Carbon & Culture Symposium Report

Sept 29 – Oct 1 2025

A Summary of Event Proceedings and Outcomes

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CONFEDERATED TRIBES OF THE
UMATILLA INDIAN RESERVATION
Treaty of 1855

DEQ

Report prepared by CTUIR DNR First Foods Policy Program
Event hosted by CTUIR and Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ)

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Disclaimer: This report has been prepared by staff within the CTUIR Dept. of Natural Resources (DNR) First Foods Policy Program (FFPP) and has not been adopted by the CTUIR Tribal government across all departments. This report is to document the proceedings and outcomes of the Carbon & Culture Symposium hosted by CTUIR DNR FFPP in partnership with the Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) as part of its report on EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) planning and status update.

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Executive Summary

DNR First Foods Policy Program Carbon & Culture Symposium

Authors: Ermia Butler, Colleen Sanders, Althea Wolf, Carl Merkle

Our lands and systems that support First Foods have a huge role to play in preventing and reducing carbon emissions. This event hosted informed discussions about options, risks, and opportunities for carbon management while centering Tribal communities and relationships to the land.

Introduction

Carbon management strategies are being proposed for our Columbia Plateau region, however our First Foods are being left out of the conversation. The Carbon & Culture Symposium invited Tribal Knowledge keepers, cultural practitioners, regional land managers/owners, research groups, academics, and those who share CTUIR's vision for the future to join us for a 3-day gathering at the Ascension School in Cove OR, within CTUIR Ceded Aboriginal Title lands. This event, held Sept 29th to Oct 1st 2025, offered lectures by scientists and systems thinkers, alongside Indigenous knowledge workshops hosted by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna (Caretakers of the Land).

The event also featured an evening program, our Celebration of Indigenous Joy, that intertwined resilience and culture in the face of change, and highlighted Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts and other Native performers.

Background

CTUIR has had active involvement in the EPA Climate Pollution Reduction (CPRG) Program, beginning in 2023. This Symposium was the culmination of CTUIR partnership with Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ). Past CPRG activities include:

- **April 2023**: Carbon Dioxide Removal Intro w/ Global Ocean Health webinar
- **Oct 5th and 6th 2023:** Climate Resilience Listening Sessions w/ ODEQ at Mission Longhouse & Nixyaawii Governance Center (NGC)
- **Spring 2024**: CTUIR develops proposals to EPA CPRG Implementation grant for consideration
  - General Grant: $18M proposal; request unsuccessful
  - Tribes & Territories: $12M proposal; request unsubmitted (staff illness)
- **Spring 2025**: CTUIR accepted as subrecipient of ODEQ's successful CPRG Implementation grant results in $50K to host Carbon & Culture Symposium for Tribal engagement.

Event Highlight: Dogbane Cordage Workshop

Indigenous land stewardship was centered during these carbon mitigation conversations. Dogbane Cordage Workshops were offered by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna (Caretakers of the Land) on the main day of the event, so all participants were able to connect with cultural and land management knowledge in tandem with scientific lectures.

A Day 1 Workshop offered a walking Tour of Tish Croom Trail and the successful restoration of First Foods on legacy tillage agriculture sites, as stewarded by Indigenous knowledge keepers and in partnership with the Ascension School.

Event Highlight: Hot Topics Session

The primary motivation to host this event was to place proposed PNW carbon mitigation activities within a Tribal cultural knowledge framework. Often these initiatives progress at a rapid pace that does not allow for full Tribal Consultation.

The Hot Topics lecture session introduced the audience to these concepts:

- Geologic Carbon "Sequestration" into Columbia Basalt rock porespace
- Indigenous perspectives on carbon dioxide removal, false solutions which replicate conditions that created the climate crisis, and creating opportunities for Indigenous people to lead climate solutions and mitigation efforts

CTUIR & the Global Stage

Carbon reduction is a global challenge, one that Indigenous people around the world are currently confronting. An aspect of this event was to heighten the connection of CTUIR lands and people to other struggles around carbon mitigation projects that erase and marginalize Indigenous people globally. Our event included lectures that connect CTUIR to the world's Indigenous communities:

- Carbon mitigation projects and Indigenous communities in India and Austrailia
- Celilo Falls and potential UN World Heritage Site Designation (UNESCO)
- UN Rights of Indigenous Peoples and Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC)

Pictured center (from top to bottom): First Foods display hosted by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna (Credit: Stephen Martinez); Tish Croom Walking Trail tour to illustrate restoration of First Foods (Credit: Jeanine Gordon); Symposium attendees participate in the Dogbane Cordage workshop (Credit: CTUIR DNR FFPP); now-BOT Secretary Monica Paradise (left) starts her Dogbane cordage (credit: Monica Paradise) ; finished Dogbane cordage (credit: Monica Paradise)

Event Presentations

Consent and Community Lectures

- Consent in Carbon Mitigation Projects; Whitman College
- Carbon & Culture: International Law, Native American Tribes; CTUIR First Foods Policy Program

First Foods as Climate Resilience; CTUIR DNR Cultural Resources Protection Program and CTUIR First Foods Policy Program

Working Lands Science Lectures

- A First Foods Approach to Landscape Stewardship, Management, and Restoration; Oregon State University Union County Extension Service
- Understanding Carbon in Our Working Lands of Eastern Oregon; USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Burns Station
- Carbon Markets Finance Rangeland Health Assessment; The Nature Conservancy and Magpie Ranch
- Soil Carbon in the Dryland Agricultural systems of the Columbia Basin: Lessons Learned at the Pendleton Research Station; Oregon State University Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center (CBARC)

Hot Topics Session

- Understanding Carbon Pricing Frameworks; Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)
- Geological Carbon Sequestration in Oregon: An Update on State Investigations, September 2025; Oregon Dept of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI)

Lands and Systems Lectures

- Mountains to Oceans - How First Foods Salmon Weave Mountains, Oceans, Carbon and Culture Together; Global Ocean Health
- Carbon Stability in Oregon's Dry Forests; The Nature Conservancy
- Refugia of the Blue Mountains; Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands, Wallowology
- Cultivating A Resilient Foods System: DEQ's Initiatives in Food Waste Prevention, Rescue, and Recovery; ODEQ, with the NDTIAIP Team

PNW Carbon Policy Roundtable

- Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Climate Programs; ODEQ
- Carbon Sequestration in Oregon: Natural Climate Solutions; Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)

Youth Engagement

This Symposium aimed to educate landowners and groups about the impacts of carbon emissions and the First Foods grown on CTUIR lands, with a focus on youth engagement. Another point to consider is the youth/young adults who will inherit these lands after us. We included youth/young adults in our Symposium by holding a poster competition on topics such as climate resilience, land management (farming, ranches, forests, gardens, etc.), experiences with First Foods and food systems (harvesting, processing, ceremony), carbon cycle, environment, and future vision.

Student Posters pictured left to right: Top photo, Lokaa Tso "Chiefs", bottom photo, Crow's Shadow Judging Student Posters, Liz Hern "Ending Ourselves in the Mess", Isabella Hiatt "This Could Be Us" (September 2025).

Next Steps and Conclusion:

FFPP is developing the Symposium's forthcoming Proceedings Report. It will include information on the events success, attendance, and participant and presenter discussions and testimony, which will be included in ODEQ reporting to EPA about the state's CPRG activities. A draft report is anticipated for later Spring 2026, to be finalized Fall 2026 for ODEQ's EPA Progress Report in 2027.

Whitman College is also developing a report about input gained during our Consent in Carbon Mitigation lecture and discussion, to be published in 2026.

Part 1: Introduction

Image 1: Display of Tribal "First Foods," medicines, and fibers processed and provided for the Day 1 workshop by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna; this display was available for the duration of the Symposium. Photo by Janine Gordon, 2025.

Why this Symposium?

Indigenous people have long recognized the imminent and active climate crisis and have been at the forefront of addressing the root causes of carbon emissions globally.
Our lands and systems that support First Foods have a huge role to play in preventing and reducing carbon emissions. This event hosted informed discussions about options, risks, and opportunities for carbon management while centering Tribal communities and relationships to the land. Around the world, carbon mitigation has the potential to be used for new land dispossession and access disruption for Indigenous people when these projects are implemented over the objections of Indigenous communities or without adequate consultation. In the United States, Indigenous land stewardship provide pathways for climate resilience, carbon emissions reduction, and carbon sequestration approaches that are accountable to ancestral lifeways and First Foods. Tribal Treaties are strong legal mechanisms to motivate climate action and the United Nation's framework on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) provides guidance on how carbon mitigation initiatives can meaningfully consult with Tribes and communities in project development and implementation.

The Carbon & Culture Symposium invited Tribal Knowledge keepers, cultural practitioners, land managers, research groups, academics, and those who share CTUIR's vision for the future to join us for a 3-day gathering at the Ascension School. Carbon management strategies are being proposed for our Columbia Plateau region, however our First Foods and working lands are being left behind. This event offered lectures by scientists and systems thinkers, alongside Indigenous knowledge workshops hosted by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna (Caretakers of the Land).

Building on Past Partnership and Knowledge

CTUIR DNR First Foods Policy Program (FFPP) is tremendously grateful for all those who put time, effort, and funding into this Symposium, it wouldn't have been possible for any of us to do on our own. This Symposium was an opportunity to highlight the idea that we have more in common than we have differences, and that we will all need to be part of creating a future where the things we all value are protected and perpetuated.

Tribal Knowledge as Climate Resilience

Tribal people are disproportionately impacted by effects of the climate crisis, and due to both intimate relationships with land and unique legal mechanisms available to federally recognized Tribes, CTUIR has been actively planning for a climate adapted future. With a Climate Adaptation Plan (CAP) published and adopted by the whole of the Tribal government in December 2022, CTUIR has been dedicatedly examining and preparing for the anticipated changes that will come to the region, and work to get ahead of the worst of these impacts to mitigate the harms they can cause to First Foods and Tribal communities.

Please find more information about the CTUIR Climate Adaptation Plan a at the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/ctuir-climate-adaptation-plan-final/

Videos and segments from the CAP associated webinar series are also located at the CTUIR website for on-demand viewing: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/climate-adaptation-plan-webinar-archive/

To implement the CAP throughout the Tribal government's various departments and services, First Foods Policy Program (FFPP) hosted a series of interdisciplinary workshops that invited representatives of Tribal government departments to learn about the projected climate impacts and identify services and priorities that they see as impacted, and encouraged departments to set their own annual work plan goals and objectives to address these anticipated impacts.

More about these workshops and the materials presented can be found on the workshop archive on the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/ctuir-cap-implementation-workshops/

EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CRPG) Planning

Addressing the root cause of the climate crisis, emissions of carbon-intensive greenhouse gases (GHGs), has been a task that CTUIR has worked towards in different ways over many years. In addition to anticipating and mitigating for climate impacts, CTUIR has also been actively engaged in conversations about removing carbon from the earth's atmosphere to work and prevent the worst climate scenarios from coming to pass. Under the Biden presidential administration, funding to address GHGs was included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIB)/Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) to support the rapid drawdown of atmospheric carbon by Tribal, state, and local governments. CTUIR worked both independently and in partnership with Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) to conduct planning and activities that would make the Tribal government an eligible entity to access this forthcoming funding. This funding was later made available under the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) Planning grant and the 2024 Implementation grants.

