

Virtual Event Transcript
**OSTP-CEQ Listening Session on Elevating Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge
in Federal Decision Making**

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Dr. Gretchen Goldman: I would now like to pass the microphone to my colleague, Libby Washburn Special Assistant for Presidential affairs.

Libby Washburn: Thank you. I'm Libby. I work in the Domestic Policy Council at the White House focusing on the portfolio a citizen of the Chickasaw nation and very excited to be before you today talking about Indigenous knowledge. This was a President initiative at our White House Tribal Nations summit. It was one of the big announcements that the President made. It's one of the biggest priorities of this Administration. OSTP and CEQ have taken on this monumental task of working to create guidance on Indigenous knowledge with all of the Federal agencies. And so happy that you are here today. This is a key part of what we're doing. We have a very robust tribal consultation. And then this Listening Session. And we hope to hear from you. I don't want to take up a lot of time because I would really rather hear from you and hear what you have to say and offer regarding this initiative.

But just know it is a priority. And we are here to listen and thank you so much for your time.

>> Thank you so much Libby we appreciate you being here with us today I will now pass it to my colleague Dominic, Deputy Director for species and conservation at the Council on Environmental Quality.

>> Thank you, Gretchen. And Libby. For those remarks. And welcome, everyone. I just want to thank you for taking the time to join with us today to share your perspectives as we look to advance this really important policy and the first of its kind. As you all know the Administration is working to deliver meaningful guidance to Federal agencies to elevate Indigenous knowledge in a comprehensive way. That builds off of the good work and collaboration we know is already underway and addresses those areas where we know we need to do better. Gretchen will speak more to this I know but we are in the early stages of this process. And the purpose of today's session is to hear from you. To really form and shape the development of this guidance. So just on behalf of the CEQ I want to acknowledge how eager and thankful we are to have you with us today to share your thoughts and experiences on some of the issues we have outlined to continue to drive this important work. And now I'll ask my other colleagues to introduce themselves as -- and I think we'll start with my OSTP colleague Haley

Case-Scott over to you.

>> Thank you, Dominic. Hello everyone my name is Haley I'm a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Indians and descendant of the Chippewa Indians I'm a policy analyst here at the Office of Science and Technology Policy. And provide support to the ITEK interagency Working Group and the ITEK engagement effort. I'll pass it to the next colleague, thank you.

>> Hello, I'm Raychelle Daniel I grew up at the mouth of the Bering Sea region and at OSTP I'm Deputy Director for the executive Steering Committee and provide policy advice for Indigenous knowledge. I look forward to hearing from everyone today, as well and I'll pass it on to the next person.

>> Hi I'm Allison Crimmins I'm on detail from the EPA at OSTP where I'm the Director of the National Climate Assessment I think back to you, Gretchen. Oops, one more.

>> Go for it, Pamela.

>> Oh hi my name is Pam Holstein-Wallace I work with the FEMA Public Alert & Warning System I'm very pleased to be here and happy to be part of this. I'm interested in listening to what you have to say to make our programs better. Thank you for having me.

>> Thank you, only Jody Chase it's been my owner to manage the tribal colleges and universities program at the National Science Foundation for the last 20 years, thank you.

>> Thank you, all, we're so glad to be here with you today I would now like to say a few words about this initiative to guide our Listening Session today at the White House Tribal Nations summit last November President Biden announced the initiative to put forward knowledge in Federal decision making this was motivated by requests from tribal leaders for the Federal Government to issue guidance around DJ knowledge and comes as part of the Administration's broader commitment to strengthen relationships with Tribal Nations and Native communities.

The White House memorandum released at the Tribal Nations summit announced a commitment and a process to elevate Indigenous knowledge in Federal decision making specifically through development of White House-led guidance for Federal agencies to be released later this year. To develop this guidance for Federal agencies, we want to hear from you. We're committed to ensuring that your input meaningful shapes this work and today's Listening Session is a critical part of that broader engagement strategy which also includes tribal consultations, written comments from the public and broader conversations with Native organizations, knowledge holders, scholars and others with experience and interest in Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge. To guide your comments today we would like to share some questions that we are interested in hearing from you on. The first is what would you like Federal employees to know about Indigenous knowledge? And thinking about areas where you engage with the Federal Government, how would you like to work with Federal departments and agencies in the future to ensure that Indigenous knowledge properly informs Federal processes and policies? What challenges do you experience or foresee? And what terminology should be used when referring to this body of work in Federal Government contexts?

Indigenous knowledge, Traditional Ecological Knowledge, other preferences and considerations?

Are there existing guidance documents or agreements or practices that provide good examples of how Indigenous knowledge should be elevated in Federal processes and policies?

And finally, the fifth National Climate Assessment, which is currently underway is a Congressionally mandated report that assesses projected impacts of climate change across the United States. How do you recommend that Indigenous knowledge be represented in the development, processes and content of national climate assessments? With that I'll pass it back to Dominic to help us get started today.

>> Thanks, Gretchen so just a few administrative notes before I begin calling on individuals to speak. First please plan on speaking for no more than two, three minutes max so we can ensure we have as many people as possible during this Listening Session contribute.

Second, a reminder that this time is dedicated to hearing from the community. And as such, we will not be taking questions or providing substantive responses in this forum but if you have more detailed comments questions or documents to provide please do submit those by email to ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov. And we ask for those to be submitted no later than Thursday May 5th 2022. To speak in this session, use the raise hand feature in Zoom. And if you're calling in, press star 9 to join the queue. Finally please note this meeting is open to the public and will be recorded for internal purposes and of course we expect speakers to be respectful and refrain from any inappropriate or offensive language so we can maintain a productive engagement so we look forward to your input and with that, we will get started. I will begin by calling on names and unmuting folks or if you're on the phone I'll just refer to the last four digits we see on the screen here. And Apologies in advance if I mispronounce any names. I will do my best.

So we will start with Roman Bitsui.

>> The name -- my name is the name given to me by Pinyon. Can you hear me.

>> We can hear you.

>> The name given to me by Pinyon boarding school. It's Roman. I grew up monolingual. Speaking only Navajo. With a traditional upbringing. I was one of the 10 children raised without running water or electricity in a traditional Navajo Nahogan (phonetic) I'm also the first Navajo to graduate from Princeton.

I have participated in our Navajo traditions, ceremonies, and spiritual practices for my entire life.

When we talk about Indigenous traditional knowledge, we are talking about far more than -- we are talking about far more than ecology. It includes social order. Sense of natural stewardship. Values, and the spirituality understood by Indigenous people such as ceremonies that connect us with our holy people. And our cultural through our historical narrative.

These are embedded in our songs and prayers.

Offerings are a necessary part of our spiritual observation. Traditional knowledge has been in decline for quite some time. This has been accelerated by COVID.

Which prevents us from participating in ceremonies and other traditional practices.

Navajo Indigenous traditional knowledge includes understanding that we have kinship with living, breathing nature. Earth. Cosmos. Water. Mountains. And holy beings.

And all life on Earth is sacred. Examples are some animals, birds, insects, reptiles, plants that form our connecting links between this existence and our relationship with the cosmic world and the holy people.

Animals are visible to us but they also share the sacred powers of the other world.

We are all interdependent in this life.

And all life in this is the creation of the holy people as we and our cultures each understand them.

The Federal plan to elevate Indigenous traditional knowledge in Federal decision making should be on two tracks.

One is for the Tribal Government organization to implement and administer their processes with the Federal agencies. The other should be that we, as the elders, herbalists, peacemaker, knowledge keeper, the hakates (phonetic) so-called medicine people, and Indigenous communities must have our own process with the Federal agencies.

