Indigeneity is a Native-led Program within Bioneers that promotes Indigenous approaches to solve the Earth's most pressing environmental and social crises. We produce the Indigenous Forum within the Bioneers Conference, original media, educational curricula and catalytic initiatives to support the leadership and rights of First Peoples, while weaving networks, partnerships and alliances among Native and non-Native allies.
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INDIGENITY PROGRAM TEAM

Co-Director, Cara Romero (Chemehuevi), is a non-profit leader, communicator, change-maker and award-winning artist. She brings special expertise in working directly with Tribes, and in producing cultural events and gatherings. Prior to joining Bioneers in 2011, Cara served as the first Executive Director of the Chemehuevi Cultural Center and was an elected member of the Chemehuevi Tribal Council from 2007-2010. She served as the Chair of the Chemehuevi Education Board and the Chemehuevi Early Education Policy Council. With degrees in Cultural Anthropology and Fine Art Photography, Cara has won numerous awards for her photography, including the SouthwestAssociations of Indian Art’s Best of Classification award (twice) and has been published in National Geographic and is widely collected by public and private institutions worldwide.

Co-Director, Alexis Bunten, Ph.D, (Unangan/Yup’ik), is a researcher, writer, media-maker, and curriculum developer. After receiving a BA in Art History, Alexis returned to Alaska, where she worked at the Sealaska Heritage Institute and the Alaska Native Heritage Center. Subsequently, Alexis earned a PhD in Cultural Anthropology at UCLA. She has published widely about Indigenous and environmental issues in academic and mainstream media outlets. Alexis has won several awards for her work from the National Science Foundation, Ford Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, and others. Her 2015 book “So, How Long Have You Been Native? Life as an Alaska Native Tour Guide” won the Alaska Library Association Award for its originality and depth. Her children’s book, Keepunumuk: Weeâchumun’s Thanksgiving Story, won the New England Book Award.

Program Manager, Nazshonnii Brown-Almaweri (Diné) is a farmer, educator, and Union College Alumna (B.S Mechanical Engineering and Studio Arts, French and Francophone Studies Minor) from West Oakland. She has worked as a STEM tutor, media educator, and youth program assistant for the American Indian Child Resource Center. She is also a Veteran Farm Educator at the Gill Tract Community Farm in Albany, an volunteer-led farm that provides food, medicine, and green spaces to the community. Nazshonnii is passionate about STEM education and advocates for exposure and opportunities for historically excluded people, especially Black and Native youth. As an educator, Nazshonnii has provided middle and high school youth with the space to learn about STEAM at the intersection of ancestral knowledge and their lived experiences. Creating space for Oakland youth to thrive in disciplines like engineering.
Dear Friends of Indigeneity:

2023 heralded the 16th Indigenous Forum and Bioneers’ 34th year. We moved the conference to Berkeley, California, offering more accessibility to the communities we serve. We expanded the Indigenous Forum and we still ran out of space for all those who wanted to attend (lesson for 2024).

Highlights from 2023 include fostering a cohort of youth leaders through the Intercultural Conversations program; creating a Youth Ambassador program for the Rights of Nature in Tribal Governance initiative, and programming one of the most powerful Indigenous Forums to date, with one panel resulting in a moving Bioneers Radio Show about the undamming of the Klamath River.

Bringing our in-person events to those who cannot attend the Bioneers conference in person, we re-released 6 episodes of the groundbreaking podcast Indigeneity Conversations. Our team has also been diligently working to develop our 90-minute Allyship Workshop into a long-form course, which we will pilot in April 2024.

Bioneers is well known for pioneering innovative solutions. One of these is championing the Rights of Nature movement, in which Indigenous communities have played a vital role in getting laws passed in Ecuador, Bolivia, New Zealand, India, and beyond. We are proud to share that our efforts have resulted in several grassroots efforts, one of which has resulted in a resolution to uphold the rights of Herring on the Eastern Seaboard.

Join us in person at the Bioneers Conference held in Berkeley, California, March 28-30 to discuss groundbreaking solutions to the issues we all face from Indian Country.

If our unique and valuable work inspires you, please consider supporting Bioneers and the Indigeneity Program in 2024.