To be eligible for this funding, GHG drawdown strategies were required to be identified by affected communities and stakeholders. First Foods Policy Program began conducting these consent-based identification activities, detailed in the following section.

CTUIR Participation in the Global Ocean Health (GOH) Network Tribal Working Group

Early in 2023, the collaborative organization Global Ocean Health Network facilitated a Tribal leaders and staff-centered working group to provide overview of carbon management strategies for the Pacific Northwest in general and understand their various potentials for Tribal communities and concerns these communities have with these approaches. This included monthly virtual sessions that hosted spotlight education on select carbon dioxide removal strategies from experts and personnel directly involved in these approaches, and allowed Tribal leaders and staff an opportunity to ask questions and express concerns.

Out of this working group, CTUIR First Foods Policy Program (FFPP) coordinated with GOH staff to host a dedicated virtual learning and listening session with the CTUIR Tribal community and government. This webinar was hosted in April 2023 to begin introducing carbon management concepts to CTUIR Gov and Community. A recording of that virtual listening session is available on the CTUIR Climate Resilience Youtube channel: FFPP Presents: Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) Introduction with Global Ocean Health Program https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bw7tZFIxsH0&t=4s

Climate Resilience Listening Sessions – Oct 5th and 6th 2023

To address carbon mitigation project concerns, CTUIR has been working to understand the implications in both short and long term timeframes and to seek guidance from the Tribal community and government. During the Oct 2023, FFPP presented a suite of potential carbon management strategies to the CTUIR community and asked participants to use red and green sticky dots to indicate what concerns and preferences exist for these strategies that are already being used in the Tribal region (mid-Columbia Plateau). Summarize the CPRG Community Engagement attachment, and additional information below about the history of carbon management efforts.

Two listening session opportunities were offered to the CTUIR community and government. The first session was hosted in the evening a the Mission Longhouse and included dinner and childcare for attendees to mitigate for barriers that can prevent community members from engaging in listening sessions. The second listening session was hosted the following day at the Nixyaawii Governance Center (NGC) to remove barriers to Tribal staff and leader participation in the event, and a virtual attendance option was offered to further facilitate participation. Recordings of these sessions are available on the CTUIR Climate Adaptation Youtube channel:
Climate Resilience Listening Session Part One - CPRG 2023
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-u3vhKFgvSM&t=3s)
Climate Resilience Listening Session Part Two - CPRG 2023
(https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aUbTRe_40II&t=5s)

Images 2 and 3: Participants with the 2023 CPRG Listening Sessions interact with carbon mitigation strategy posters and indicate their support or concerns with colored sticky dots and comment cards. Many of the participants from these Listening Sessions were also organizers and partners for the Carbon & Culture Symposium. Photo by CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2023.

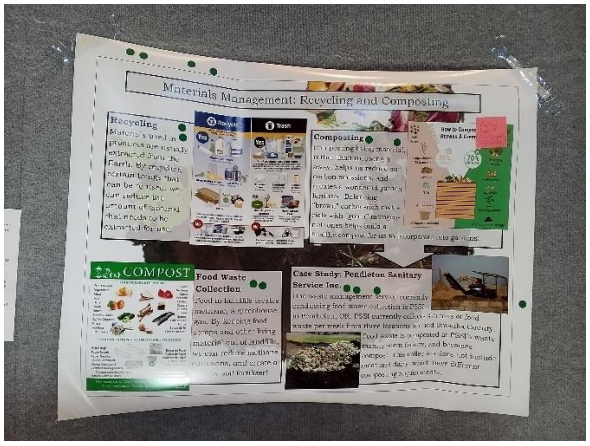
CTUIR Priorities for the CPRG Implementation Grant Opportunities

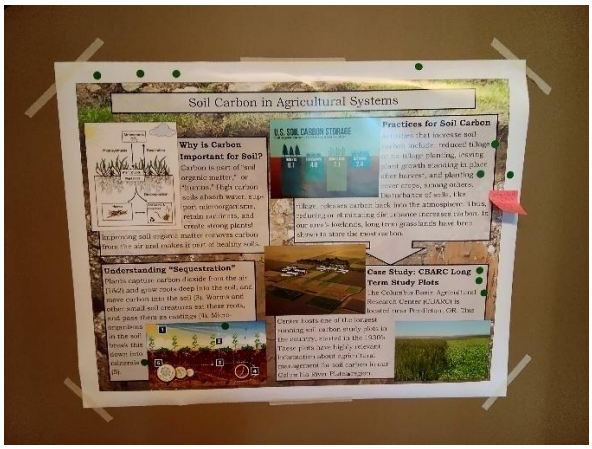
During the Spring of 2024 as the EPA offered the CPRG Implementation Grant funding opportunity, CTUIR conducted internal discussions and developed priorities for greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction strategies that were preferred by our Tribal community and government staff. The priority areas below were developed into two separate funding proposals that provided rough calculations for the amount of GHGs each of these strategies was anticipated to prevent.

CTUIR Areas of Priority for GHG Reductions:

1. Walking Trails and Traffic Abatement
2. Kayak Public Transit Expansion and Electrification
3. Pulp Mill and Small Diameter Forest Harvest
4. Organic Waste Management and Resource Recovery
5. First Foods Working Lands Restoration
6. Research Collaboration on Soil Carbon Valuation

These priority areas were developed out of responses FFPP received from our previous carbon-centered listening sessions hosted in partnership with Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) during the Climate Resilience Listening Sessions hosted in October 2023. Posters developed for use with the Listening Session offered a summary of different carbon mitigation strategies and provided a local case study to cement relevance to the Tribal community. A full description of the community engagement around the CPRG activities is available in Appendix B.





Images 4 and 5: Posters to facilitate engagement with options for the Tribal community. Red and green sticky dots were used by participants to indicate either concerns about or support for various carbon mitigation strategies. Photos by CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2023.

Conducting these listening sessions that included CTUIR priorities in the Oregon Priority Climate Action Plan (https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/Documents/CPRG-OregonPCAP.pdf) made CTUIR eligible for CPRG Implementation grant for General and Tribes & Territories Implementation grants. In 2024, CTUIR developed proposals for both CPRG Implementation General Grant (open to cities, states, municipalities and Tribes) and to the Tribes & Territories specific grant. Within these two grant opportunities, proposals were developed for the following amounts and focus:

- $18M proposal for small diameter wood management, walking trails and traffic revisions, and organic waste management. Submitted but unsuccessful
- $12M proposal for working lands and riparian restoration, and academic partnership to understand freshwater systems carbon sequestration. This proposal was not able to be submitted, but through its development FFPP learned about the lack of research into carbon management for inland (non-oceanic) ecosystems.

In the development of these two proposals, CTUIR FFPP recognized the need for improved understanding of the carbon sequestration potential of our mid-Columbia River basin working and First Foods lands to support carbon mitigation and drawdown. This motivation to better understand how our inland freshwater ecosystems can be recognized for their potential to sequester carbon as well as preserve and protect biodiversity and climate resilience is the precipitating concept that led to the organizing and facilitation of the CTUIR/ODEQ Carbon and Culture Symposium.

What Did the Event Aim to Achieve?

Growing out of a motivation to improve recognition and understanding of Tribal priorities and relationships to carbon mitigation strategies, FFPP began organizing an event that would put Tribal culture and First Foods front and center in these conversations about regional carbon sequestration potential. The Symposium aimed to offer a different perspective than ones conventionally offered in GHG emissions reduction spaces, and focus on relationships to land, community, and culture instead of a singular focus on carbon as a pollutant.

Indigenous Land Stewardship as Climate Resilience

A strong motivation to host the Symposium was due to the lack of understanding and institutional prioritization nature-based carbon management strategies receive, compared to other more heavily industrialized strategies. The aim of the Symposium was to convene Tribal and non-Tribal community members together to better understand carbon management knowledge, gaps, and potential for our lands to be part of the nature-based solutions that also support First Foods. In recent years, large amounts of funding have been allocated to heavily industrialized carbon management strategies like photovoltaic (PV), electric vehicles and associated infrastructure, direct air capture, and geologic approaches that are not well understood but have high levels of private and government funding.

Similar funding has not been allocated to the nature-based solutions like Coastal Blue Carbon, prevention of land conversation, transitions in land management, and proactive forest management. Many of these approaches also build landscape-scale resilience to natural disaster, as well as create positive opportunities for greater connection within affected communities. These approaches often take more time for carbon removal benefits to aggregate in large quantities, which causes them to be overlooked by carbon valuation frameworks that prioritize rapid carbon removal, like the EPA CPRG cost/benefit analysis does. Additionally, non-carbon benefits are not calculated into this decision making framework, and technical assistance to overexploited communities such as Tribal nations are insufficient and unable to highlight natural and working lands solutions due to lack of research investment.

Working lands are a documented preference for CTUIR, as discovered by the Oct 2023 CTUIR Climate Resilience Listening Sessions. At the same time, heavily industrialized approaches are receiving large amounts of investment into technologies that advertise rapid and lasting carbon

removal benefits, but with insufficient research and understanding of how risky these approaches are and how stable resulting carbon removal gains will be in the long term.

Additional information on working lands and carbon sequestration will be addressed in Part 2: Symposium Proceedings within this report.

Image 6: Participants in the Carbon & Culture Symposium walk along the Tish Croom Walking Trail that surrounds the First Foods and medicines restoration being conducted by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna and the Cove Ascension School. Photo by Stephen Martinez, 2025.

Consent from Communities in Carbon Mitigation

Indigenous people globally have had mixed experiences with carbon mitigation projects conducted in their homelands. Around the world, many Indigenous communities are being displaced by large scale carbon mitigation projected that have been located near or within lands historically stewarded by Native peoples. Consent has very rarely been meaningfully sought from Indigenous communities around these projects, despite longstanding frameworks like the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that outlines the process of Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC). In our Columbia River basin region, several carbon mitigation and renewable energy projects have been planned and developed without attempts to secure consent from not only 1855 Treaty Tribes that have reserved rights in the region, but from other affected communities and stakeholders.

This Symposium emphasized the need for carbon mitigation efforts to pursue and secure meaningful consent, especially from Tribal nations and land managers that will disproportionally affected by these large scale activities. Partnering with professors and students at Whitman College in CTUIR's ceded lands, FFPP intentionally included concepts and processes around consent and building consensus into the Symposium proceedings, in an attempt to demonstrate that securing consent is not only possible but necessary for a future where carbon mitigation is used to improve communities instead of continue to marginalize them.