Our process is sacred and so well avoid any discussion of any notion of sovereignty. Political parties. Or control. So that you and we can reach consensus in our own traditional way without distraction of political agendas.

This is the Navajo process. We all come together and share perspectives so that a solution optimizes the goals of all. Instead of sacrificing those with quite voices while maximizing the solution desired by the loudest.

Of course it can be expected that the credibility of people involved will be questioned. But that is also part of the process.

The answer is not simply coming up with an overall Indigenous integrated resource management plan or something similar. In which Federal agencies can say it consulted with us. That's more of the same that has not worked. At least for the Navajo.

The knowledge that we share would have to be implemented in an ongoing way as a challenge to philosophy and practice. There is no quick answer. This must be an inclusive discussion.

Some of the guidelines you seek are in our songs.

The most important mistake you can make is to bring us in too late. Don't present us with the question. You think you will bring out explanation of Indigenous knowledge. Past Federal land and Indigenous relations practice show us you don't know what you don't know about how we think.

Let us help you frame the question so we can participate fully in the discussion.

I hope to talk to you soon again. Thank you.

>> Thank you so much for those comments.

Turning now to Laura Jacobs.

>> Hi, can you hear me?

>> We can, thanks.

>> Hi, my name is Laura Jacobs and I'm a citizen of the Muscogee Nation and an ecologist who works with traditional knowledge at Oregon state university first I would like to thank for everyone for allowing this public process to happen I do have a couple of comments first ecological knowledge is an inherently Indigenous form of knowledge doesn't need to be called ITEK but only traditional ecological knowledges it differs from other different kinds of knowledges like local ecological knowledge which is a similar but distinct way of knowing where non-Indigenous peoples hold long standing knowledge about their local environments so I respectfully to ask for the Federal Government to call Traditional Ecological Knowledge by it's correct terminology TEK not ITEK additionally I suggest you look into the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples specifically Article 31 which states that Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop and control their cultural heritage traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions as well as the manifestations of their science. Technologies and cultures.

They also have the right to maintain control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such information.

These rights mean that Indigenous peoples should not just be stakeholders in how the Federal Government is engaging with TEK-related data but instead Indigenous peoples should be leading these efforts at all levels. And any inclusion of TEK should be met with co-managerial frameworks in which the Federal Government equitably partners with tribes and Indigenous peoples to oversee land stewardship.

These types of co-managerial frameworks should provide Indigenous peoples with full rights to be the ones who are implementing their practices. Instead of requiring them to turn over their sacred data to the Feds which will be then used without their oversight.

The U.S. Federal Government has a long-standing history of harming Indigenous peoples. And so I respectfully request that Indigenous leadership should be at the forefront of all TEK discussions. Planning efforts. Policymaking. And the implementation of any types of Indigenous science on Federal lands.

The Federal Government needs to recognize that our data is sacred. And it has been developed, maintained and overseen by Indigenous value systems for tens of thousands of years. So we're the only ones who should be applying what we know.

These aren't things we can just teach other people to do or to know. Our data is not something that should just be turned over to the Federal agencies or public land managers. It should only be used by us under our power of control and authority. So if the Feds should establish -- so the Feds should establish equity-based co-managerial roles for Indigenous peoples and tribes if they want to use our data.

This is the best way that we can protect our rights to our sacred knowledges. And uphold all of the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. Thank you.

>> Thanks so much Laura for those comments. Before we turn to the next commenter, I just want to remind folks that if you do have remarks to make, please use the raise hand function on

Zoom so that we can see you in the queue.

Next on my list here is Brendan Raymond-Yakoubian.

>> Yes, hi, sound check.

>> We can hear you, thanks.

>> Thank you. Hi, my name is Brendan Raymond speaking on behalf of Kawerak Inc. the Alaska Native for the 20 Federally recognized tribes of the bearing straight region we thank you for your work we will be submitting a letter but want to touch on a few points today in response to some of the questions that were posed.

First, Federal employees should be engaging TK and IK broadly not just their ecological subcomponents.

There is more to TK and IK than just their ecological components which are relevant to Federal policy and TK and IK are integrated across domains including ecological, spiritual and others.

Secondly, it's important for Federal employees to be versed in TK and how to work to avoid misconceptions. Particular note are misconceptions about the nature and scope of TK. Wherever science is used, so can and should TK be used.

Additionally, it's important to understand that TK applies to both small and large scales. Including globally. As a factual and also more abstract levels such as pertaining to values and ethics.

It can also inform directly or indirectly many topics which people may not realize. Federal employees should not simply assume what TK and -- can and cannot speak to directly or indirectly nor what TK holders are or are not interested in or what they know about. Thirdly, regarding terminology, Kawerak pleases it's important to use the terminology to use by whatever people the Federal employees are engaging with and not force terminology on others through its work our social scion program has developed terminology we use which we find resonates with communities in our region and that's appropriate to our work and that includes Indigenous knowledge as that broader knowledge which Indigenous individuals or communities may have. And traditional knowledge as an Indigenous-only subset of IK which pertains to multi-generational often expert knowledge rooted in deep history but also ever evolving we have developed a briefing document on this topic and encourage you to consult it for our rationale. Beyond just terminology it's important to understand the underlying concepts so one is clear about who -- what one is talking about with whom and why.

And finally, regarding guidance documents and related issues, yes, there is a bounty of information on this. For example, we have been heavily involved in these issues and has been working on an umbrella effort regarding knowledge sovereignty and indigenization information for which can be found at quirc.org/knowledge included in this work is a development of a toolkit related to research which includes protocols, guidelines and best practices, guidance on IK and TK information about co-production of knowledge which is the approach the Federal Government should use in research, policy and management and other topics. Thank you very much for the opportunity to comment.

>> Brendan, would you be able to give us -- send us that briefing paper to the mailbox?

>> Is that the address that Dominic had mentioned earlier.

>> Yeah; yeah.

>> Yeah, for sure, I can do that afterwards.

>> Wonderful, appreciate it. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Yeah and thanks for those thoughts, Brendan. One more note for folks who may be joining via phone, to raise your hand, please press star 9 to submit a comment and to unmute yourself it is star 6. Next we'll turn to Josephine Fu, you are up.

>> Yes, hi, I'm calling from the Navajo Nation and I have been asked to read out a little bit of what knowledge holders have put together.

It's part of a (inaudible) project our land, so it is kind of an umbrella effort, as well as Brendan was saying, with a lot of intonation gathered.

So firstly, I believe I've been asked to say that the knowledge impacts more than the ecology or science in each of us is social and natural stewardship both must be well functioning in order for health and wellness as a whole -- to be whole from past generations to future generations.

The complete absence of our traditional knowledge from Federal policies so far has brought us to a critical point of urgency. It is pastime for a broader application of traditional knowledge and the governmental orders of how we live and relate to our Earth Mother which are interdependent. Policies built on traditional knowledge can't be hybridized with approaches that deny our Earth Mother as a living being in need of ongoing sustenance.

This is why traditional knowledge holders have kept intonation close in the past. Our elders and knowledge holders will need assurances that upon sharing their knowledge, holistic integrity will be maintained with the inclusion of TEK.

The guidelines must reflect this in order for our knowledge holders to share medicine and for medicine to be received in good faith.

Finally, there need to be mechanisms to allow traditional knowledge individual to each community to be shared and receive as they are ready. We disagree with any emphasis on the Government-to-Government process being the exclusive means to obtain traditional knowledge. That is the wrong approach for traditional knowledge, especially at this time of urgency.

Traditional knowledge holders are separate from Tribal Governments traditional knowledge holders are concerned with the relationship that we have with the Mother Earth and not primarily concerned with relationships with governments. Knowledge holders need the ability to directly share our knowledge with the Federal Government upon consensus of our communities without undue barriers.

