on reciprocity, and used Traditional Ecological Knowledge to keep the ecosystem in balance. Today, more than 30 tribes, including the Apsáalooke/Crow, Cheyenne, Blackfeet, Shoshone, Bannock, Arapaho, and

other Indigenous peoples are keepers of this knowledge and retain deep connections to this remarkable place.

The forced removal of Indigenous people from places like Yellowstone, the loss of Indigenous land stewardship practices that resulted, and the continued exclusion of Native voices from the Western conservation movement are realities we must acknowledge and confront. Recognizing and reinstituting Indigenous values, beliefs, and practices is a vital step in restoring the cultural and ecological integrity of the region. The Greater Yellowstone Coalition commits to identifying and fulfilling its role in advancing that paradigm shift.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

The Greater Yellowstone Coalition envisions a Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem where plant, animal, and human communities exist in reciprocity. We know we will only achieve this through work that is inclusive of the lands, waters, wildlife, and diverse communities of this region. For too long, the Western conservation movement has excluded and ignored diverse voices and perspectives, causing harm and creating a weaker movement as a result.

It is our responsibility to find and embrace our role in changing the existing paradigm by advancing inclusion and equity within our organization, our culture, and our corner of the conservation movement.

We commit to doing so because:

It is the right thing to do.

- Our organization's stated values are integrity, innovation, collaboration, excellence, and inclusion.
- It is our responsibility to ensure GYC has an inclusive and equitable organizational culture where diverse staff, board, and community members feel welcomed to bring their unique experiences and perspectives to the table.
- As a conservation leader, we have the obligation to identify and interrupt oppression and inequity within the scope of our work.

It is the smart thing to do.

- Our work will be more effective and enduring if it incorporates the perspectives, knowledge, and skills unique to the diverse individuals and communities within the Greater Yellowstone.
- Our movement will be stronger and more sustainable with the involvement of a broader, more diverse supporter base.

GYC's vision is a healthy and intact Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem where critical lands and waters are adequately protected, wildlife is managed in a thoughtful, sustainable manner and a strong, diverse base of support is working to conserve this special place as part of a larger, connected Northern Rocky Mountain Region.

They envision a day when:

- All people work together to protect the ecological integrity and beauty of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem.
- Greater Yellowstone's natural and human communities flourish because people act with the understanding that their economic, cultural, and spiritual well-being depends on the health and vitality of the region's natural systems.
- Elected officials work with citizens, on the basis of scientific knowledge and the long- term needs of the ecosystem, to enact public policies that protect nature and preserve biodiversity in the ecosystem.
- Public and private institutions actively protect the ecosystem and embrace the region's unique potential for people to learn about living with nature's processes.

(Source: https://greateryellowstone.org/mission)

INCLUDING THE WIND RIVER INDIAN RESERVATION

Over the nearly four decades since GYC's inception, the organization worked intermittently with Tribal communities in and near its geography. The Wind River Indian Reservation, home to the Eastern Shoshone and Northern Arapaho Tribes, sits entirely within the footprint of GYC. To the east is the Crow Indian Reservation; to the west is Fort Hall Indian Reservation, home to the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes.

In the past, work with Tribal communities varied and the organization would "dip in and out of Tribal geography," according to GYC's Executive Director Scott Christensen. At one point, GYC had an intern who was from Rocky Boy Reservation (in north central Montana) and interviewed Tribal officials at Fort Hall and Wind River about native trout and climate change mitigation and adaptation. In the past – approximately ten or so years ago – GYC had board members from the Tribes. These varied, issue-based interactions with Tribal nations contributed to staff/board learning about Tribal rights, values, and interests, but were not a sustained part of the GYC's work. Now though, "the organization is in a more deliberate learning and action mode," says Scott.

GYC had recognized the need for DEI and Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) as part of its work and was working with consultants on how best incorporate it. This proved timely as the broader national reckoning emerged on racism in 2020. As part of GYC's DEI work, they had been looking at who is in their region. They noticed Tribal communities were not present despite being in or near the GYC's footprint. This realization coincided with the relocation of Siva Sundaresan, GYC's Director of Conservation, to Lander, Wyoming, which sits along the southern border of the Wind River Indian Reservation. As part of his move, he got to know the area over the course of a couple years, including the Wind River communities, and noticed that there was an opportunity in GYC's work.

Siva joined GYC four years ago and has been in Wyoming seven. Previously, he worked on ecological issues and politics related to zebras and lions in Kenya and tigers in India. When we talked, Siva said, "I noticed a gap in GYC's work with the Wind River Reservation (WRR). Here was an area the size of Yellowstone National Park, within the ecosystem and well-within GYC's scope of work where we had a huge opportunity and moral imperative to invest in conservation. WRR has a Tribally-designated wilderness area, a wildlife and water code, a sizeable land base, and a clear, long-standing commitment to conservation. It was obvious GYC should and could support Tribally-led conservation on the WRR. While many Tribes have ties to this ecosystem, their present-day reservations often fall outside what is called the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem today. So, the WRR was an obvious first place to start our journey to elevate Indigenous community-led conservation."