Whitman students worked with Dr. Denise Fernandes to develop a short report on their emphasis on consent, with some of it's content excerpted below. The full report and associated artistic "chapbook" are available in Appendix A of this report.

"During the Carbon and Culture Symposium, we requested community members to reflect on three questions in relation to 'consent' around carbon mitigation projects:

1. What does 'consent' mean to you as an individual?
2. What are the concerns with development of carbon mitigation projects?
3. How would you shape the future of 'consent' in carbon mitigation projects?"

Additional excerpts from this Whitman College report will be highlighted in Part 3: Consent and Consensus of this report.

Building a Shared Future

Carbon mitigation is a global effort innately because carbon does not remain where it is emitted. Carbon emitted in one place can travel the globe and carbon mitigation projects are often designed as offsets for carbon emitters located far from where these projects are sited. The scale of action required to prevent catastrophic levels of atmospheric carbon will also require immense collaboration and cooperation within communities and regions around the world. CTUIR recognizes that addressing the climate crisis is an action that cannot be done alone; all those with a stake in the future of our Columbia River basin region will need to be involved for required change to be implemented.

First Foods Policy Program would like to express our deep gratitude for all who gave their time and energy to this gathering, it wouldn't have been the same without all who participated.

Image 7: Attendees to the Carbon & Culture Symposium participate in the Dogbane Cordage Workshop offered on Day 2. Photo by CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2025.

Part 2: Symposium Proceedings

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) and the Department of Natural Resources First Foods Policy Program started thinking about the issues of carbon management strategies that were suggested to be introduced in the Columbia Plateau Region. Along with the carbon strategies being introduced, it is leaving behind the Native American communities that live within the Columbia Plateau Region, which will affect First Foods and cultural and productive landscapes. By approaching these topics, we invited scientists and tribal knowledge keepers to consider the bigger picture, with Native American Communities involved, and how to resolve concerning issues for all.

This event hosted informed discussions about options, risks, and opportunities for carbon management while centering Tribal communities and relationships to the land. Around the world, carbon mitigation has the potential to be used for new land dispossession and access disruption for Indigenous people when these projects are implemented over the objections of Indigenous communities or without adequate consultation. In the United States, Indigenous land stewardship provides pathways for climate resilience, carbon emissions reduction, and carbon sequestration approaches that are accountable to ancestral lifeways and First Foods. Tribal Treaties are strong legal mechanisms to motivate climate action, and the United Nations' framework on Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) guides how carbon mitigation initiatives can meaningfully consult with Tribes and communities in project development and implementation.

Symposium Attendance Demographics

This Symposium aimed to convene those who have influence over land management in the Columbia River basin, and include a diverse range of audience types that were invited to the event. Promotion for the event targeted Tribal members and others that have a connection with the CTUIR Tribal community, as well as those responsible for managing lands in Eastern Oregon and Washington, in both a private and public capacity. This includes those directly responsible for implementing management actions on these lands, and those indirectly involved through the setting of policy and strategic planning for these lands.

Partners in diverse governments that work with Tribes were also a priority for Symposium attendees. This included event sponsors like the Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality (ODEQ) as well as others from municipal governments like Portland Metro and staffers with federal government agencies responsible for Tribal coordination and land management like the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Students and research professionals were also a priority audience for the Symposium. Research institutions are often the incubator for developing strategies and planning for lands that support First Foods. Inviting these researchers to our event intended to build understanding and support for Indigenous knowledge and stewardship so its inclusion into land management research can be improved and accountable to Tribal communities and culture. Students themselves are the future of this knowledge as well, and youth perspectives that represent the shared future we strive to build were also specifically targeted for participation in this event.

As part of the Symposium's registration form, participants were asked to identify the role(s) they play in our inland Pacific Northwest communities. Results from that registration question are presented below.

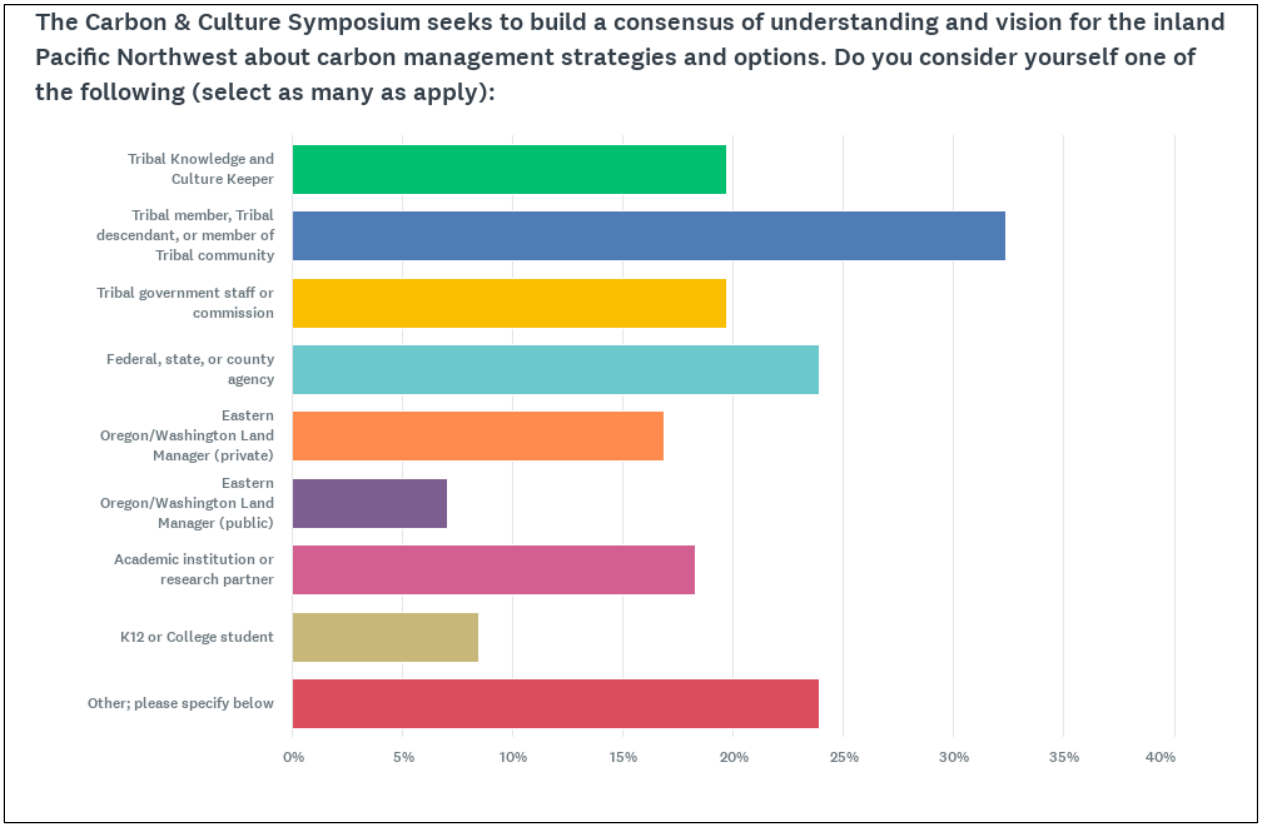


Figure 1: Responses from the Carbon & Culture Symposium registration survey; respondents were able to select multiple identities within their answers. 20% of respondents indicate Tribal knowledge and Culture Keepers (14 respondents); 32% were Tribal member, Tribal descendent, or member of Tribal community (23 respondents); 20% were Tribal government staff or commission members (14 respondents); 24% were Federal, State, or County Agency staff (17 respondents); 17% were Eastern Oregon/Washington Land Manager (Private) (12 respondents); 7% were Eastern Oregon/Washington Land Manager (Public) (5 respondents); 18% were associated with Academic Institution or Research Partner (13 respondents); 8% were K12 or College Student (6 respondents); and 24% indicated an Other identity not included in the list (17 respondents). 121 responses in total from 74 survey respondents.

Table 1: Details of the Registration Survey Question: Do you consider your self one of the following:"

Registration Response	Percentage	Responses
Tribal Knowledge and Culture Keeper	20%	14
Tribal member, descendent, or member of Tribal community	32%	23
Tribal government staff or commission	20%	14
Federal, state, or county government	24%	17
Eastern Oregon/Washington Land Manager (private)	17%	12
Eastern Oregon/Washington Land Manager (public)	7%	5
Academic institution or research partner	18%	13
K12 or College student	8%	6
Other	24%	17
Total		121

Table 2: Written responses from those who selected "Other" are shown below:

I'm the new Energy Trust of Oregon New Buildings NE Oregon Outreach Manager and completing my Ph.D. (abd) in Sustainability Education. Thank you for the opportunity to join and learn with you.	Outreach volunteer for Oregon State University extension, private landowner and manager, PNW Section Society for Range Management in coming president, Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District is a special elected district.	I will be working with Denise Fernandez on the FPIC/UN consent workshop
nonprofit conservation organization that partners with Tribal Nations	Conservation organization and partner on work in the northern Blues and across Oregon	Scientist, Educator, and Tribal partner
I work for a non-profit that is establishing a multi-state initiative, in partnership with Tribes and Tribal organizations, to build resilient salmon populations	Blue Mountain Land Trust is a nonprofit conservation organization that works with private landowners in Eastern Oregon and Washington to conserve	I am the Program Director at the Columbia Gorge Discovery Center & Museum. We provide academic programming on-site and across the Gorge. Our

in the face of climate change. While understanding Indigenous land stewardship practices and principles is essential to building salmon resilience, I also recognize that there may be people with greater need for attendance who are more directly involved in carbon management.	natural and working lands. Blue Mountain Land Trust believes collaboration between Tribal partners, conservation organizations, and private landowners can create lasting impact and would be honored to participate in	offerings range from history, ecology, geology, and more. We are always seeking to incorporate Indigenous knowledge and histories in our teachings and museum as a whole (with permission and in partnership). Additionally, stewardship is at the heart of our programming and our mission.
My position as "stewardship archaeologist" is a new type of job in WA state government, focusing on taking care of places and cultural values including First Foods and other culturally important landscapes, rather than just permit review and compliance archaeology. I also do some consulting in western WA prairie restoration projects.	I am an enrolled member of the Colville Confederated Tribes and I am a descendent of the Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce and Palus tribes	Metro is a regional government that serves 24 cities and three counties in the Portland, Oregon region. Our Tribal Affairs program consults regularly with 7 Tribes across all departments in our government including in Parks and Nature, Transportation, Housing, Venues, Oregon Zoo, and Waste management.
Associate Director, Technical Assistance - Intertribal Agriculture Council	Research and education partner with Tribes.	Tribal member of another Tribe in the Pacific North West, also an educator with a nongovernmental organization (NGO)
my tribal knowledge is personal/in-home use	Local landowner currently restoring some rangeland	Gatherer
Non-profit	N/a	Nonprofit organization
Just appointed as Secretary/Treasurer of the CTUIR Fish and Wildlife Commission		

The make up of our audience reflects the intent of the event to attract those who value relationships to land and community, with special consideration for those who have ancestral and ongoing connection to Tribal culture.