Native organizations can help get the knowledge that knowledge holders wish to share on a rolling basis.

Such a mechanism may be online and via electronic communication with Federal agencies of our physical meetings as each community is ready.

The proper gathering of this information requires community consensus and needs to follow

community timing.

It may also need Federal Government funding for this to happen.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide this statement on behalf of our knowledge holders.

>> Thank you so much Josephine for those thoughts.

Next we'll turn to Kaylene Sisk, please go ahead.

>> Can you hear me now?

>> We can.

>> Okay. I could hardly get that thing off of mute. I'm the chief of the Winnemem Wintu tribe in California by Mount Shasta which is the watershed that pretty much feeds the entire state of California. And we are a quote unrecognized tribe. And have been battling with the inappropriate treatment that we get from EPA and Bureau of Reclamation and U.S. fish and wildlife on protecting the salmon and bringing the salmon back to the McLeod River and as you know EPA can follow that the winter run salmon in California is pretty much doomed if they don't get them to the high mountain rivers soon.

But even though we're the only tribe on that river, and we are active. And we have been talking about the traditional practices of salmon swimming in our rivers, we don't really have a seat on the committee. Because we're not a Federally recognized tribe.

We can't really apply for any of those grants that are only put out for Federally recognized tribes.

But we will do everything that we can for the salmon.

But I would like to request that President Biden look at the state of California and the problems that have been created by creating this misknown label which doesn't really mean anything to anybody of being an unrecognized tribe who has a complete history and connection to the state and local Government from the time it became a state.

This kind of discrimination is stopping traditional practitioners from engaging and saving and being effective in saving the redwood trees. In saving our Bay Area shell mounds. You know, this is all history that has to do with climate change. Salmon are climate changers.

So we would like to request something be done to address this huge elephant in the room that no one can tackle and nobody wants to talk about. They just say, apply for recognition. For 40 years people in California have been applying for recognition. No one has got it. So there's a flaw. There's a problem. It's not like we disappeared. And we're still here. We're still talking.

And we're still trying to understand why would the BIA do that to us here in California?

So that's kind of my whole thing, you know, we have fish in New Zealand. And we're fighting with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife about pathogens and the pathogen test and whether or not we can bring eggs back to put in the river. But they are going to put winter run ide (phonetic) eggs in the river that aren't tested for pathogens as if there are no pathogens in California.

And yet we're saying the river has medicine for those fish that have those pathogens. And the only time that gets out of hand is when you put them in warm, slow water. The pathogens go wild.

But in the natural rivers, there are medicines, there are foods that they eat that keep them

healthy. And they don't seem to want to listen to this. Or engage in that. Because it hasn't scientifically been studied.

And so if at all we could, you know, get some attention on the California situation, there are many tribes in California that are suffering from this same invisible status. And there's really no way out, except for that black hole Federal recognition process. And if you want the ITEK or whatever the traditional knowledge is, it's coming from the tribes that are not casino tribes. And that's us. And so many other tribes in California. As you know. Most tribes are in California. Because of the kind of state that it is.

But we are on the river. And we need some assistance. And mechanisms put into place. You know, the UN Declaration says that we are entitled to our homelands that we had before. And we have a right to our distinctive way of life. And right now that's totally interfered with.

You know, we don't own anything on our river since 1941, the Act of Congress that took our land and flooded the rest of the land. And now, you know, we're fighting for the salmon. So I would just like to leave you with that. And hopefully we'll get a situation where we can, you know, even getting Deb Holland out here to look at what's going on with this situation in California.

We can't survive any longer than the fish can survive. We should be on the Endangered Species List, too. Okay. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Kaylene for that perspective.

I'll note now for everyone on the call that it doesn't look like there is anybody currently in the queue to speak. We do have this session open until 5:00 o'clock p.m. Eastern Time. So for about another hour and a half. It looks like some hands are coming up now. So the floor is no longer open but we'll start to turn to the next speakers.

And we will start with Steven LaPoint. Steven, please go ahead.

>> Hello. Can you all hear me.

>> Yes.

>> Hello I'm Steven LaPoint I'm an educator in the republic schools Native American culture and education I also sit on several Boards for state land conservation. My main question if I can get a little bit of offtopic here is representing 60% or approximately 60% of all Natives who live off reservations, we believe we also would deserve a seat or a voice in any of the Government initiatives for urban consultations.

And urban Indian centers. If we could get guidance on how to outreach from Federal Government decision makers to allow us to have a voice at a grassroots organizational level. And allow us to have our own opinion of how Federal guidance could be regulated.

Some of our traditional people who live in the urban settings have a lot of questions about food, sustainability, such as wild game and bison. And how this directs tribal sovereignty rights.

We want to observe the rights of the treaties of every nation.

The Urban Indian Health Commission has also stated that approximately 7 out of every 10 Native Americans who live off reservation who do not have a voice of their particular Tribal Government.

How would this initiative be able to raise the voice of tribal sovereignty and include urban Indians off reservation?

The next question was how to recommend TK be represented in the development processing content of the National Climate Assessment.

I would recommend that there be an urban-led initiative for consulting local tribes. And in such cases in Denver, the local tribes are hundreds of miles away. And approximately 70,000 Native Americans reside in the Denver Metro area.

With traditional people living and working in the cities, having a voice that could go all the way to the Federal Government level, assisting state conservation efforts in the Federal conservation effort would give all an equal voice as far as reaching throughout Indian Country.

And I would like to end my comments there. Thank you very much for your time.

>> Thank you, Steven.

Next Steve Giddings please go ahead Steve, if you're there, the floor is yours.

>> Am I unmuted now.

>> We can, thanks.

>> Sorry about that. I must have had to press a button. So my name is Steve Giddings I'm the Chief Scientist of NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries in that program we're increasingly recognizing the value of traditional knowledge in our discussions and our understanding of the places that are associated with the marine sanctuaries which are these protected areas in the oceans around the U.S.

So we are gradually broadening our notion of the application of what is often called best available science. And adopting it as more fundamental meaning of science, which is knowledge.

In fact, the Latin word for science meant knowledge, not the scientific method. It was a knowing, an expertness, or even experience. So it was based on those principles.

The -- we recognize other methods of gaining knowledge. And don't want to constrain the application of knowledge derived from our legitimate sources for aspects of sanctuary management. And these would include expertise built on experience as well as traditional and unwritten oral forms of understanding and dissemination of knowledge so when we assess sanctuary conditions, for example, we make it very clear that multiple forms of information are acceptable in determining resource status and trends.

And we typically refer to that as best available information. But given what I said above, it would be appropriate to also call that best available science.

So my encouragement to you is to consider the adoption of a definition of best available science in the Federal Government that goes beyond ideas related specifically to the scientific method and broaden it in the way that we have in applying it to the marine sanctuary program we're doing that in NOAA right now coming up with various notions of best available science among different offices and trying to narrow it down or open it up broadly I guess you would say to include these notions of best available information from legitimate sources beyond what many people consider science. In the more constrained form.

So that's -- and if you would like any more input on that, I would be happy to at any time

provide what we have adopted or what we have developed for our definition of best available science.

>> Thank you, Steven. Yes, we would welcome any additional information to be submitted to the email address that we noted at the outset.

Next we'll turn to Cristina Eisenberg, Cristina, please go ahead. Cristina, are you there?

>> Sorry; I was muted.

My name is Cristina Eisenberg and I am of mixed western Apache heritage I'm faculty at Oregon state university in the College of Forestry I work with Tribal Nations in the U.S. and Canada to implement ecological restoration informed by TEK called ecocultural restoration. For five years I was the Chief Scientist at Earthwatch Institute where I had oversight on 50 projects all over the world, many of which supported Indigenous communities in empowering themselves to restore their lands with their own wisdom.