Sincerely,

Cara Romero, Alexis Bunten, and Nazshonnii Brown-Almaweri
Indigeneity Program Co-Directors and Manager
Since its inception, Bioneers has been fundamentally shaped and guided by Indigenous worldviews and approaches to social and environmental issues. Our program prioritizes protecting Indigenous Peoples’ intellectual property rights and cultural privacy while weaving networks, partnerships, and alliances among Native and non-Native allies.

Our program offers a mix of live events, media production, curriculum, and catalytic initiatives to support the leadership and rights of First Peoples, while weaving networks, partnerships and alliances.

We help to produce the annual Bioneers conference, and the Indigenous Forum within it. We adapt these presentations and events into radio shows, TV broadcasts, online videos, media collections, articles, blogs and books.

We lead an initiative to bring Rights of Nature to Indian Country, by conducting research, developing resources, and coordinating events to share ways that Rights of Nature can protect Tribal lands and beyond.

We prioritize cultivating future leaders through our Native Youth Leadership and Intercultural Conversations Programs, providing life-changing experiences that introduce youth to new ideas, role models, and other youth to form lasting relationships and foster transformative learning.

Your funding is the reason we can do this critically important and unique work. We do not take corporate funding, and you – our Bioneers community – are vital to our ongoing success. Now more than ever, the leadership and voices of Indigenous Peoples can and must help shape the wellbeing of our communities and the planet for future generations.
INDIGENEITY IMPACT

- Amplifies Indigenous voices and campaigns
- Educates students and lifelong learners
- Provides opportunities for youth leadership
- Connects Indigenous leaders with each other and allies
- Supports Rights of Nature in Indian Country
- Leads progressive environmental and social change
- Advances movement-building across sectors

INDIGENEITY PROGRAM OUTCOMES BY THE NUMBERS, 2023

**Media and Curriculum**

174 Indigenous Content Posts

27 Articles

10 Indigeneity Learning Units

6 Indigeneity Conversations

**Bioneers Conference**

37 Indigenous Speakers

3 Indigenous Keynotes

142 Indigenous Participants

**Intercultural Conversations**

100 Participants

10 Facilitators

4 In-Person Gatherings

Tribal Affiliations
The Bioneers Indigeneity Program is the go-to source for accurate and contemporary information about Indigenous science, media, and curriculum for social change.

MEDIA AND CURRICULUM FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

The Indigeneity Program has cultivated a rich repository of original videos, transcripts and audio recordings showcasing leaders from around the world who have shared Indigenous approaches to environmental, human rights, and social justice issues.

ARTICLES AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Our media reaches hundreds of thousands of people each year to share Indigenous perspectives and worldviews. Our Indigeneity Curriculum page received over 21,000 downloads in 2023 with our “Thanksgiving for grades K-1” and “Three Sisters” lesson plans and activities being the most popular. Across all of Bioneers media shared in 2023, we published 174 social media posts that pointed back to our original media, as well as the stories and campaigns led by Indigenous partners within our network.

TOP 3 ARTICLES SHARED IN 2023

3 Ways to Teach Young Children About Thanksgiving – An Indigenous Perspective
What It Means to Decolonize Thanksgiving In 2022
‘Keepunumuk’: Teaching Children the True Story of Thanksgiving
INDIGENEITY CURRICULUM

INDIGENEITY LEARNING

“I wish I had learned this in school,” our audiences have consistently told us over the years. To address the critical erasure of Indigenous histories and content in the classroom, we have been developing Indigeneity Curriculum to bring Indigeneity resources to the classroom.

This body of curricula is developed by Native experts and designed in line with Indigenous pedagogy supporting multiple learning styles. The majority of the content presented is not available in books, or if in books, has been presented from a non-Indigenous perspective. Native students can finally see themselves and their cultures represented, and non-Native students are exposed to accurate histories, cultures, and knowledges about Native Peoples.

Our curricular resources for grades 9-12 include 10 units on Indigenous themes aligned to common core standards across a number of subjects. Each curriculum bundle includes teacher instructions, activities, assessments, and extensions for a week of instruction aligned to the lesson’s theme.

Themes Include:

- Cultural Appropriation
- Solutions to the Climate Crisis
- A Just Transition
- Borderlands
- Honoring Women
- Water is Life
- Alcatraz
- The Three Sisters
- Thanksgiving Curriculum and Activities Grades K-1
- The Real Thanksgiving Grades 9-12

ALLYSHIP FOR LIFELONG LEARNERS

In recent years, we have seen more and more non-Native friends, relatives and allies stand up for “Indigenous causes.” These friends understand that the issues we face as Indigenous Peoples are actually “everybody’s issues,” and that the knowledge we bring has the power to help solve social and environmental issues rooted in colonial capitalism.