The facilitation team worked to implement trauma-informed practices throughout the Symposium and especially in discussion and testimony spaces. ADA accommodations were available for most activities, and the Ascension School worked to accommodate food allergies as much as possible.

Event Venue and Agenda

The location for this Symposium was equally as important as the topics of the event. When considering potential venues for this event, First Foods Policy Program (FFPP) could only think of one place that had capacity to host this event and set an appropriate backdrop for conversations that uplift Tribal knowledge and land stewardship. The Cove Ascension School (https://coveascensionschool.com/)

Ascension School Camp and Conference Center sits on approximately 100 acres. For nearly a century, 80 acres of the property was farmed in tillage intensive dryland cereal crops like wheat. In 2019, the Ascension school began implementing a vision to re-establish the native riparian and prairie eco-system and build a nature trail. About half of the project is part of the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which seeks to support landowners in establishing vegetation along streams, protecting water quality, and restoring fish and wildlife habitat. The restoration is managed by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna (Caretakers of the Land) and monitored in partnership with the Grande Ronde Community Science Project. The Ascension School works with Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna to offer workshops and educational opportunities that center Tribal culture and native plant relationships, and works as a fiscal sponsor for this Native-led nonprofit.

This report is designed to memorialize the knowledge shared and relationships build during the course of this three-day Symposium so it can be used for others who may seek to build a similar shared future. The following section provides detailed overviews of the lectures, workshops, and discussions that were integral to the proceedings of the Symposium. Caretakers of the Land is an Indigenous-led organization (Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla) serving to steward and strengthen the symbiotic lifeways, languages, habitats, and traditional ecological knowledge of the Blue Mountain Bio-region and the Columbia River Basin. This mission is carried out through seasonal round immersion camps and ecosystem restoration projects. Guided by the seasonal patterns of the land and work with the cycles of the first foods, medicines, and materials, priority projects involve knowledge and skills that are fading from collective memory but are crucial aspects of unique cultural identity that our Ancestors sacrificed and worked hard to preserve for future generations.

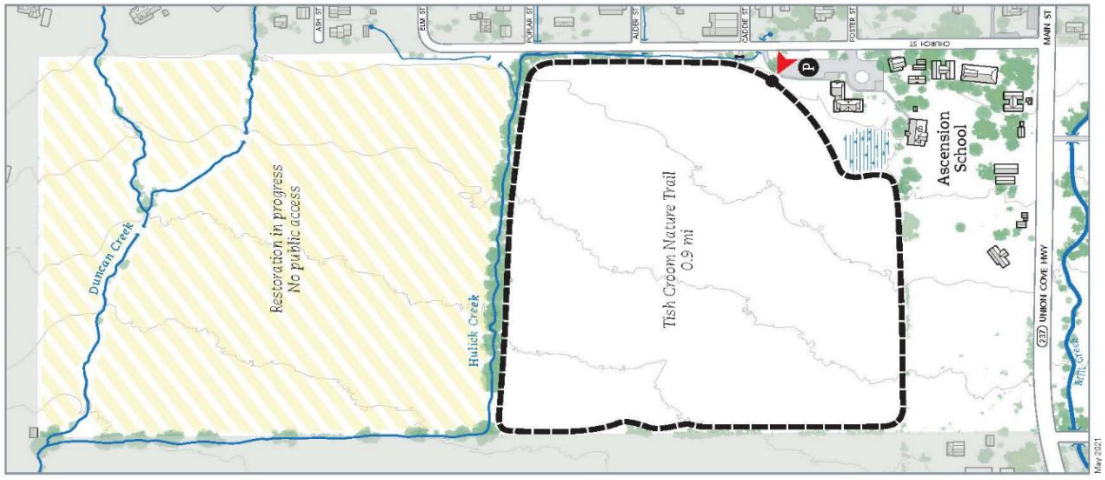


Image 8: Map of the Tish Croom Nature Trail and the Ascension School. Courtesy of the Cove Ascension School, 2025.

Day 1 – Monday September 29th: Consent and Community

Below is the agenda for the first day of the Symposium.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Day 1 – Mon Sept 29th</th></tr>
<tr><td>1 PM: Welcome and Invocation (30 minutes)</td><td rowspan="3">11AM: Participant intake and booth set up
- Sign in
- Packets and paperwork
- Site orientation and accommodations
- Booth space and set up assistance
- Student poster competition space prep</td></tr>
<tr><td>1:30 – 2:30 PM Lunch #1 plus networking & continued discussion (1 hour)</td></tr>
<tr><td>2:30 - 4 PM: Workshop #1 (1.5 hours)
Walking Tour of Ascension School and Tish Croom Trail, History of working with Caretakers of the Land</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">4 – 5:30 PM: Lecture Block – Consent & Community (1.5 hours)
Coe Kerr Building
• Consent in Carbon Mitigation Projects; Denise Ferdandes, Whitman College
• Carbon & Culture: International Law, American* Tribes; Carl Merkle, CTUIR First Foods Policy Program</td></tr>
<tr><td>5:30 -6:30 PM: Dinner #1 plus networking & continued discussion (1 hour)</td><td rowspan="4">5:30PM: Student Poster Competition Set up
- Volunteers needed to help with set up
- Opportunity for attendees to engage with posters and pick up voting slips</td></tr>
<tr><td>6:30 – 7 PM: Facilitated Discussion #1 (30 minutes)</td></tr>
<tr><td>7 – 7:30 Testimony Opportunity #1 (30 minutes)</td></tr>
<tr><td>7:30 – 9 PM: Evening Activity - Movie Night (1.5 hours)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Concludes Day 1</td></tr>
</table>

Workshop 1: Indigenous Land Stewardship with Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna

This event was held with specific and intentional partners and venues to set the most appropriate backdrop for these important conversations about the future. To set the right tone for the discussions that would follow throughout the event, Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna hosted their first workshop which included a storytelling about their work with the Ascension School and how Tribal culture and knowledge are at the very center of this relationship.

Bobby Fossek (Walla Walla/Yakama) began with a story of how humans came to be as Natítayt: since time immemorial, all the plants and animals already lived here and had community and way of life. Creator told them all that humans would be coming, and they would be like infants that did not know anything, not how to feed themselves, or clothe themselves or build shelters or take care of the water. And if no one shows them how to take care of themselves and the land and water, they're going to make a mess of things and make it hard for all in this way of life. So Coyote gathered all the plants and animals to deliver this message: soon the humans will be here and they won't know how to take care

of anything, so we will have to show them how to take care of the land and the water and all the living things. This story can help us understand our role in the natural world. None of the plants or animals ever suggested they try to prevent the humans from arriving or get rid of them. Instead, one by one the First Foods stood up and promised their bodies to provide food to the humans and to the lands. As long as the humans promise in return to take good care of the First Foods, the water and the lands and habitat that they rely on. As long as the humans agreed to take only what they needed, and followed the laws of the season and kept a good heart, all the First Foods will return each year to feed the humans. This is the ancient law that Tribal people still keep to this day.

All the streams in the Grande Ronde basin used to have Salmon and Freshwater Mussels at one time, but many rivers and streams now have been diverted and channeled for irrigation. In our modern age, it is difficult to keep this promise in some ways, like keep clean water and clean healthy foods, because many things have disrupted these natural cycles and ways of being, so it has been a priority for Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna to revitalize these ways of life whenever possible and reestablish these relationships. There is deep healing possible by returning to these practices, including healing from existential crises like the climate crisis. That is how Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna came to be as an organization and to have a relationship with the Ascension School.

Please find the full video of the First Foods presentation by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna on the CTUIR Climate Adaptation Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7uhPfAgRx94&t=1870s

Image 9: First Foods, medicines, and fibers are on display as Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna talks about Indigenous land stewardship and relationship to community and place. Still image from recorded workshop by Stephen Martinez and Paul Lynn, 2025.

The second part of the workshop was a walking tour of the restoration work that Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna and the Ascension School have been implementing for many years. Participants walked with Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna's Bobby Fossek and Brosnan Spencer around the roughly 1 mile of walking trail that is open to the Cove community and in active restoration for the native plants and animals in the area. Prior to restoration activities, the land encircled by the walking trail was planted annually with dryland wheat crop, but now is being restored to bunchgrass and other native forbs. 80 acres of the land is in restoration through a Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) contract, and half this area is available to the public with the Tish Croom Walking Trail. The trail is named after a female priest who worked with the Ascension School, who long ago started the intention of replacing the non-native crops and invasive species with native plants, and began with a Red Osier planting that got the restoration started many years ago.

These days, Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna has been focused on wetland restoration in this area, with Wapato growing in the restored stream and aspens providing shade. Every year they add to it as the seasons progress, and Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna hosts volunteer work parties to invite the community to come and participate in the restoration. The site also hosts an atmospheric weather station to provide the most accurate and up-to-date weather conditions that facilitate prescribed burn planning and decisions so low intensity fire can be applied to the restoration area. The site supports many outdoor and educational learning opportunities like the annual Outdoor School.

Please find the full video of the Tish Croom Walking Trail on the CTUIR Climate Adaptation Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iv6k8PvtjEY&t=1747s

Image 10: Walking tour of the First Foods restoration being undertaken by Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna and the Cove Ascension School over many years. Still image from recorded workshop by Stephen Martinez and Paul Lynn, 2025.

Day 1 Consent and Community Lecture Session

Indigenous communities globally are often the epicenter of testing for geoengineered "climate solutions," and many initiatives do little or nothing to meaningful secure consent from these communities. Here in the Columbia River basin, the situation is similar as geotechnical solutions are being funded to proceed in a test phase, with little planning to meaningfully engage local communities and Columbia River Treaty Tribes around the initiatives. This lecture session examines what it means to meaningfully engage with Indigenous peoples and some international mechanisms like the United Nations Declaration of Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) that provide a framework that can be used by those seeking to secure consent for these projects.

- **"Landscapes of Consent in Carbon Mitigation Projects"**
  Presenter: Denise Fernandes, Dept of Politics with Whitman College, supported by Ben Anderson and River Woodruff.

  This lecture session was designed to locate our discussions of carbon mitigation in a global context, examining how Indigenous communities around the world are being impacted by large carbon removal/mitigation projects that have been implemented at the objection of local and Indigenous communities. Using India as a microcosm of challenges Indigenous people face related to carbon mitigation projects, this presentation provided international examples of massive solar energy mega projects disrupting Indigenous access to traditional pastoral and plant and animal gathering locations. As global investment into solar technology increases, global financing mechanisms are using the opportunity to dispossess lands from Indigenous groups by weaponizing carbon mitigation incentives. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) aims to accelerate solar deployment globally, with eager financing provided by institutions like the World Bank Group. These investors are almost exclusively located in the Global North, with proposed solar projects disproportionately affecting lands in the Global South. These often come with exclusion of Indigenous groups from ancestral lands, mostly affecting women and access to forest and firewood resources, grazing lands and shepards, loss of source of food and income, and no access to agricultural fields. Concepts like Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) exist in theory to protect against these, but often there is no enforcement.