To create ecosystems more resilient to climate change, including drought and other stressors, it is essential to partner with Tribal Nations. And embrace -- braid Traditional Ecological Knowledge with western science. TEK is knowledge and practices passed from generation to generation informed by cultural memories, sensitivity to change, and values that include reciprocity.

TEK observations are qualitative and diachronic long term often made by persons who hunt, fish and gather for subsistence most importantly TEK is inseparable from a cultural and social fabric offering irreplaceable cultural knowledge that can be thousands of years old and incorporates values such as kinship with nature and reciprocity that can help restore ecosystems. TEK land care practices include using prescribed burning to modify vegetation and serving culturally important species such as beaver, bison and wolves and adjusting timber use to create more sustainable communities of traditional plants that provide wildlife habitat and in turn food and medicines for humans. These actions increase biodiversity and ecological resiliency by creating fine grain landscape mosaics that function within an ecosystem's range of natural variability. TEK includes stewardship practices that can be adapted by Tribal Nations for today's world. To understand TEK, which has existed for millennia and its potential for healing the damage done to Earth and increasing ecological resiliency, it is absolutely necessary to contextualize within the more recent narrative of settler-colonialism.

Settler-colonialism refers to act of a settler society dispossessing an Indigenous population and its culture using power and authority to develop or exploit the colonized to benefit colonizers it typically means modernizing colonies by force. And eliminating Indigenous societies.

In the U.S., EuroAmerican settler-colonialism is a defining component of the Anthropocene Epoch which began with the late 17th Century Industrial Revolution and caused extra passion of many species Indigenous people consider important such as beaver and bison.

Specific impacts of settler-colonialism include land loss, significant population loss from genocide, oppression by criminalization for performing traditional cultural practices, including hunting, burning and occupation of usual and accustomed places, and relocation and forced removal to boarding schools which led to loss of languages, cultures and traditions.

In the U.S. the Dawes Act of 1887 recognized tribal sovereignty defined as a right of Indigenous people to self-governance and self-determination. However, the Federal Government implemented this act unevenly on a tribe-by-tribe basis additionally these rights weren't upheld and from the termination policies from 1963 to 1964.

The 1994 Tribal Self-Governance Act acknowledged and reinstated Indigenous peoples' sovereignty rights and empowered them to manage their lands. Nevertheless, securing such rights in practice today continues to challenge many Tribal Nations particularly regarding natural resource and sustenance rights. Settler-colonialism remains prevalent in society today. Regardless of institutional mandates to support diversity, inclusion and equity.

Incorporating TEK in ecological restoration called ecocultural restoration empowers Tribal Nations. This matters because Tribal Nations in America are underserved communities with unemployment, poverty and suicide rates far higher than U.S. rates.

Ecocultural restoration partnerships can advance our national climate agenda. However this requires building capacity with education and jobs in botany, soil, science and tomography, forestry and ecological restoration for Native Americans it also must strictly respect sovereignty rights including data sovereignty and self-determination as part of Government-to-Government Relations.

I will close by saying that I testified in Congress a week ago about this for the select committee on the climate crisis. And I will be submitting my notes to you. Thank you for allowing me to speak.

>> Thanks, Cristina. I will just note for folks interested in submitting comments, again, the email address is ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov.

And turning to the next speaker I have here is Elaine Santos. Please go ahead.

>> I ask permission of all sisters and guardians to speak today I am an Indian Puerto Rico, U.S. territory.

As I sit with this question, what should Federal employees know about TEK, a number of things come to mind.

I remember how rural peoples in Puerto Rico survived when all infrastructures collapsed after Hurricane Maria.

Before the hurricane arrived, elders, who keep traditional diversified forests alive harvested food. And knew where to find edible roots after the hurricane passed.

While people in cities waited hours in line to purchase one bottle of drinking water, all that they could get, people in the countryside relied on our Indigenous memories of springs to provide water for our communities.

Elders shared how to collect and clean drinking water. And which waters were unsafe due to pesticide runoff and cattle.

I remember water in my hometown. A river was dammed in the 1940s as U.S. manufacturing industries replaced an agricultural economy heavy metals, nitrates and bacteria from industrial runoff and sewage rendered its waters unsafe for life we remember what was before.

After the hurricane, many have been revitalizing diversified food forests and TEK to challenge our island's dependency on U.S. commodity foods. Many refuse genetically modified seeds as disaster relief and reclaim our original seeds. In Oregon, in Kalapuya where I live now I witness our Native kin also utilizing TEK. We have cultural burnings for soil. Cool and clean bodies of water. Sustain salmon and prevent destructive wildfires behind my house timber was cut to prevent wildfires and the mountain there a creek dry for miles I dream every day of what it would look like if native plants and seasonal rounds were restored, if cultural burnings were the norm if ancestral stewards of the land and water would care for them I dream of what would happen in Puerto Rico if Indigenous TEK was raised as a path forward, a path that's been tested for centuries.

What can Federal agencies do? Follow our lead. Return land. Respect treaties. Learn from and with and support Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge keepers as we seek to honor our own essential treaties with the Earth and generations to come. Blessings to all of us doing this work together. Thank you.

>> Thank you for those comments.

Just a reminder to this session in particular is designed to be a forum for tribal communities, tribal leaders, elders, knowledge holders and not one for Federal practitioners.

Next we will turn to the individual it looks to be calling in with the last four digits in their number 9629. If you would like to go ahead and make a comment, please do so now.

If the caller -- go ahead.

>> I was going to say remember to unmute it is star 6 or star 9? It's a specific . . .

>> I believe it's star 6.

>> Star 6.

>> We can come back to you if you're having trouble unmuting and we'll turn now to Selena Gray. Selena, please proceed.

>> Can you hear me okay.

>> We can.

>> Thank you for this opportunity to speak today.

(Speaking in Native language).

>> Selena Gray I am enrolled in the little shelter tribe of Montana and I'm also a nation descendant I'm a Graduate Student at the University of Montana in wildlife biology and I'm part of the of the Working Group of the Wildlife Society.

Today I need Federal employees to know more about the importance of relationship building and maintaining with tribal members and communities. And their histories. On the land. And the history of how TEK has gone unrecognized as a formal reliable knowledge system.

I would also like to see Federal employees understand that each Tribal Government Federally recognized treaty-based or newly recognized and those tribes who have been terminated or are trying to become recognized each have their own relationship with the Government. And with scientific inquiry themselves.

Each of them are culturally unique. And each deserve their own attention to those details

and require specialized support for their science and the TEK practitioners and knowledge holders.

TEK is much more than just tribal science. It is life ways. And those scientists and knowledge holders or knowledge seekers who are attempting to utilize TEK are often engaging in heart work for the community.

This is imperative for Federal employees to know for students who are working to incorporate TEK. Because students are the capacity builders of Tribal Nations today.

Particularly the National Science Foundation Departments of Interior, Energy and Agriculture need to be briefed on how to create and support projects led by students utilizing TEK that need different funding mechanisms than more classic westernized scientific Applied Science.

The terminology that should be used is Traditional Ecological Knowledge. The existing document that should guide this effort for this Administration to incorporate TEK in Federal policy is the United Nations report on the rights of Indigenous peoples.

Finally, the climate adaptation science centers need more support and frankly funding to support Native American students like myself who are developing these projects for their communities and with all of Indian Country in mind as we tackle climate change adaptation, utilizing not only the climate assessments, but also TEK to mitigate climate anxiety for our communities.

Thank you.