Janet Offensend, Chair of GYC's Board of Directors, reflected, "About three or four years ago, we had a board meeting in Lander and we visited Wind River. We traveled around with [Eastern Shoshone Tribal member] Jason Baldes and got an introduction to the community. Jason's candor about the history of the Tribes on the reservation was really eye-opening for the group. We were all distressed to see the ongoing problems related to historical actions and continuing policies."

Siva talked with Scott about the inclusion of Wind River in the Coalition's work and he agreed. Others in GYC agreed as well. GYC recognized that working with Indigenous communities like those on the WRR means that they have to view conservation more broadly as many in Native communities do. For these people, conservation is not just about land or wildlife but also tied to issues of culture, art, spirituality and, ultimately, sovereignty. GYC recognized that it must be committed to authentic and long-term partnerships and be willing to overcome its fear of making-mistakes. With this in mind, GYC entered this work.

Scott describes the decision to incorporate the Wind River communities into their work as a "no-brainer. We wondered why we had overlooked the reservation for so long," he said. "The barriers and excuses felt real. We had some fear of the unknown and around where to start and at one point we chastised ourselves, but we knew we had to overcome that and our trepidation."

HIRING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

To begin to include Wind River in their work and as part of their strategic planning, social justice, and racial equity efforts, GYC created a position to hire someone from Wind River and start to determine if and how the communities and GYC might work together. Scott reflected, "We wanted to be careful not to develop outcomes before listening to communities. We wanted to understand how to fit this into the organization. We talked with people [at Wind River] about pit falls. We tried to craft a position description so it sounded right to people." Siva agreed, "It seems obvious to work in a thoughtful way. You don't have to hide your agenda, but it needs to overlap with community needs. We have our priorities and want to be Tribal-led and GYC supported – the idea that 'it's your work that we are helping with.'"

GYC made an organizational – board and staff – commitment to work with folks at Wind River as part of their DEI efforts. They also decided to hire a community member from Wind River to work toward better integration of Wind River and GYC's goals. Siva helped shaped the position description and its responsibilities based on input and feedback from Native people at Wind River. Reflecting on the process, Siva observed, "You treat people like people. You learn what are the needs? The opportunities? Nothing earth-shattering. It's the basic homework of getting to know people. There is a need here – water, buffalo, climate, ancestral food gathering. I talked with people there about, 'This is my intention. Is the description landing right? Is the language right?' Then we asked for resumes. We were lucky to hire Wes."

Wes Martel joined GYC as the Senior Wind River Conservation Associate in January 2021. Prior to that, he served on the Eastern Shoshone Business Council for twenty years where he oversaw programs and legislation dealing with water, taxation, energy, and environment. He was Chairman of the Fish & Game Committee for the Shoshone & Arapaho Tribes where they instituted sound fisheries and wildlife management planning with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and also adopted a Tribal Game Code. His work included drafting, approving, and adoption of the Wind River Water Code. (Source: https://greateryellowstone.org/meet-our-team)

LEARNING THROUGH LISTENING

I asked Siva about why GYC believes it is important to work with Wind River. He explained, "Working with Tribes is the right thing to do for many reasons – morally, strategically, optically. Internally, Scott and the board have been nothing but supportive. The work is not easy and susceptible to mistakes," he noted. "But the organization has made a commitment to say, 'Okay, let's get this right.' It takes courage and humility. Also making people aware that it's not always easy to land on a policy decision. When something challenging does come, we will sit together and figure it out."

"GYC has been on a DEI journey for a few years," said Siva. "We have worked with [a consultant] for a couple years. There has been a national reckoning. The kind of people our board attracts have wide interests and are open-minded. They read David Treuer and *Braiding Sweetgrass*."

Janet noted that GYC "wanted to center work [with Wind River] in the organization's new strategic plan. Scott convened an innovation committee and solicited ideas from board and staff. Working with Tribes was a new, big direction that emerged, and is inspiring to all of us. We articulated our plans in our new strategic plan. It's complete and was passed [in June 2021]."

Janet noted that, "Cultural differences are large [as between Indians and non-Indians] – how communities are organized, how they make decisions. We [non-Indigenous people] are so accustomed to top-down organizations, but decisions can happen in different ways. We have to understand those differences and adapt our approach. Timetables are different, the sense of urgency is different. True collaboration comes from respecting that and working with it. The opportunities are so rich. To develop new kinds of relationships is thrilling."