Building upon the Allyship panels and workshops that the Indigeneity team has researched and developed over the past 5 years, we created a long form course titled “Allyship With Indigenous Peoples.” This Learning Journey directly addresses such questions as: “What is an ally?” and, “How do we create spaces where genuine collaboration for social change is possible?”
Rights of Nature is a global movement to protect rivers, mountains, and entire ecosystems and the life forms supported within them by recognizing their legal rights to exist and thrive.

The Rights of Nature vision is to safeguard threatened lands and ecosystems from human destruction. At its core, the Rights of Nature reflects Indigenous worldviews that understand humans as a part of nature, with an obligation to maintain balance and all beings’ intrinsic right to exist.

Integrating the Rights of Nature into Tribal policy is a long-term process. Like any major socio-environmental movement, it moves at the speed of Tribal partners in it for the long haul. Our team has been steadily building the Rights of Nature Movement in Indian Country. Over this time, we brought together an advisory board, offered regional trainings, conducted in-depth legal research, and created a guide to organizing for the Rights of Nature.

In 2023, the Bioneers Rights of Nature in Tribal Governance initiative made tremendous accomplishments to forward the movement. We authored a “Guide to the Rights of Nature in Indian Country” and distributed over 350 copies. We co-sponsored a week-long intertribal youth camp in Alaska, where attendees honed their leadership and organizing skills through workshops and hands-on activities. We piloted a Youth Fellowship with the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe, resulting in the first-ever Rights of Herring Resolution. We partnered with Movement Rights to sponsor Youth Fellows to attend Climate Week in New York. We also hosted our most significant Intertribal Rights of Nature gathering in Southern California with over 250 participants.

PLAN FOR 2024

In 2024, we’ll continue to expand our outreach across the US, and support youth groups interested in bringing the Rights of Nature movement to their home Tribe. We’ll scale our efforts by creating a train-the-trainer online learning platform. With a full-time staff person dedicated to outreach and building alliances, we anticipate building greater momentum in the movement for Tribal Sovereignty and the Rights of Nature.
## Rights of Nature by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Intertribal Rights of Nature Gathering</th>
<th>Rights of Nature Youth Fellowship</th>
<th>Rights of Nature Camp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>230</strong> + Attendees</td>
<td><strong>6</strong> Youth Fellows</td>
<td><strong>35</strong> Youth in Attendance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>79</strong> Tribal Affiliations</td>
<td><strong>5</strong> Youth Attended NYC Climate Week</td>
<td><strong>7</strong> Tribal Affiliations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>350</strong> Rights of Nature In Indian Country Guides Disseminated</td>
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</tbody>
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## Bioneers Rights of Nature in Tribal Governance Team

- **Cara Romero**: Bioneers Indigeneity Program Co-Director
- **Alexis Bunten**: Bioneers Indigeneity Program Co-Director
- **Brittany Gondolfi**: Special Consultant
- **Samantha Skenandore**: Legal Counsel
- **David Greendeer**: Rights of Nature Lead
- **Danielle Greendeer**: Rights of Nature Lead

## Indigeneity Rights of Nature Presentations and Media

2015: *Seven Things We Must Do to Advance the Rights of Mother Earth* with Dr. Daniel Wildcat


2017: *Rights of Nature – Codifying Indigenous Worldviews into Law to Protect Biodiversity* with Kandi Mossett, Maui Solomon, Kealoha, Tony Skrelunas, Tom Goldtooth, and Leila Salazar Lopez

2019: *Aligning Human Law with Natural Law* with Casey Camp

2020: Panel Discussion – *Fighting for the Rights of Nature* with Mari Margil, Thomas Linzey and Anahkwet (Guy Reiter)

2020: *What do the Rights of Nature have to do with Indigeneity?* with Alexis Bunten

2020: *Bioneers Partners with Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund on Rights of Nature in Indigenous Communities*

2020: *Compassion & Kinship: Astounding Intelligence in Nature* with Robin Kimmerer


2021: *Indigenize the Law: Tribal Rights of Nature Movements* with Casey Camp-Horinek

2022: *Movement in Indian Country and Beyond: From Grassroots to Mainstream* with Frank Bibeau; Thomas Linzey, and Samantha Skenandore.