>> Thank you for those thoughts, Selena.

Turning again to the caller whose number ends with 9629, again, please press star -- please press star 6 to unmute yourself if you would like to make a comment. We'll give you a few seconds to try back in so go ahead now, please. Apologies if we're unable to connect here. We will turn next to Michelle Clark. Michelle, you are unmuted and welcome to comment.

>> Hello, for some reason I'm Michelle Clark.

(Chuckles).

>> But my name is Joseph Gazing Wolf I'm from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe and I greet you all with a warm heart as my relatives I'm a buffalo rancher I'm not an elder or a leader so is it okay if I share a few thoughts? Yes, okay. So I work most -- I've worked most of my life on the ground as a buffalo rancher and within my community to support the most vulnerable members of our tribe and more broadly of Chouanoac (phonetic) people I would urge you to consider a few things both for Indigenous leaders here as well as non-Indigenous leaders that I'm speaking to.

Whatever we do, we should probably consider the impact that our decisions will have on the most vulnerable in our communities, those being elders, women, children, those living in poverty. And those struggling with mental health and substance abuse because if we're not well then our knowledges aren't well either. So that's the first thought I wanted to share. The second being TEK will not exist unless it's transmitted from elders to youth. And this is a major issue. It's become even worse due to COVID and inequities in health.

So it's important that we have programming in place to do that. And funding in place to do that. To transmit traditional knowledges from our elders to those of us who are younger.

And then the third thing that I've encountered just with having my boots on the ground is we're often given funding to support the devisement, the creation of protocols for natural resources management or land management protocols as well as others such as health and economics. But it stops there. The funding often stops there. So we implement or we devise these wonderful protocols within our tribal communities but we're not given any funding to implement those protocols. To implement those plans.

So I would urge you to consider that. To allow the funding streams to continue to flow so we can implement natural resources management protocols that we come up with within our tribal communities.

So I think it's important just to bring back what some of our elders and others have said here and that's that TEK is seen on and in the land itself. If we're going to benefit from the fruits of TEK, then we have to support tribes to implement those specific land management protocols on the ground. And not just thought of the preparation or thought stage of things. So I would urge action as much as possible. Thank you so much for letting me speak.

>> Dominic, you're muted. But maybe --

>> Sorry about that.

>> You're good. I was going to say, while I'm talking I did just want to clarify that what we meant by the earlier comment was just that this is primarily for the public and not for Federal employees. So that was the clarification. So you do not need to be a tribal leader or elder to speak just to clarify. Over to you, Dominic.

>> Thanks, Gretchen. Next is Rachel Donkersloot, Rachel you are unmuted and welcome to comment.

>> Great can you hear me.

>> We can.

>> Thank you for your time today. And for hosting this Listening Session. For the record my name is Rachel Donkersloot. I don't know if you guys can hear that terrible echo. Hold on.

>> She might have accidentally dropped.

>> I think we may have lost Rachel.

We will take another commenter and hopefully Rachel will join us again in the queue. Next Cecilia Clavet (phonetic), Cecilia, please go ahead.

Cecilia, the floor is yours. Cecilia, we'll move on to the next commenter. And please feel free to raise your hand again if you would like to submit a comment.

Next Edith Leoso. Edith, please go ahead.

>> Hi can you hear me.

>> Yes.

>> Well, I would like to introduce myself as I've been taught before I speak to people. So I would like --

(Speaking in Native language).

>> So for people who are wondering why I introduce myself in that manner, it's so that you know who I am and what I said is that I'm called woman who stands in front of others as to lead them.

And I am of the Eagle Clan. And I am from Bad River. Which is the Bad River Band of Lake Superior tribe of Chippewa in Northern Wisconsin.

And I am also a fourth degree madaon (phonetic) and I'm a woman who takes care of the lodge. And -- but my tax paying name is Edith Leoso I'm the tribal historic preservation land for the band of Chippewa.

So I would really like to thank you for holding this webinar. It's been a long time coming for this. I've been talking about this for about 18 years now that I've been a Tribal Historic Preservation Officer.

But I think that to incorporate ITEK that it's called now, it was TEK. It was TK before. And it was just -- I remember the first student who came to talk to me about this. And he gave me the acronym. And I was like, oh, so that's pretty much what we know. You know. And he said, yeah. I said, what a novel idea when we've been trying to say this ever since perhaps Chief Seale's (phonetic) speech way back when, when he told the Federal Government everything about how things were happening and how it should happen. Right?

And what was happening. I would have you visit that -- revisit that speech, as well, to give an inkling of what that's all about.

But I think where we've come to today with this is that it's good to say that we should incorporate Indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge, it's funny I just got off the phone with a PhD student too and helping them with the same thing, because she was a medical student.

And so -- and I was telling her, you know, traditional knowledge isn't limited to just talking about health or talking about traditional knowledge. It's intertwined. Everything is intertwined. And I would really like to thank the previous speaker who kind of laid that all out.

And I'm sure there were many other previous speakers. But I just jumped on here not too long ago.

What I think we need -- that needs to happen right now in how to incorporate that in the Federal decision making is to incorporate I think it would be appropriate to include tribes and organizations sanctioned by Federally recognized tribes which may be non-Federally recognized tribes. An actual place at the table in the decision-making process. The logistics of how that would happen is something that would need further discussion. Hopefully it would result in developing draft legislation to govern the Federal agency process that would enable a tribal decisional process in collaboration with the Federal agency. And the reason why is because it's been since the 1800s maybe even longer than that that we have been saying, don't do this. Because this is going to happen. And then it's been done. And then it happens. And everybody is like, oh, we should have listened to the tribes.

So now we're at the table here again. With the White House, and saying, this is what should happen.

Well, this is, again, it is a tribal voice that needs to be incorporated in the actual decision

making. For that to happen.

And I'm sure there is probably a lot of tribes who have already said this. Today. And I'm very grateful for it.

But with that, I would like to say () which in my language we use that word to say thank you but it actually means me. It means it is enough.

And it is enough that you have brought this to the table. That you have brought it to our screens that are right in front of our faces where we can talk to you. Now it's, you know, again, how that would happen, it will take more discussion on this.

So I would like to thank you.

>> Thank you, Edith. And if you would like just a reminder, you are welcome to submit the speech you referenced to our inbox here and again that email address is ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov that's ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov. Cecilia if you can hear us I think we can hear you now so if you would like to go ahead and make a comment, please do so now. Cecilia, are you there?

We will try again if we can, thanks.

Next we'll turn to Laura Evilsizer.

>> Thank you I'm Laura I'm with the Montana state historic preservation office and I wanted to call attention to the National Historic Preservation Act and the need for -- in that identification -- TEK in the identification and management of cultural resources particularly it's important with traditional cultural places. But really all cultural resources would benefit from having TEK incorporated.

The NHPA obviously exists and requires a consultation with Native nations but as the Advisory Council on historic preservation can tell you agencies struggle to meet those requirements. It's particularly relevant to National Register Bulletin No. 38. Which is -- advises practitioners and agencies on how to record traditional cultural places. Particular importance is also the Secretary of the Interior standards which establishes professional qualification standards for cultural Resource Managers. And these need to be changed to validate the importance of TEK knowledge and practitioner holders as equal to that of archeologists or architectural historians that are doing work in compliance with this law. Thank you.

>> Thanks, Laura.

Turning again to the caller with the phone number ending in 9629. If you are able to unmute yourself and would like to still make a comment, we'll give you that opportunity again now. Still unable to hear you, caller, unfortunately. So we will jump now to Courtney Carothers. Courtney, please go ahead. Courtney, it looks like you're on mute. If you did want to make a comment, please unmute yourself.