  No recording or presentation slides are available of this lecture to respect requests from presenters to privacy.

- **"International Law, Native American Tribes"**
  Presented by Carl Merkle, CTUIR First Foods Policy Program

  Federally recognized Tribes in the United States have access to unique legal and policy mechanisms as protections secured during the Tribal treaty signing era. There are also some international mechanisms that may be available to Tribes in the United States to try and protect cultural practices and places, and to build on existing Treaty rights and protections, U.S. policy, and other successes in securing Tribal sovereignty and practices. Since Salmon were listed as a priority species by the Endangered Species Act (ESA) in the early 1990's, CTUIR has primarily

focused on harvest restrictions, Salmon population supplementation, and habitat restoration. As the struggle for Salmon restoration continued through the decades, the source of Salmon mortality became more obviously passage barriers and water quality challenges created by the Columbia and Snake River Hydroelectric systems and the dams associated. In 2007, the Pacific Northwest recognized the 50th anniversary of the drowning of Celilo Falls, a cultural and Tribal commerce heritage site that was flooded during the creation of The Dalles Dam, but Tribal nations found no reason to celebrate and instead created Resolution #07-14 at the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians (ATNI) Winter Conference. With this memorialization, connections to other global heritage site protections could eventually be possible. As mechanisms for Tribes to affect actions with the federal government slowly erode, options at an international level exist.

Please find more about the Celilo Falls Memorial Resolution #07-14 at the website: https://atnitribes.org/wp-content/uploads/resolutions/res-07-14.pdf

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/UtXJ4vwtLnw

Day 2 Film

To close the first day in the same spirit of addressing past and ongoing injustice to Indigenous stewards of the land, the event hosted an optional movie night as evening programming for the first night. This film was selected due to a shared theme of disruption of relationships with land and community, historic, generational, and ongoing trauma committed against Indigenous people, and how these communities are continuing to resist colonial violence, land theft, biopiracy, and intergenerational trauma to perpetuate culture and build a brighter future.

The film was produced by the organization Science and Non Duality (SAND), and a trailer of the film can be found on their Youtube channel: https://scienceandnonduality.com/films/the-eternal-song/

Disclaimer: Event organizers do not own or have rights to this publication

Day 2 - Tues Sept 30th: Carbon, First Foods, and Our Lands and Systems

On the only full day of the Symposium, the was focus on was on the multifaceted discussion of carbon management and various strategies and approaches for our region. Below is the agenda for Symposium Day 2, with additional detail on each element explained further in this section following.

After breakfast, our gathering began with a keynote presentation on the CTUIR Public Education and Outreach Specialist Wenix Red Elk shared the First Foods presentation with our gathering, starting with the Creation story that drives the mission of the Department of Natural Resources. CTUIR Climate Adaptation Planner Colleen Sanders provided background context on how the Symposium came together and the long history of working with the Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality to conduct community engagement around carbon mitigation. And CTUIR Climate Change Intern Ermia Butler

shared her experiences working with the First Foods Policy Program and how it has shaped her path in her education and vision for the future.

Day 2 – Tues Sept 30	
7:00 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast #1 plus networking & continued discussion (*1.5 hours)*	
8:30 – 9:30 AM: Keynote (*1 hour*) Coe Kerr Building First Foods as Climate Resilience Speakers: Wenix Red Elk, CTUIR DNR Cultural Resources Protection, Colleen Sanders and Ermia Butler, CTUIR First Foods Policy Programs	
9:30 – 11:30 AM: Track 1 (*2 hours*) Workshop: Dogbane Cordage Making Coe Kerr Building Hosted by Caretakers of the Land	9:30 – 11: 30 AM: Track 2 (*2 hours*) Working Lands Science Kimsey Commons • A First Foods Approach to Landscape Stewardship, Management, and Restoration; *Bryan Endress, Oregon State University* • Understanding Carbon in Our Working Lands of Eastern Oregon; *Rory O'Connor, USDA ARS Burns Station* • Carbon Markets Finance Rangeland Health Assessment; *Mike Hale, the Nature Conservancy and Magpie Ranch* • Soil Carbon in the Dryland Agricultural systems of the Columbia Basin: Lessons Learned at the Pendleton Research Station; *Francisco Calderon, Paulina Ramirez, and Stephen Machado, Oregon State University*
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Lunch #2 (*1 hour*) plus networking & continued discussion	
12:30-2 PM: Hot Topics Session (*1.5 hours*) Kimsey Commons* - Geologic Carbon Sequestration in Oregon: An Update on State Investigations, September 2025; *Jason McClaughry, Richard Walker, and Alex Lopez with Oregon Dept of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI)* - Understanding Carbon Pricing Frameworks; *Thomas Joseph, Indigenous Environmental Network*	

2-4 PM: Track 1 (*2 hours*) Lands and Systems Kimsey Commons • Mountains to Oceans – How First Food Salmon Weave Mountains, Oceans, Carbon and Culture Together; *Kevin Scribner & Kat Brigham, Global Ocean Health* • Carbon Stability in Oregon's Dry Forests; *Kaci Radcliffe, The Nature Conservancy* • Refugia of the Blue Mountains; *David Mildrexler, Wallowology* • Cultivating A Resilient Food System: DEQ's Initiatives in Food Waste Prevention, Rescue, and Recovery; *Lily Herd, ODEQ with the NDTIA!P team*	2-4 PM: Track 2 (*2 hours*) Workshop: Dogbane Cordage Making Coe Kerr Building Hosted by Caretakers of the Land
4 - 5 PM: Facilitated Discussion #2 (*1 hour*)	
5 - 6 PM: Testimony Opportunity #2 (*1 hour*)	
6 - 7 PM: Dinner #2 (*1 hour*) plus networking & continued discussion	
7-9PM: Celebration of Indigenous Joy (*2 hours*) Coe Kerr Building Engage with Student Poster Competition entries and vote for People's Choice!	
Concludes Day 2	

Day 2 Morning Keynote Presentation

"First Foods as Climate Resilience"
Presented by Wenix Red Elk, Public Outreach and Education Specialist for the Cultural Resources Protection Program, Colleen Sanders, Climate Adaptation Planner for First Foods Policy Program, and Ermia Butler, Climate Change Intern for First Foods Policy Program

The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation (CTUIR) Department of Natural Resources (DNR) works diligently to preserve the lands that have been used for time immemorial by harvesting First Foods are the culturally important elements like water, and plant and animal species that include roots, berries, deer, and salmon, Medicines, and natural fibers.

Slides for this presentation can be found on the Symposium archive page of the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/

Please find a recording of this presentation at our Climate Adaptation Youtube channel: [pending]

Images 11 and 12: (Left) CTUIR Public Outreach and Education Specialist Wenix Red Elk presents the DNR First Foods presentation as the Symposium's keynote and highlights how Tribal lifeways are inherently climate resilient. (Right) CTUIR First Foods Policy Program's Ermia Butler and Colleen Sanders also presented on the history of CTUIR's partnership with ODEQ's Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) activities. Photos are still images from recorded presentations by Stephen Martinez and Paul Lynn, 2025.

Day 2 Workshops: Dogbane Cordage Making

Central to our conversation about carbon is Tribal culture and Indigenous knowledge, and there is no better way to understand Native connection to land and place better than being part of a cultural practice rooted in place. To cement this understanding of Tribal peoples' intimate connection with the land that sequesters and manages carbon, Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna hosted two rounds of their workshop to learn about the Dogbane Hemp plant (*Apocynum cannabinum*) and how to work with this native plant to create beautiful and functional textiles that can be part of basketry and other larger construction practices.

Image 13, 14, and 15: Symposium attendees participate in Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna's Dogbane Cordage Making workshop, which was offered as a central feature of the event. Dogbane is a native plant species that has been used for textiles creation for Tribal people but has been threatened by carbon emitting practices like wetland draining, agricultural tillage, and urban development. Participants work with Dogbane to select the plant's fiberous material that can be hand-worked into a soft textile used for clothing, nets, baskets, and many other uses. Photo left by CTUIR DNR FFPP 2025; photos center and right by Monica Paradise, 2025.

Day 2 Hot Topics Lecture Session

Accelerated implementation for industrialized approaches to carbon removal have been funded for the Columbia River basin and surrounding lands. As this technology moves rapidly into a planning and development phase, many communities within the affected region have not seen meaningful opportunities to provide consent or rejection of these approaches, including 1855 Treaty Tribes. This rapid motion towards these technologies are one of the galvanizing reasons for the organizing and implementation of this Symposium.

To address these technologies and concerns around consent and Tribal Treaty Rights, the Hot Topics Lecture Session was offered without any competing activity mid day on the main Day 2.

Geologic strategies are currently being funded for exploratory phases in the Columbia River basin of the inland Pacific Northwest. The Columbia River that separates Washington and Oregon states has a very unique geology, and carbon mitigations that involve storing carbon deep within the pore space of these Columbia River basalts are currently being tested. Learning of these geotechnical strategies that are actively receiving funding was part of the impetus to host the Symposium and prioritize Tribal leaders and knowledge keepers in learning about alternatives and nature based solutions for carbon management. Ideally, many diverse strategies will be implemented across the region for an effective and prompt draw down of atmospheric carbon to protect communities and First Foods impacted by the climate crisis.

Images 16 and 17: (left) Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI)'s Richard Walker provides technical explanations of carbon dioxide mineralization in Columbia Basalt rock pore space as proposed geologic strategies for carbon removal are funded for the Columbia River Basin. (Right) Thomas Joseph with the Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)provides perspectives on carbon pricing frameworks that have affected Indigenous communities globally as a caution for pitfalls to avoid. Photos by CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2025.

- **"Geological Carbon Sequestration in Oregon: An Update on State Investigations, September 2025"**
  Presented by Jason McClaughery, Richard Walker, and Alex Lopez, Oregon Dept of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGAMI)

  In response to the immediate need to reduce atmospheric carbon, the Oregon legislature approved funding to investigate carbon storage potential in the Columbia River basalts in northern Oregon. The study will include outreach to Tribal nations and potentially affected communities, installation of at least one research well to investigate Columbia River basalt properties deep below the ground and water type, quality, and distribution within the basalt. The study will also conduct an analysis of the potential impacts of carbon dioxide storage through these methods, long term environmental impacts of geological carbon storage, and potential regulatory frameworks for assurance of protections for communities and resources. DOGAMI exists within the state's government under the Geological Survey and Services Agency, which also addresses natural hazards, mapping and remote sensing. The Columbia River Basalt Group (CRBG) is the target for this study, comprising roughly 81,000 square miles across the

Columbia River basin, with an estimated carbon dioxide storage potential of 40-100 billion metric tons. The Wallula Basalt Pilot project began in 2013 and injected 1,000 tons of supercritical carbon dioxide at a dept of 2,600 feet over 25 days, and provides a foundation for this effort. Key aspects of this project include surface-based geologic mapping, field-based fault characterization, and regional seismic hazard analysis. To engage with Tribal nations in Oregon, DOGAMI has previously participated with CTUIR's Climate Resilience Listening Session in 2023, and will remain a priority through the life of the project.