2022: *How Rights of Nature Can Support Tribal Needs With Alexis Bunten*

2022: *Tribal Rights of Nature Governance* with Alexis Bunten for the Intertribal Council of the Five Civilized Tribes

2023: *International Perspectives on Rights of Nature in Tribal Law* with Brittany Gondolfi

2023: *Rights of Nature Is the Logical Extension of the American Legal System* with Britt Gondolfi

2023, *Bioneers Indigeneity Program Hosts Historic Rights of Nature Gathering in Southern California* with Alexis Bunten
Indigenous wisdom has always been central to Bioneers’ mission to address real-world issues practically and holistically. Over the past 34 years, we have met this commitment by featuring and amplifying the voices of Indigenous leaders to connect people from all over the world with wisdom, practices, movements, and struggles within a larger context of the re-indigenization of all peoples.

Indigeneity had a major presence in the 2023 Bioneers conference, featuring 37 Indigenous speakers in keynote talks, panel discussions, and interactive sessions. We had a full house in 2023, with more attendees than ever before. In 2024, we plan to extend the Indigenous Forum to accommodate everyone.

I primarily attended the Indigenous Forums. Every single one was so amazing and well organized! I learned so much and it was beautiful to feel represented on so many levels. Choosing one to session to highlight it would be the Indigenous Forum panel, “Unpacking Tribal identity: Real Talk. Hearing peoples’ personal stories and growth was the best. All of them spoke really well. -Conference Attendee

I really enjoyed participating in this conference. I learned so much about so many relevant issues including impactful solutions about the climate crisis from all around the world. I felt like I was surrounded by knowledgeable people who are working hard to make the planet better. -9th Grader, Bay Area Participant
Since its inception, Bioneers has prioritized creating a space that nurtures cross-cultural dialogue and understanding among all peoples. We open the floor for discussion with a diverse audience, and we let people know culturally appropriate ways for allies to get involved with Indigenous issues.

Tribal leaders, activists and youth also look forward to the annual conference as a place to convene, learn, plan and spend time together. In 2023, this tradition continued as over 140 Indigenous community members representing 125 distinct tribal affiliations joined us.

INDIGENOUS EVENTS AND SPEAKERS AT THE BIONEERS CONFERENCE 2023

Land Acknowledgement - Corrina Gould (Lisjan Ohlone)

Strengthening Indigenous Leadership During Collapse - Jade Begay (Navajo)

The Ongoing Legacy of Alcatraz - LaNada War Jack (Shoshone Bannock)

The Ethics of Belonging - Yuria Celidwen (Maya)

The Resurgence of Maori Law - Erin Matariki Carr (Maori)

Landback: Restoring People, Place and Purpose - Cara Romero (Chemehuevi), Penn Elyse Droz (Anishinabe), Corrina Gould (Lisjan), and Kawenniiosta Jock (Kanien'kehá:ka)

Indigenous Science for Healing Land to Sea - Alexis Bunten (Unangan/Yup’ik), Loa Numeitolu (Tongan), Kiana Frank (Kanaka Hawaii), and Andrea Kealoha (Kanaka Hawaii).

Undam the Klamath! How Tribes Led the Largest River Restoration Project in US History - Cara Romero (Chemehuevi), Samuel Gensaw (Yurok), and Isaac Kinney(Yurok).

Unpacking Tribal Identity: Real Talk - Nazshonnii Brown-Almaweri (Diné), Cara Romero (Chemehuevi), Alexis Bunten (Unangan/Yup’ik), Andrew MacDonald (Esselen), Gregg Castro (Ramaytush/Salinian/Rumsen Ohlone), Manny Lieras (Comanche/Diné), Paloma Flores (Purepecha), Bette Billiot (Houma), Christie Lacoban (Houma), Manaia Lieras (Diné, Umatilla, Samoan, and Chicana)

Healing Justice to Restore Relations with Land: Hosted by Indigenous Climate Action - Eriel Deranger (Athabasca Chipewyan First Nations), Jodie Geddes, and Carlee Loft (Kahnawake/Mohawk)

International Perspectives on Rights of Nature in Tribal Law - Brittany Gondolfi (Houma descendant), Samantha Skenandore (Ho-Chunk), Danielle Greendeer (Mashpee Wampanoag), Erin Matariki Carr (Maori)