>> Hi, can you hear me.

>> Hi, yes.

>> Great, I am not Courtney Carothers my name is Brook Woods I'm from Rampart, Alaska and I'm a tribal member.

I wanted to first thank you for this session.

And -- thank you for this session. It's wonderful to see the Administration White House

USDA and Department of Interior doing these tribal consultations. But it is overwhelming for tribes and tribal organizations that don't have the staff or adequately organized -- to adequately organize and participate.

I found out about this session secondhand.

So please bear with me.

We have known and it's very well documented the work that needs to be done. And we appreciate these sessions. But hope it turns into real world on-the-ground work and funding for tribes. And that often it doesn't because mid-level managers don't carry out these initiatives. They have no accountability. And they just wait for Administrations to change.

Case in point, the lead coordinator for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service here in Alaska did not include the White House memo or -- on Indigenous knowledge. Or the Secretarial Order on tribal stewardship in the Alaska Federal Subsistence Management regional Advisory Council meeting information.

Because she said it's not pertinent.

On record.

Tribes need to be adequately funded to do this work of tribal stewardship and entering Indigenous knowledge -- ensuring Indigenous knowledge is utilized in stewardship in our homelands. Currently they are not.

Thank you so much. Our state is dual managed. And we are in a state with 229 tribes. And the state does not recognize tribes.

There's currently a House Bill 123 to do that.

So the inequities are paramount.

And I appreciate your time.

>> Thank you.

I think we'll turn next to Victoria Flowers. Victoria, if you would like to make a comment please do so now.

>> Yes, thank you very much. My name is Victoria Flowers I am the environmental compliance coordinator for the Oneida nation I also am a member on the Tribal Waste and Response Steering Committee which is a conduit for tribes to speak to the Office of Land and Emergency Management at EPA.

I would like to thank you for recognizing this as an important issue. One of the things I think is also important that as we work through our various opportunities to engage with the Federal Government, is to understand that TEK is just one part of the picture. Right?

So when you determine what it is that TEK is going to give you, it's going to help you identify tribal beneficial uses to a resource or to a part of being able to practice their self-determination and self-governance. That's conveyed by treaty or other agreement with tribes.

So that's what I wanted to say. And I would like to further encourage you to embrace the right of tribes for self-determination and to consider all the speakers who spoke -- who have spoken so eloquently. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Victoria. We'll turn again to Rachel Donkersloot to give you another chance

to comment here, please go ahead. Rachel, if you're there, you can unmute and please go ahead.

>> Can you hear me now.

>> Yes. Thank you.

>> Okay. Sorry about that. I have spotty internet and poor phone service so bear with me here.

For the record my name is Rachel. I'm a non-Native social scientist, I have roots in Rural Alaska. My comments are brief and specific to fishery science and management processes in Alaska and the North Pacific. Though I think they can be applied across Federal agencies in terms of lessons learned.

To address your question, your first question of what would you like Federal employees to know about ITEK.

For one, I think it's worth repeating that Alaska Native peoples have been respectfully and patiently requesting adequate consideration of their knowledge in science and decision-making processes for many, many decades.

Secondly, wherever western science is being used in decision making, so, too, should traditional knowledge in the context of Federal fisheries in the North Pacific this is actually mandated under national standard 2 of the Magnuson-Stevens act with best available science but it hasn't happened yet in terms of terminology there's large literature to help guide your thinking on this and previous testifiers have mentioned a few resources I respectfully suggest that traditional knowledge is a more appropriate term to be applied here. In part because TEK limits the scope of what knowledge is considered to be valued or relevant in decision making. It potentially creates a scenario where traditional knowledge is extracted and then evaluated by western scientists in terms of what's useful.

A more holistic understanding of traditional knowledge allows for improved understanding of not only ecological dimensions in change but also social and cultural dimensions among others. That are essential not only to good science but to sustainable and equitable management in decision making.

Finally, for any guidance developed from these efforts, we need to also have an investment in funding capacity and expertise. Generally fishery researchers, policymakers and decision makers in the North Pacific are woefully unprepared and unknowledgeable on accounting for social considerations in science and management processes.

And this is especially the case when it comes to tribes and traditional knowledge. In the context of Federal fisheries, the Federal Government does not collect any data on tribal participation or tribal impacts of management and decision making in the North Pacific.

So non-economic social science capacity is critical and expanding that expertise is critical. Expanding Indigenous representation and leadership in these processes is critical.

Expanding traditional knowledge subsistence expertise is critical and this requires investing in full-time positions of tribal advisors liaisons and knowledge holders that occupy senior-level positions to shape the research the science and the decision making.

And I would just echo previous callers on my final comment that have emphasized the need

to fund and support tribal participation to do the work. Thank you for your time.

>> Thanks so much, Rachel. Cecilia Clavet it looks like your hand is still up and that you are unmuted.

Hopefully we can hear you. We'll give you another chance here to make a comment. Please do so. Still hearing none on our end.

We will turn to Gracie Redshirt Tyon, Gracie, please go ahead.

>> Sound check.

>> All good, thanks.

(Speaking in Native language).

>> Gracie.

(Speaking in Native language).

>> Good afternoon to all. I'm happy to be here. My name is Gracie Tyon I'm an Oglala Lakota I come to you from the sacred lands of the Rocky Mountains Colorado unceded territories of the Cheyenne Ute and 45 other Indigenous nations.

I'm an educator at the University of Colorado. Where I work for the Centers for American Indian and Alaska Native Health and I want to thank all of my relatives who spoke before me.

I didn't have a statement prepared. So I'll keep it short.

And I want to thank the panel here for inviting us to share our concerns and our thoughts and our ideas with you today. I'm really grateful for that.

I have concerns about the TEK and IK and my concerns have to do with the cultural appropriation. And our ways and our people and land being stolen. As you know, the history of our people, so many of our children, were stolen, our land was stolen. And fearful that it can be capitalized on and exploited for profit, which we see going on in our ways and specifically in our languages and our spirituality.

Also, the last thing I want to stress is that tribal consultation does not mean consent.

So there's a big difference there.

And we are sovereign nations. And our treaties should be upheld. And I think that's a broader discussion, as well.

And I think that the importance of our tribal people, our nations, our sovereign nations, to maintaining the control and protection and in leading these efforts for this initiative are so important.

And that's it. Thank you so much for listening.

(Speaking in Native language).

>> Thank you, Gracie.

At this time it doesn't appear that there are any additional hands up for folks interested in making a comment.

So I will just pause -- well, it looks like we do have one more so we will turn to Donna House. Donna, if you're there, please go ahead.

>> I'm sorry Donna House here. I'm a citizen of the Navajo Nation member of the Navajo Nation.

And would like to thank Secretary Deb Holland for formalizing the recognition of Indigenous knowledge-knowing science within the Federal Government.

I have (audio cutting in and out) of my life 38 years ago (audio cutting in and out) with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service trying to get them to accept ITEK. And to my dismay, of course that didn't happen.

I am a botanist. I have been practicing in the early years of rare and endangered species. And in areas where there was no information at all. That information existed in communities in the leadership of communities.

So as I progressed and moved in time, I saw a great deal of information in science at the local and community level. The keepers of the knowledge. And the ones that practice.

And so opportunities for the Federal Government and other NGOs working in conservation and beyond conservation that could have used the knowledge to increase better stewardship of forestlands, BLM lands, parklands, even looking at education. As far as being -- developing the appropriate items that would educate the public and also give credit to a lot of the local people that they shared the knowledge.

There's one thing that I would really want to specify. And it's critical. That all the public lands, all the agencies that you've listed, are going to be impacted by tribes' knowledge.