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel:
https://youtu.be/ehHpZd_dXKc

- **"Understanding Carbon Pricing Frameworks"**
  Presented by Thomas Joseph, Carbon Pricing Educator with Indigenous Environmental Network (IEN)

  Geotechno-fixes are often introduced in a test phase to marginalized and Indigenous communities around the world, even though there is a global moratorium on these technologies without adequate consent secured from these affected communities. Global Indigenous communities are calling for carbon mitigation approaches that address carbon emissions but also value relationship to land and consent. Indigenous people have faced climate changes before, but this is the first time in history that it is because of human activity. Respect for relationships between people and land is at the core of Indigenous communities, and as resistance to extractive industries changes, so too do the stakeholders and community that come together to do the work, and it is fundamental this relationship comes first before anything. Tribes are often approached by carbon market opportunities for lands for large sums of money, but the details reveal that these projects are offsets for massive fossil fuel development efforts to whitewash the harm these companies cause. As California pushed to expand their carbon market to reach international offset opportunities that alleviate company demand to reduce and prevent carbon emissions. Globally, these offset projects have a history of being used to displace Indigenous people and disrupt traditional foods and medicines gathering on those sites. There are examples of carbon offset frameworks being use to develop lands that would not have otherwise been able to be extracted, even being advertised as a "land back" scheme that pays off the loan on extracted lands. Offset projects and nature based solutions are the solution to the push for the commodification of carbon at an international level and the creation of "cap and trade" frameworks that allow for the legitimate expansion of polluters.

  Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel:
  https://youtu.be/ENdwZ653b-0

Day 2 Working Lands and Systems Lectures

Afternoon lecture sessions were offered opposite to the Dogbane Cordage workshops and emphasized the science and practice of various carbon management options for our region. Two sessions offered similar but distinct perspectives on carbon management through the holistic management of "working lands," and other landscape scale natural and manmade systems. These lectures were offered by our Symposium partners, and we are grateful for their generosity with their time and expertise. Below are overviews of these sessions and the presentations contained within; these lectures were also recorded and made available at the CTUIR Climate Adaptation Youtube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCjN61eROflvHaI9dSVl4VEA

Session 1: Working Lands Science

In Oregon, natural and working lands span forests, rangelands, wetlands, farmlands, and estuaries, and they form the foundation of the state's ecological health, cultural identity, and rural economy. These lands support biodiversity, regulate water and air quality, store carbon, and provide food, lumber, and habitat. They are home to diverse ecosystems such as sagebrush steppe, oak savannah, and coastal estuaries, which sustain fish and wildlife populations and serve as critical buffers against the impacts of climate change. Working lands, including farms and ranches, are often managed in ways that support conservation values while contributing to local economies and food systems. Natural and working lands represent vital spaces that must be protected and stewarded to maintain Oregon's resilience and quality of life for future generations.

Find more information about the science of Working Lands in the Pacific Northwest:

- N&W Lands Resources | Institute for Natural Resources | Oregon State University
- Land-Based Net Carbon Inventory
- Forests and Farms Can Fight Climate Change
- Working Lands for Wildlife
- BoA_Rangelands_NWL.pdf
- NWL Board of Ag_FINAL.pdf
- Working+Lands+Guidebook+November+2021.pdf
- Beavers can convert stream corridors to persistent carbon sinks

For more about working lands in general, Oregon's Climate Action Commission has a Natural & Working Lands Advisory Committee that has produced documents for technical guidance about many of the Working Lands that exist within CTUIR's Ceded Lands: 2023-Natural-Working-Lands-Report.pdf

Presentation slides from these lecture are available for download on the CTUIR Carbon & Culture Symposium archive webpage: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-

policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/ccs-2025-working-lands-science-lands-and-systems-lecture-sessions/

Within this session, the following lectures were held:

- **A First Foods Approach to Landscape Stewardship, Management, and Restoration**
  Presented by Dr. Bryan Endress, Union County Oregon State University

  Collaborating author of the CTUIR First Foods Uplands Vision Landscape scale food system around First Foods as natural resource management approach. Accountable to the Treaty of 1855 secured rights to fish, hunt, gather and graze with federal government Trust obligations to protecting these rights. Dept of Natural Resource (DNR) "Vision" documents provide detailed technical knowledge that brings land management into a holistic approach that values and prioritizes not only First Foods habitats and health but Tribal access to harvest them. This approach also increases climate resilience in the face of wildfires, improves ecosystem resilience that directly supports Tribal First Foods and increases success of associated Endangered Species Act (ESA)-listed vulnerable species. This technical guidance aims to be helpful to federal and state agencies that value working relationships and shared landscapes with CTUIR and other Columbia River Tribes. This approach brings to the surface information knowledge gaps that are most relevant to Tribal use of the land that exist. This data collection effort is in its early years but represents a large working collaborative that focuses on 18 culturally significant plant species to understand of different threats and management strategies affect the health and abundance of these important species.
  Please find more information about the work being done at the USDA Burns Station at their website: https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/eoarc
  Please find more information about the First Foods Upland Vision and Umatilla River Vision technical documents on the CTUIR DNR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/administration/

  Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/iBHKS2iX5XA

- **Understanding Carbon in Our Working Lands of Eastern Oregon**
  Presented by Dr. Rory O'Connor, USDA Agricultural Research Service (ARS) Burns Station

  Managing eastern Oregon lands for carbon sequestration using cattle grazing as the primary method of management. Precision livestock management, land use cover and change, rangeland carbon pools in the soil and vegetation, and plant carbon uptake are the main factors that are monitored, including carbon flux towers that monitor how much carbon is being moved through rangeland systems from atmosphere to plants and into soils. Before long term carbon mitigation agreements, we need to understand the way carbon moves through your systems to understand the potential to sequester, which is going to depend heavily on the ecosystem and soils involved. In eastern Oregon, precipitation creates different plant communities and soils, which affect the carbon flux of these ecosystems. Carbon pools are

things like plants, soils, air water etc and ways to monitor the movement, or flux, that measures the exchange between pools and out of them. Carbon stock account for carbon in a single carbon pool, a very specific time/point measurement, so it is a snapshot of carbon, not a static measure. Carbon flux is measured with the carbon flux tower through an infrared gas analyzer to create a measure for a moment in time. ARS is using the towers to see how cattle grazing affects the flow of carbon using many of these point in time measurements. Winter is the lowest sequestration potential due to microorganism activity in the soil occurring more than what plants are taking up. Water stores carbon dioxide, so moisture in an environment creates more opportunities for carbon to move in either direction, so there is a lack of research into riparian potential. Much of the research available comes from the Great Plains region so the information is not as relevant to our arid landscape, which is incredibly heterogeneous with many distinct microclimates. "Carbon security" is how secure the carbon pools are through time and from/with disturbances. Management and natural processes affect the carbon that can be stored in our carbon pools. Rangelands shouldn't be managed like row crop agriculture when examining carbon pools but instead focus on ecological integrity that manages for systems that can hold onto carbon. Arid and cold weather inherently stunt carbon storage potential compared to wetter and warmer landscapes. Conversion of rangeland through events like fire, drought, invasive species, woody plant expansion, cropland urban expansion, and gas/mineral extraction result in land use change that becomes a source of "irrecoverable" carbon emissions instead of storage that we may not be able to get back. Keeping deep roots through out the seasons through perennial grasses are more effective and add to the water holding capacity of soils, and treatment of juniper to increase sagebrush also has benefits. Moderate intensity grazing results in better outcomes than light and heavy grazing. For carbon security, work collaboratively to protect existing capacity, prioritize areas for restoration and avoid further degradation, and reduce changes of further loss by creating landscapes that are resilient to fire and drought and other land conversation forces.
Please find more information about the work being done at the USDA Burns Station at their website: https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/eoarc
Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/k6hFp39P5gs

- **Carbon Markets Finance Rangeland Health Assessment; The Nature Conservancy**
  Presented by Michale Hale, with the Nature Conservancy and Magpie Ranch

  Carbon credits can be used to finance health assessments for Eastern Oregon and Washington ranch and wildlands under opportunities offered by Climate Trust and Nature Conservancy. Zumwalk Prairie Carbon Cooperative operates ranch and conservation lands in a sensitive ecosystem like highland grass and prairie lands, and provides a living example of how global and U.S. carbon pricing frameworks can benefit working lands and generate supplemental revenue to these operations. Monitoring of rangeland health metrics are also used to track carbon crediting for these lands. Additionally, working lands carbon tracking can allow for use of different land management strategies like prescribed burning and selective thinning, allowing for a custom management plan that credits carbon saved by preventing conversion. Ecosystem Dynamics Interpretive Tool (EDIT) is used by the Zumwalk Prairie Carbon Cooperative to

understand the land's ecological properties and how atmospheric patterns and management strategies are modeled to affect not only future vegetation growth but the carbon associated. The cooperative conducted 35 sites within the easement that represent each of the major ecological site types with mapping to coordinate management plans for each of the types. Assessments are based on ecological site potential and the observed or measured departure from the reference site potential. Summary reports allow for the opportunity to track trends and changes in affected range lands and plan on strategies to address deficiencies and external forces like drought, flood, and wildfire.

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/vT-2nntdZ_A

- **Soil Carbon in the Dryland Agricultural systems of the Columbia Basin: Lessons Learned at the Pendleton Research Station; Oregon State University**
  Presented by Dr. Francisco Caulderon, OSU Columbia Basin Agricultural Research Center

  One of the oldest agricultural research stations that exist nationally at 116 years old, the CBARC station has decades of research and data on cereal crops, agronomy, and soil science. Work at the station prioritizes sustainability of dryland agriculture and cropping systems that are resilient and diverse, with maximum carbon storage, water and nutrient conservation and profitable food production. Within the Columbia River basin, soils are predominantly loess soils deposited by wind over time, and represent some of the most fertile soil types in the U.S. Soil organic carbon makes up 58% of organic matter within soils, and varies with annual precipitation and moisture. Increased moisture leads to decreased soil organic matter, and is affected by management strategies like tillage, crop rotations, and residue management. In 1910, CE Bradley conducted a study of agricultural practices and predicted worsening soil degradation if practices were not modified to preserve soil organic matter in dryland farming systems. Perennial plants have deep relationships with native soils that has been disrupted with the use of annual grass crops like cereals; improved cropping practices mimic these perennial grass relationships by keeping root mats and ground covers intact to reduce erosion, minimize tillage activity and preserve microbial synergy that converts plant residues to soil carbon. Summer fallow is currently used to store winter precipitation and mineralization of nutrients, though a study from 1912 observed declining organic matter in this wheat-summer fallow system due to minimal biomass not being returned to the soil. The research station hosts long term research plots in to different cropping systems to document soil fertility and crop yield over a long period of time, and in some plots soil organic matter has been returned to near-pre contact carbon levels.
  Please find more information about the work done at CBARC at their website: https://agsci.oregonstate.edu/cbarc

  Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/6iUFEcctuPs

Session 2: Lands and Systems

Many of the ways we manage systems can create opportunities to reduce and prevent carbon emissions in ways that are quantifiable, trackable and have additional benefits to lands and communities. This session provided information on how systems level approaches to both our landscape and built systems provide opportunities to reduce and prevent carbon emissions.