GYC'S FUTURE WORK

Now, about six months after Wes joined and following dozens of conversations with Wes, and GYC staff with agencies, Tribal members, governing councils, and partner organizations, GYC has identified broad areas of work where its investments would best leverage and complement Tribal conservation priorities. These issues are overlapping and interconnected. GYC will work to improve water quality, flows, and riparian habitat along the Big Wind River. GYC will also support efforts to restore bison to reservation lands and expand the existing bison herds on the WRR. They will endeavor to elevate Indigenous voices in agency decision-making. Specifically, they will find ways for Tribal stories and histories to be better captured in their narratives about conservation

and land protection. They will support policies and programs to improve consultation among Tribes and agencies in decision-making, whether by supporting Tribal Historic Preservation Offices or through federal agency planning processes. In the short-term, GYC hopes to use opportunities such as Yellowstone National Park's 150th anniversary as a key moment around which they can rally federal agencies to commit to more effective partnerships with Tribes. Finally, GYC is committed to supporting additional Wind River community members being employed in its conservation efforts.

THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY

Identifying Indigenous Leadership and Evaluating Language

BACKGROUND

The Wilderness Society (TWS) was founded in 1935 by Aldo Leopold, Robert Marshall, Robert Sterling Yard, Benton MacKaye, Ernest Oberholtzer, Harvey Broome, Bernard Fran, and Harold C. Anderson. At the time, forests and other federally-managed public lands outside of the national parks were seen mainly as resources for industry and development. Timber, minerals and livestock grazing were the raw materials used to fuel the Nation's burgeoning economy and growing population. TWS was formed in response to the perceived loss of wildness and accordingly, TWS was envisioned as an "organization of spirited people who will fight for the freedom and preservation of the wilderness."

In the years that followed, TWS worked with conservationists at large to rally around a few big causes such as preventing a destructive dam from being built on the Dinosaur National Monument's Green River and preserving remote areas of Alaska including the establishment of the Arctic Wildlife Refuge. These battles over individual development threats led to a recognition that a unified, national framework for protecting the wildest places would be a more effective and holistic approach.

The campaign to preserve those lands as-is and independent of human activity ends up directly informing the creation of the Wilderness Act, which was passed in 1964. The act immediately placed 9.1 million acres of federal land into the National Wilderness Preservation System and helped set the framework for future wilderness conservation. (Source: https://www.wilderness.org/about-us/our-team/our-history and Jennifer Ferenstein)

COMMITTING TO DEI AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

In 2016, TWS made a commitment to launch work related to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI). This commitment includes: increasing diversity of the TWS team and those it works with, embedding equity in all of TWS' work, and improving the TWS culture to make it more welcoming and inclusive.

INVITING INDIGENOUS PEOPLE TO JOIN GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

Jennifer Ferenstein, Native Lands Partnerships Program and Senior Conservation Manager at The Wilderness Society, described the Governing Council's efforts to diversify its members by adding Indigenous people. "We have identified a mix of talented people of Indigenous descent. One recently accepted an opportunity in the Biden-Harris Administration, though, and dropped off due to the conflict of interest. One of our Indigenous Governing Council members also recently went to the Administration so had to leave the Council." In spite of losing candidates to federal offices, she noted that they have identified some really good candidates and are "waiting to approach them through people who know them."

The shift toward identifying and including more Indigenous leadership in the Governing Council is a significant one for TWS. Many Indigenous languages do not have words for "wild" or "wilderness" as Indigenous peoples did not separate themselves from the landscape around them, instead managing, utilizing, and stewarding their territories. The idea that a landscape was "uninhabited" was a falsity created by European colonists; in fact, the landscape colonists settled was carefully managed to promote many things, including animal, plant, fish habitat and forest overgrowth. Wilderness areas – unless managed by Tribes – historically and presently displace their original caretakers from management. As an organization whose work is predicated on wilderness and whose language may be an affront to Indigenous people, the effort to include Indigenous people in executive decision-making roles – as well as articulate and implement a means by which to work with Native communities across the country – is significant.

A key component of TWS's recently completed strategic plan is to build-in more inclusive language and narratives around U.S. public lands that reflect all peoples' stories and connection to nature. This requires TWS to re-evaluate the organization's language. "It would give us an opportunity to look at the organization's language – words like 'wild', 'uninhabited' – with our land acknowledgement playing an important role." said Jennifer. "An unvarnished check of language," is a hope of hers. "It would help us look at our alignment and see where we can change our language and how we show up [as an organization that is committed to DEI and Indigenous communities]."

APPENDIX

RESOURCES RELATED TO CANADA:

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RESOURCES RELATED TO THE UNITED STATES:

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