And it's about time that we, Indigenous people, sit at the table, help develop better stewardship and also continue our practice of our culture because many of your policies have actually caused a great deal of loss of our culture.

It is time for it to change.

I really believe that one thing that needs to happen is that you -- agencies need to go and look at their policies closely to see whether or not it's racist. Especially towards Indigenous people. And whether or not it has a greater impact of -- to our people. Indigenous people. And how we, both of us, sit at the table and start changing this.

There are great opportunities on the side to actually improve climate change.

And I believe that you are on -- at least on the way to address that through various hearings.

I have -- I can't tell you how many -- I feel like it's thousands of Listening Sessions that I've been to.

And the Listening Session needs to become more change in policy. Developing policy. I have not seen -- I really have not seen any change in a lot of the policy addressing culture and Indigenous science and knowledge and practice. And that right now is a time to do it. Right now is the time to do it.

As far as one thing that I think has been said over and over, consultation is not consent.

Hiring, having Federal agencies hire local -- or people that are so-called going to carry and deal so-called in parentheses with ITEK as you're calling it, Indigenous knowing and science. Is not working.

That information is at the community. And it's about time that you all start sitting down and working with the people at the local level within their timeline. And within their protocols.

The protocols that are given by Federal agencies, you're never going to ever get the

information. And better stewardship. And right now, we need to start doing that.

Part of doing that is respecting and acknowledging Indigenous peoples' work and practice before the planet increases in temperature.

I have a lot of other examples as far as like how TEK has worked it's way into tribal management. And has been acknowledged -- well not acknowledged formally but used in the Federal agencies that are -- have been working on it of late. But there are excellent examples of Indigenous knowledge being used across the tribes.

And we shouldn't be only looking at Federally recognized tribes. We should be looking at state and non-Federally recognized communities and tribes that are out there. Because all Indigenous people that were here before, we all have ties to the lands that surround us. And the lands that surround us mostly now is public lands. And we're impacted from DOE to the parks, et cetera.

So I will have a more detailed comment for you in the future. Thank you very much.

>> Thank you, Donna.

Cecilia, again, I think we started to hear some indications of a successful connection there. So if you're still with us and can hear us, we invite you to speak now. Cecilia, we'll keep trying. But we do have a couple other folks interested in commenting here. So we will turn next to Kevin Eastman. Kevin, please go ahead.

>> Hi, thank you. And I'm not a tribal leader or tribal member. Just a tribal employee. Work on behalf of the band of the Chumash Indians in central California. And I heard one commenter earlier. And I did want to -- I wanted to wait and ensure tribal leaders got a chance to speak and it sounds like you got through them by the time I raised my hand I did hear one commenter earlier talk about co-management agreements and I just wanted to highlight the proposed designation of the Chumash heritage national marine sanctuary off the coast of central California. The Chumash have been engaged in consultation with NOAA and commerce. And are excited about the designation. I think a great way to integrate Traditional Ecological Knowledge and practices into Federal land management is for agencies to engage in robust co-management agreements with tribes.

We've seen that happen successfully with BLM. Other interior agencies like the National Park Service. And commerce and NOAA do have authority under the National Marine Sanctuaries Act to engage in co-management agreements with Federally recognized tribal governments so I just wanted to highlight that as an existing opportunity.

And note that there are tribes interested in working with the White House and working with Federal agencies to ensure that there are cultural practices and knowledge -- their cultural practices and knowledge are built into Federal land management decisions kind of from the start. And so I appreciate all of your time today. I've enjoyed listening to all of the comments so far. And look forward to continuing that.

>> Thank you, Kevin.

It looks like Courtney Carothers your hand is still up so if you would like to make another comment, please go ahead and do so now.

Okay. And Cecilia Clavet, if you are still with us and would like to comment, please go ahead and unmute and we will try to hear from you again.

Well, with no other hands up at the moment, we will just continue to invite folks who may have joined late to please feel free to raise your hand over Zoom or press star 9 if you're calling in to submit a comment.

We do have the floor open for about another 28 minutes or so.

So we may just take a pause for folks to continue to think about any questions you may have. And have the opportunity to submit them. In the meantime, I just want to extend another thank you for all of the really meaningful and substantive input you've provided thus far. There's some really specific examples that you pointed out. And other perspectives here that I think will really help bring this guidance together with your input.

So it looks like we do have a caller with a hand up, so with the caller with the number 4509 at the end of your phone number, please go ahead and unmute yourself and the floor is yours. Again, caller 4509.

>> Hello my name is Mary Huffman can you hear me.

>> We can, thanks.

>> Oh, thank you for having me.

Again, my name is Mary Huffman it's my honor to direct the Indigenous Peoples Burning Network which is a support network of Native American communities that are revitalizing their traditional fire cultures in today's context. And this particular network is funded through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Forest Service and the Department of Interior.

And in this world of climate change and fire behaving badly, I wanted to be sure that the White House was aware that this network is working hard to make room for more than one fire culture.

In which tribes can revitalize their traditional fire practices.

And I think it's important in terms of Indigenous knowledge to remember that knowledge in Indigenous systems is often a matter of practice. And so the knowledge or the way of being and the life way has to be connected with the practice. And unfortunately, First Nations, Native American communities, Indigenous peoples in our country have had fire regulated out of their hands since the early 1900s. And if we're looking for solutions to today's fire challenges, it's really important that we open up space for more than one fire culture.

And I would be more than happy to connect with you and others and to connect you with some of the tribes in the network to get into dialogue on how we can elevate Indigenous voices and Indigenous practices to help bring fire back into balance. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you very much. Courtney Carothers it looks like your hand is up again, if you would like to make a comment, we invite you to now.

>> Hi, can you hear me.

>> We can, thanks.

>> Okay. I apologize I'm actually Jessica Black and Courtney is my colleague and she sent the link and I think I accidentally logged in under her. So my great apologies for not chiming in

sooner, I was not expecting that.

My name is Jessica Black. My family is from Fort Yukon in Northeast Alaska I'm a tribal member of the Tribal Government but here I'm speaking on behalf of myself. A lot of the work that I do I'm an Associate Professor at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. And grew up along the banks of the Yukon River with my extended family. We have a fish camp and it very fundamentally shaped my life, my foundation and the work that I do today. A lot of the work that I engage in is around salmon steward -- Indigenous salmon stewardship and our relationship to salmon as a foundation for well-being for my people.

And in recent years we've seen really sad and unfortunate crash of the chinook and chum salmon and that's had devastating impacts to our community.

You know, if we are in relationship -- we are in relationship with salmon, we are in relationship with the land, and when we can't be out there fishing, hunting, gathering together, that leaves an incredible void in our hearts. And in that relationship. We truly believe that salmon give themselves to us. And when we're unable to harvest as we have been unable last year and the year before, it was very limited, it creates a lot of trauma and grief.

So the point of this Listening Session around Indigenous knowledge, I just wanted to say, Indigenous knowledge is its own intact knowledge system. And it really doesn't need western science to validate it. It's its own intact knowledge system. And it's relational. The previous speaker was talking about in order to understand and learn your knowledge, you have to practice it. Practice it. Excuse me. And we do that through stewardship and care. We teach our children how to become people out on the land and unfortunately we've largely been left out of conversations around long-term salmon stewardship. And you could look at other species. And yet we have 10,000 plus years of care.

So we can be better included in Federal agencies through direct appointments.

Federal officials coming to visit our communities. Like I said, we have a chinook and chum salmon crash. We need those in the highest positions of power to come see how that truly impacts our communities.

In the summer it's not uncommon to see people waiting anxiously for a 12-hour opening to do what they were meant to do. So I invite your Administration, Secretary, and all of you to come to our communities in Alaska and, you know, if the Federal officials followed their own laws such as true consultation, we would be in a much better place.