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ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED BY INDIGENOUS ATTENDEES AT BIONEERS 2023

American Indian Cultural District
Alaska Native Indigenous Training Institute
Braven Saige Eagle
California Consortium for Urban Indian Health
Colores Verdes
Cultural Conservancy
East Bay Fitness
Friendship House Association of American Indians
Great Plains Action Society
Idle No More
Indigenous Climate Action
Indigenous Environmental Network
Indio de Norte y Sur
Intertribal Friendship House
Kayon Konsulting
Kapor Center
Mashpee Wampanoag Tribal Council
Mezcla Media Collective
Movement Rights
Muchia Te Indigenous Land Trust
Ojala
Ramaytush Ohlone Association
San Francisco Foundation's Indigenous Communities Working Group
SNAG Magazine
Sogorea Te' Land Trust
In 2023, we served over 80 community members through our Native Youth Leadership Program (NYLP) and 100 youth in our Intercultural Conversations (IC) Program. We supported youth and elders with registration waivers, transportation, and meals at our events, including the annual Bioneers conference in Berkeley, Indigenous Peoples’ Day Sunrise Ceremony on Alcatraz Island, as well as a series of wellness events featuring Khnum Muata Ibomu at the Mandela Grocery Cooperative. Additionally, IC participants engaged in a series of virtual talking circles and in-person cultural exchange.

2023 INDIGENITY YOUTH CONFERENCE PROGRAMMING

Orientation Dinner with Bioneers Youth Programs

Storytelling with Auntie and Uncle with Cari Herthel (Esselen) and Jerry Tello (Coahuiltecan)

Beading Workshop with Samantha Huesue (Diné)

Basket Weaving Workshop with Judy (Diné) and Celeste Aguilar (Diné)

Self Defense with Amir Lacy (Ojibwe)

Silversmithing Stamping with Keevin Huesue (Diné)

Indigenous Foodways and Diets with Joshua Hoyt (Ojibwe) and James Bell (African American)
Intercultural Conversations (IC) fosters youth leadership and facilitates cross-cultural exchanges within the Bioneers Indigeneity Program. The IC Program promotes educational exchange between Native and non-Native youth via virtual talking circles and in-person gatherings. Intercultural Conversations provides a platform for diverse youth across the nation to learn together through Indigenous-centered discussions and original curricula curated by Native people.

Since the program began in 2017, we have served 317 youth towards our goal of 400 by 2026. Over the past seven years, we have supported youth in growing networks and develop the skills to effect social and environmental change.

“I learned a lot from this experience, and I have gained a new perspective on climate issues and solutions. It was hard to imagine how bad things have gotten and how many people deny or cover it up, but it was reassuring to know that there is still hope and that there are people fighting to keep our planet safe.”

-Bishop O’Dowd High School Participant, 10th Grade

In 2023, we partnered with 7 groups serving 56 youth in our 7th Cohort, 61% of whom identify as Indigenous. Cohort 8 of the Program launched in August of 2023 with 44 youth across the nation.

Partner Organizations and Schools

The New School in Atlanta, GA
Bishop O’Dowd in Oakland, CA
Native Like Water in Oakland, CA and San Diego, CA
Brilliant Mindz in Bogalusa, LA
United Houma Nation in Houma, LA
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska in Juneau, AK
Hawaii Cultural Exchange in Hilo, HI

2023 INTERCULTURAL CONVERSATIONS DISCUSSION THEMES AND EVENTS

January 20th: Indigenizing Agriculture and Aquaculture
February 17th: Decolonize Your Diet
March 17th: Creating Affinity Spaces
April 5-10th: Bioneers Conference
May 20th: How to Make An Impact In Your Community

*Cohort 7 ends and Cohort 8 Begins*

August 19th: Introductions and Tribal Diversity
September 16th: Understanding the Rights of Nature
September 20-25th: SoCal Cultural Exchange
October 9th: Indigenous Peoples’ Day Sunrise Ceremony
October 21st: Coming of Age Ceremonies
November 18th: Impact of Money- Financial Footprint
December 16th: How to Make An Impact
If you are moved by what we accomplished in 2023 and want to see our groundbreaking initiatives flourish, we invite you to support our game-changing initiatives to the highest level you can. Together, we will amplify Indigenous solutions to restore, revitalize, and regenerate our planet for the ecosystems and people that depend on it.

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