Presentation slides from this lecture are available at the Symposium archive on the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/ccs-2025-working-lands-science-lands-and-systems-lecture-sessions/

Within this session, the following lectures were held:

- **"Mountains to Oceans - How First Foods Salmon Weave Mountains, Oceans, Carbon and Culture Together"**
  Presented by Kevin Scribner, Brad Warren, Francesca Hillary, Global Ocean Health

  Carbon is an essential element for life; how can we create a culture of "healthy carbon" that supports elements in balance for the Columbia River basin? Salmon provide a framework for this understanding. As migratory species, Salmon travel from our inland rivers to the Pacific Ocean and back, bringing marine nutrients with them. Global Ocean Health has worked with the Washington Climate Commitment Act and supported Tribes in launching the Indigenous Greenhouse Gas Removal Commission (IGGRC), and is actively work to connect Tribes to carbon removal experts, create governance frameworks for marine carbon removal, developed carbon verification standards, and worked with Tribal Elders and leaders to build capacity for Tribes to engage in this work. This includes the Forest Biomass Learning Network to address forest-specific carbon management opportunities that support Tribal sovereignty, cultural and environmental stewardship, and responsible community-led development of forest based natural climate solutions.
  Please find more information about Global Ocean Health's work at their website: https://www.globaloceanhealth.org/

  Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/jtIGa2Gj4js

- **"Carbon Stability in Oregon's Dry Forests"**
  Presented by Kaci Radcliffe, The Nature Conservancy

  Within our inland Pacific Northwest forests, carbon cycles depend on many factors that include climate, topography, soils, disturbance, and management actions. There are many types of dry forests in eastern Oregon, and these have an important role to play in both stabilizing and sequestering carbon from the atmosphere. With up to 500,000 acres of forest there is a tremendous opportunity to restore riparian vegetation in Oregon, which has added benefits of providing First Foods habitat, flood and drought mitigation, and floodplain collection for water

quality and storage. Many of our dry forests are missing the presence of low intensity fires that facilitate the cycling of nutrients and management of invasive plants and canopy density. Many land managers are actively working to safely return prescribed burns to areas that are appropriate within these forests to reverse the crowded forest conditions observed today. As wildfire is a source of carbon emissions from forests that have too high a stocking density for trees, proactively managing for wildfire risk can provide options for carbon stability for dry forest managers interested in securing and sequestering carbon. This has benefits beyond carbon, including habitat diversity and connection, water quality and abundance, resilience to disturbance and changes, air quality from reduced wildfire smoke, soil health and reduced erosion, and healthy natural and human communities. The Northern Blues Restoration Partnership is a featured collaboration that encompasses 10+ million acres, 2 Tribes, 13 counties, 2 national forests, and the states of Oregon and Washington to provide proactive and coordinated landscape management for climate and First Foods resilience.
Please find more information about the Northern Blues Restoration Partnership at their website: https://www.northernblues.org/

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel:
https://youtu.be/dNepaxnHOws

- **"Refugia of the Blue Mountains"**
  Presented by Dr. David Mildrexler, Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands and Wallowology

  Building resilience for our eastern Oregon and Washington land that support First Foods health requires a collaborative and intact landscape-scale approach to resource management that provides refugia to plant and animal species. Refuge is the considered the condition of being safe or sheltered from pursuit, danger, or trouble; this is in contrast to refugia which are habitats that allows biodiversity to retreat to, persist in, and potentially expand from under changing and challenging environmental conditions. Under changing climate, places of refugia are essential for maintaining sensitive species that are affected by changing conditions. Intact forest landscapes with refugia have watersheds with high integrity, create strongholds for biodiversity and endangered species, protect old growth forest, foster natural mosaics of ecosystems, and buffer local climatic changes. Mapping exercises show which lands could benefit from protections and reduction in road miles. Oregon has the largest forest area but the lowest proportion of these lands under regulated protections; promoting areas of roadlessness could help provide habitat connectivity and additional benefits, as Oregon federal lands roadless areas are currently inventoried at 24-28% of landscapes. The Blue Mountains are one of Oregon's largest ecoreigons and are a key connective corridor between the Cascade and Rocky Mountains for species migration and cultural diversity. Advancing strategies that reduce habitat fragmentation can improve landscape resilience and promote migration and refugia corridors for First Foods and endangered species, and help maintain these crucial connections under challenging climatic conditions.

  Please find more information about Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands at their website:
  https://www.eorlegacylands.org/

Please find more information about Wallowology at their website: https://www.wallowology.org/

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/yB1bTS68vkA

- **"Cultivating A Resilient Foods System: DEQ's Initiatives in Food Waste Prevention, Rescue, and Recovery"**
  Presented by Lily Herd, ODEQ, with the CTUIR NDTIA!P Team

  Similar to managing natural landscapes for carbon sequestration has added climate resilience benefits, managing our materials and waste systems to reduce carbon emissions creates community health and connection benefits. Food waste includes but is not limited to excess, spoiled or unusable food and includes inedible parts commonly associated with food preparation like pits, shells, bones, and peels. 38% of the food grown in the U.S. and elsewhere is wasted, creating a negative environmental impact: this represents over 140 million acres of agricultural lands, 5.9 trillion gallons of fresh water, 664 terawattshours of energy, and 14 billion founds of fertilizers wasted through the loss of this food out of the human consumption stream. This also means greenhouse gases associated with food production and processing are created, and preventing this food waste and loss represents a potential to reduce carbon emissions associated with food systems. The State of Oregon has transitioned to a food systems approach to food waste, which focuses on food production, food consumption, and waste management to holistically address the crisis of wasted food. ODEQ has produced an Action Plan to host regional workshops that emphasize coming together to talk about work that is already happening and what goals for the future look like, with a document that serves as a repository for current and future projects as the outcome. Under the ODEQ approach, Sustainable Production of food includes supporting sustainable farming practices, supporting community micro-agriculture, and reducing waste in food processing and manufacturing by focusing on relationship building, peer-to-peer learning, and regional initiatives. Sustainable Consumption includes reducing grocery, food service and commercial food waste, encouraging plant-rich diets, reducing consumer and household food waste, and using surplus foods to feed people who are food insecure. Sustainable Waste Management includes recovering value from food waste, and ensuring equitable access to value from food waste. The Nixyaawii, Don't Throw It Away! Project is included as a case study as a Tribal food waste recovery and value initiative supported by ODEQ.

  Please find more information about Oregon DEQ's food systems and materials management programs at their website:
  https://www.oregon.gov/deq/mm/food/Pages/foodwastestrategy.aspx
  Please find additional information about the Nixyaawii, Don't Throw It Away! Project at the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/nixyaawii-don-t-throw-it-away-project/

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/e7VF1VDgprA

Day 2 Evening Program - Celebration of Indigenous Joy

This event had a goal to re-centering Tribal sovereignty and Indigenous peoples in land management and climate resilience discussions, in contrast to other efforts around carbon mitigation. Our event intentionally uplifts Native people, their connection with lands stewarded through ancestry, and the joy of being integrally part of a place and culture.

Below are the presentations and performances; recordings of some sessions are available on the Youtube channel, however Tribal songs and stories have not been made public due to cultural etiquette associated.

Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts with Jacy SoHappy

Tribal culture is rooted in relationship to the land and the crafts created from natural textiles and fibers reflect this deep relationship. Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts (CSIA) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1992 with a mission to support Native American artists and communities. Over the past three decades, CSIA has evolved from a small initiative into a nationally recognized studio known for advancing Native voices in contemporary fine art printmaking. Its reputation as a leading printmaking center attracts artists from across the United States and beyond, fostering collaborations that place Indigenous perspectives at the forefront of contemporary art. Located at the foothills of Oregon's Blue Mountains on the ancestral homelands of the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse people (CTUIR), CSIA has become a beacon for both artistic innovation and cultural heritage. CSIA's Traditional Arts program is equally integral to its mission, preserving and promoting Indigenous practices such as beadwork, basketry, and garment-making. Through these programs, CSIA sustains a legacy of deep cultural knowledge, offering artists a unique space to explore both ancestral techniques and contemporary expressions.

Crow's Shadow offers a standing gallery for Native artists who have participated in the artist in residence program with the Institute, as well as regular Native craft workshops. Workshops are organized around the CTUIR Seasonal Round to help prepare our Native community for the upcoming First Foods ceremonies and harvest associated, which includes a focus on horse regalia craft that has been partially lost to cultural interruption. Jacy shares how her own personal journey in learning these essential Native crafts like the round baskets and wing dresses have shaped her learning and engaging with the knowledge. Dogbane hasn't been used much in contemporary craft but is beginning to be used more regularly along with other natural fibers with the help of craft revival. Jacy highlights the creative and collaborative effort associated with each single Native craft like basket hats, and how each piece is unique and has a story associated with it. Memories associated with mentors and teachers with these crafts are also cherished, and Crow's Shadow facilitates opportunities for our CTUIR community to reconnect to these crafts that are required to continue the perpetuation of First Foods culture.

Please find more information about Crow's Shadow at their website: https://www.crowsshadow.org/

Please find this conversation recording available on our Youtube channel:
https://youtu.be/EMvt2Lmog24

Images 18 and 19: Jacy SoHappy with the Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts describes her creative process and the textile arts closely associated with CTUIR and other 1855 Columbia River Treaty Tribes. Photos are still images from recording by Paul Lynn, 2025.

Gatherers Project Interview with Brosnan Spencer

In 2024, First Foods Policy Program published The Gatherers Project, a short book that highlights our Tribal harvesters, especially the female Gatherers who dig for Celery and Roots every year as part of the Nixyaawii Longhouse Feasts that welcome the First Foods back seasonally. This book was designed to highlight the Gatherers and Longhouse cooks who work hard to prepare First Foods celebrations like Feasts each year, and to document climate impacts and adaptations that prioritize keeping connection to First Foods harvest.

As a Gatherer featured in the book, Brosnan (Umatilla/Cayuse/Klickitat/Seminole) is a traditional foods gatherer, and one of the women who make the Nixyaawii Longhouse run. Longhouse women are some of the strongest women known and possess a strength that is incomparable. Many Gatherers begin their journey by attending Children's Feast where Tribal youth are supplied and prepared to go out and

dig for Roots each year and carry on the cultural knowledge of First Foods harvest. When she got older, Brosnan then made the conscious decision to step into the lifeways of the Gatherers, as it is a lifelong commitment that Gatherers make to their community. Every year, she lives with the seasons as much as possible, and raise her daughter in the First Foods lifeways as well.