I thank you, all, for your time.

I know that you have a lot of priorities. But when I think about what's happening along the Yukon River we have the Yukon River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission the () Inter-Tribal Fish Commission who are made up of Alaska leaders who are really helping to steward these relationships, we need support, we need to be trusted to do what we've been doing for thousands of years. So thank you for your time. And I appreciate the ability to make some comments.

>> Thanks very much for that perspective.

The floor again I will note is open at this time. We will keep the session live for about another 20 minutes. So we'll invite, again, anybody else to please raise your hand. Or press star 9

if you're calling in to submit a comment. But we will just take a pause. Until we see any more folks line up in the queue here. So thanks again. Gretchen, if you had any other comments, please go ahead.

>> Sure, I'll just take a moment to thank everyone who spoke and everyone who joined us today. And I'll note that even if you don't feel this is a platform or venue that you want to speak in but you have thoughts or comments, we are happy to hear those in writing, as well. And we're really interested in your perspectives and are really -- really value the -- the time you have spent with us today and for the specific examples and thoughts. It's been really valuable to us. And I'll maybe just also note that one reason we had general questions rather than anything for you to react to, is because this is the beginning of our process. And we really want this session and our other engagement opportunities to shape what we're doing. And so you know that is why we don't -- we don't already have a document because we wanted to hear from you on the frontend so this has been really valuable to help inform that effort.

>> Thanks, Gretchen it looks like we have another commenter with their hand up Sherri Norris I'll unmute you and invite you to speak.

>> I did not prepare anything to speak originally I did not hear about this until it was halfway over I'm a member of the Osage nation I'm the Executive Director of the California Indian Environmental Alliance here in California. We -- our organization works in collaboration with tribes on protection of water quality for the ability for tribes to continue cultural practices for subsistence fishing and eating traditional foods that are aquatic based we also work on forest and fire because of the connectivity there and in our work with the North Coast tribes through the North Coast resource partnership we're the tribal engagement coordinator for that body.

In our work in California and I know I'm hearing it echoed all across the United States from the other colleagues that have been talking today but we see over and over again where consultation becomes like one of the previous speakers talked about as giving permission.

When really there needs to be the prior and informed consent doctrine that the United Nations through () has adopted in that space.

So that international forum is something that the United States really needs to look at seriously. Because if we want to talk about how we're -- want to talk about how we're going to survive as human beings on this planet, we have to look at the Indigenous peoples methodologies that created the bounty that when the first people that came to this country from others, the first colonists came and looked and saw it here, it was created through very careful management systems. That took thousands of years to do and the plants and the species and the regimes of land management are based on them and they are intertwined in a reciprocal fashion.

And so I will say in California with one hand we'll have the Government saying we want to listen to tribes, we want to involve you in place-based solutions. But the other hand saying, we are getting ready to move the water from Sacramento River and -- again and to create more methodology more -- methods for moving water from one shed to another not realizing doing that is the continuation of the same kinds of management strategies that got us into this situation that we're currently in. So we can't with one hand do good and the other hand do seven times

worse.

We as Indigenous peoples really would like to see those management strategies, those large-scale management strategies that we had among tribes, between tribes, within us, put back on to the land. So that we can all be eating salmon. So that we can all be eating plants and animals that are supposed to be in the landscapes that we live. And I guess that's all that I wanted to say, thanks.

>> Thank you, Sherri for those comments. It looks like there are no other hands up at this time. So we will just take a pause.

>> It looks like we do have another hand. Oh, no. It went away.

>> We did.

(Standing by).

>> It looks like we do have another commenter, Dominica Zhu I'm unmuting you now and you are invited to speak.

>> Thank you everyone my name is Dominica so I'm coming from a different perspective as I'm representing non-U.S. based Indigenous perspective. And part of the diaspora community as well so just want to make a remark that there are a lot of us that are non-U.S. based. Indigenous. And it is a very complicated discussion on how to incorporate that type of traditional knowledge, as well, but since we are a mobile community and force migration has been a thing, it's important to consider that and inviting those voices, as well, to these types of discussions.

The other thing is I have an organization around protecting this type of Traditional Ecological Knowledge on the internet front. And I think the thing that comes up very often is language and so often when our communities come to the table and have to speak a lot of the meeting is diminished because we are forced to speak within the English tongue. So I would advise in any way possible to allow a form for Native speakers to maintain their Native tongue when communicating and having some sort of translator versus, you know, not saying you guys are forcing but requiring only English dialects to be communicated, I think that goes a very long way.

The other part that I recognize, too, around natural resources from the Government perspective is it's often presented from an economic standpoint, for example, you know, calling things like the Blue Economy and things of that nature is sometimes very offputting when wanting to incorporate Traditional Ecological Knowledge because that in itself centers everything around a capitalistic point of view, which is one of the very things that have destroyed Indigenous cultures to begin with.

So just wanted to just bring those things up. Just as how things are framed moving forward. Thank you.

>> Thanks so much. Seeing no other hands at the moment, just another reminder, we'll keep the line open for a few more minutes here. And I did just want to take this occasion to kind of just reiterate a comment. Gretchen had noted for folks if this is not the forum or a venue that -- that you prefer to submit your comments, the email inbox is open. Again that's ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov. So we will be collecting comments there. And again of course for

anyone whose hand may have been raised that we were unable to get to, for whatever reason, please do use those alternative channels to submit your comments.

(Standing by).

>> So with just a few minutes remaining before 5:00 o'clock Eastern Time here, we'll ask for one last call for anyone who is interested in submitting a remark before we go ahead and close out this session.

And as we do -- looks like we have one more person here Cristina Eisenberg we have unmuted you and you are welcome to speak.

>> Yes I spoke earlier but in listening to this, all of the amazing comments, the theme that comes through most strongly is that of decolonization.

So decolonizing the process of partnering with Tribal Nations. Meeting us where we are. And as who we are.

And understanding that we do not have a linear worldview. And I work with a lot of Government agencies, Federal agencies. And our way of doing business, if you want to call it that, is very circular. And so if you really want to do this, you know, all of these comments will not -- are not going to create any change at all for the better unless you decolonize the process. That starts with decolonizing education, higher ed. It starts with decolonizing meetings. And I think you've done a really good job of that at this meeting.

And I have been in meetings with Secretary Holland and some of the other secretaries where they do a fabulous job at that.

But decolonization is the takeaway that I suggest that you at least sit with.

And I hope that there are other meetings like this. I'm glad this is the beginning of the process. It's non-linear. It takes time. And it's about rebuilding trust. Thank you so much for the opportunity to speak and for listening.

>> Thank you, Cristina.

As we move to close here soon, unless there are any other commenters, I just want to pick up on a theme that the last commenter made about the fact that this is -- we are early in the process of developing this guidance. So your feedback today and in the future public engagement sessions that we have planned will be instrumental in that. I would note, too, that we are -- we do have formal tribal consultations, as well, informing this process, specifically to engage tribal leaders on the effort, as well.

So again, if there are no other comments from the folks on the line before turning it over to Gretchen for any closing comments I will just say again, a big thank you -- to everyone for the really robust engagement here, this has been great, Gretchen.

>> Great, yes, thank you so much. We really appreciate you taking the time today. And please do submit any other materials, comments, existing documents, processes, examples that exist. Anything that is specific can be really helpful for us to understand. So if it's a good example, a bad example, anything that informs how we can think about this and where the greatest needs are would be especially appreciated so thank you so much for taking the time today I'll one more time read the email address which is ITEK@OSTP.EOP.gov. So thank you

so much. And enjoy the rest of your day.