Preparing to gather First Foods requires preparation. Spiritual preparation includes participation in "sweat" to clear the body and spirit, and set intention for gathering the First Foods. When out gathering, it is essential to keep "a good heart" while digging; if a person is sick or experiencing loss or other difficult emotions, many Gatherers will forego digging and help in other ways as it is essential to be of clear mind and positive spirit when harvesting First Foods. Having a song in your heart and a willingness to understand the complexity and beauty of the Earth and our place within it, preserving this intimate relationship. The Roots are known as family and as Gatherers prepare themselves, so too are the Roots to be ready to be harvested. It is a requirement to be open to learning and growing. First Foods like Celery, Roots, and Berries tend to be ready at different times of the seasons, so there are opportunities to harvest Foods throughout most of the year.

Tribal harvesters often have ancestral locations where First Foods have been harvested for centuries if not longer, and so observations from our First Foods harvest can provide a wealth of information about monitoring for the health of these lands and the factors that affect the abundance of First Foods. Exclusion of low intensity fire is often cited as a factor that may be essential for preventing disease and harm to First Foods plants especially, and plants have a wide range of abundance from year to year, as the land ebbs and flows naturally and with the presence of Tribal harvest. Windows of time where First Foods are available for harvest are shifting and shortening due to climate impacts, and there is a lot of effort put into scouting and maintaining relationships with these plants over a long period of time. Land managers within Oregon and Washington have a role to play in helping Tribal people maintain cultural connection to First Foods, as relationships with private and public landowners can provide additional opportunities for Tribal harvesters to access First Foods at different times across the year. Landowners and managers supporting of First Foods can connect with Tribal harvesters and proactively build relationships with the goal of being part of maintaining these ancestral connections and the First Foods as relatives and teachers.

This publication is available as a digital file for download at the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/gatherers-project/

Please find this conversation recording available on our Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/rp_l32ZFxvQ

Image 20: CTUIR DNR First Foods Policy Program's Colleen Sanders (left) and Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna's Brosnan Spencer (right) discuss the Gatherers Project publication, in which Brosnan and her daughter are featured Gatherers, and Tribal harvesters' experience keeping an ancestral promise. Photo is still image from recording by Paul Lynn, 2025.

Cultural Song and Story with Mildred Quaempts, Merle Kirk, Clarise Huesties, Manaia and Stella Wolf and Bobby Fossek

With her first story, Mildred shares the story of Coyote and Nayšłá, the whirlpool monster. The story of the Nayšłá is typically a winter time story, told when snow is on the ground and people are hunkered spend long hours repairing equipment, weaving baskets and fibers, and telling stories to strengthen the knowledge of culture rooted in place. This is the same story that Mildred narrates in the [story telling winter lodge at Tamástslikt Cultural Institute (TCI), and Symposium organizers specifically requested this story, as it can be easily viewed as an allegory for our modern age. Very generally, in the story the Nayšłá is sucking in all the plants and animals and Coyote reluctantly agrees to help. Coyote first starts by giving the monster a medicine, but this proves ineffective. Nayšłá then sucks up and swallows Coyote, bringing him deep down into the heart of the monster. There, Coyote cuts the heart of Nayšłá until the monster spits out Coyote and all the other plants and animals as well. When Creator asks Coyote what happened, Coyote declares he killed Nayšłá. Creator chastises him for taking a life, and to atone, Coyote brings Nayšłá back to life with the promise that the monster will be in harmony with all the other beings. Today we know Nayšłá by a different name: an eddy. The places where the water spins in the right way to drag you down, under the water. Even now, every now and then, someone will be pulled down by the swirling of the waters.

This story reflects that endless consumption is harmful to everyone, but redemption is possible if we change our ways. This story reminds us to watch out for downward spirals.

Images 24 and 25: (Left) CTUIR Language teacher and Umatilla Master Speaker Mildred Quaempts and her daughter CRPP Public Outreach and Education Specialist Merle Kirk perform songs for the Celebration; (right) CTUIR youth Manaia and Stella Wolf perform tbe Butterfly Dance for the Celebration. Photos are still images from recorded performance by Paul Lynn, 2025.

Images 26 and 27: (Left) Bobby Fossek and CTUIR youth Manaia and Stella Wolf perform the Bear Dance for the Celebration; (right) closing song performed by Bobby, Mildred, and Merle. Photos are still image from recorded performance by Paul Lynn, 2025.

Additional stories Mildred shared with our gathering include stories of growing up speaking the Umatilla Language at home and teaching family members English she learned at school, working with the Tribal Education department, and of learning the dances that are integrally connected with Longhouse ceremony. As the girls performed the Butterfly Dance, she shared the story behind the dance and the lesson it teaches about understanding that life is precious and beautiful and to persevere through loss and grief.

She invites Merle and Bobby to join in a final song and a prayer to Creator to help keep lands and people safe and to give thanks to the ancestors for the language, songs, dances, and the reminder to take care of the First Foods, the land, and each other.

After the Celebration concluded, many participants shared with the organizing team that the evening program's songs and dance and the laughter they created allowed them to heal from the tension of the day, and change the energy after heavy and at times tense discussions.

No recording of these performances are available due to cultural teachings. We are thankful to Mildred, Merle, Manaia, Stella, Bobby, and Clarise for making this Celebration possible!

Day 3 Pacific Northwest Carbon Policy

On the event's final day, we were looking towards the future. This day was an opportunity to bring together all the concepts and perspectives we learned about over the past two days, and explore different funding and policy mechanisms that exist and are coming online for the state of Oregon and the Pacific Northwest region.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="2">Day 3 – Wed Oct 1st</th></tr>
<tr><td>7 – 8:30 AM: Breakfast #2 plus networking & continued discussion (1.5 hours)</td><td rowspan="2">Pack up and break down

• Assist attendees with luggage and other needs
• Break down booths and other displays
• Pack up posters
• **Kimsey Commons bunkers will need to be packed up and out by 11 AM</td></tr>
<tr><td>8:30 – 9:30 AM: Lecture Block – What's Next in Carbon Policy (1 hour)
Coe Kerr Building
• Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Climate Programs; Morgan Schafer and Whitney Dorer, ODEQ
• PNW Carbon Policy Roundtable with Alexa Schmidt, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">9:30 – 11 AM: Facilitated Discussion #3 (1.5 hours)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">11 AM – 12 PM: Testimony Opportunity #3 (1 hour)</td></tr>
<tr><td>12:30 – 1:30 PM: Closing Speaker (1 hour)
Student Poster Competition Winners announced, thank you to Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts for judging!</td><td>1:30 – 2:30 PM: Lunch #3 (for the road) plus networking & continued discussion</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Concludes Symposium</td></tr>
</table>

To close this forward thinking event, the final day focused on carbon policy and mitigation opportunities around our Pacific Northwest region. Overview of funding opportunities and programs with state and organizational partners that focus on reducing atmospheric carbon and natural climate solutions. Presentation slides from this lecture are available: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/ccs-2025-consent-and-community-hot-topics-pnw-carbon-policy-lecture-sessions/

Within this session, the following roundtable was held:

- **"Carbon Sequestration in Oregon: Natural Climate Solutions"**
  Presented by Alexa Schmidt, Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB)

  Natural landscapes in Oregon have a great potential to play a role in removing carbon from the atmosphere and storing in our soils and vegetation. Natural climate solutions (NCS) are practices that protect or increase carbon held in the land and are often less costly to implement, can be implemented more readily, and can also provide climate resilience and adaptation benefits. Within Oregon, Legislative Intent (HB 3409) allocates $10 million to 4 natural resource agencies to provide incentives, technical assistance, and financial assistance to advance NCS in the state, and prioritize programs proposed or administered by environmental justice communities and Tribes. These also seek to prioritize the use of existing programs and the leveraging of federal investments to optimize the social, health, ecological, climate resilience, and economic co-benefits of NCS. More than 100 landowners across Oregon have been contacted or received technical assistance from these projects, with more than 120 implementation actions across the state. These funds also go to studying the workforce and training programs needed to support the implementation of NCS, identifying activity-based and community impact metrics to evaluate progress in carbon sequestration and storage, and to establish a baseline of net biological carbon on natural and working lands to adopt goals that increase beyond this baseline. The Oregon Environmental Restoration Program and Fund was established by SB 1561 to manage funds received from the Monsanto PCB settlement, and will be used for environmental remediation and restoration of Oregon's air, land, water, and other natural resources. The Tribal Nation Natural Resource Program Fund will receive 25% of this funding to support stewardship efforts by Tribes for the next 50 years.

  Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel: https://youtu.be/ZrJnlt77OLU

- **"Oregon Department of Environmental Quality Climate Programs"**
  Presented by Morgan Schafer, Climate Pollution Investments Coordinator, and Whitney Dorer, Climate Policy Community Engagement Coordinator, ODEQ

  As the primary funder for the Symposium, ODEQ partners shared information about the Climate Pollution Reduction Grant (CPRG) secured by the state of Oregon to implement greenhouse gas reduction activities across the state. This effort began in March 2024 with the Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP), which includes CTUIR and other Oregon Tribal priorities within it; more information about CTUIR's partnership with ODEQ and the Oregon PCAP can be

found the Symposium Appendix B: CPRG Tribal Community Engagement Session (2023). In December 2025, ODEQ completed the Comprehensive Climate Action Plan (CCAP), and are preparing a grant status report to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for May 2027. The implementation effort Climate Equity and Resilience Through Action (CERTA) grants will provide $197 million dollars for projects and efforts in Oregon, and include programs dedicated to zero emission vehicle rebates ($31 million), electric vehicle chargers ($10.9 million), medium and heavy duty ZEV rebates ($14.8 million), medium and heavy duty ZEV grants ($6 million), medium and heavy duty EV chargers ($3 million), energy efficient housing incentives ($21.3 million), building performance standards incentives ($12.1 million), heat pump incentives ($25.3 million), residential weatherization ($8 million), building reuse and space-efficient housing ($25.6 million), food waste infrastructure ($$28.9 million), and landfill gas controls ($6.6 million).
Much of this is managed by the Climate Protection Program with ODEQ that coordinates the Community Climate Investments (CCI) program, with 15% of funds that must be spent to benefit Tribes and Tribal communities in Oregon. Actions eligible under the CCI include efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from transportation, residential structures, industrial processes, and commercial structures.

Please find the Oregon Priority Climate Action Plan at the website:
https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/Documents/CPRG-OregonPCAP.pdf
Please find more information about the Oregon CERTA and CCI grants at the ODEQ website:
https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/certa/Pages/default.aspx and
https://www.oregon.gov/deq/ghgp/cpp/Pages/Community-Climate-Investments.aspx

Please find the recording of this lecture at the Youtube channel:
https://youtu.be/LEkMzuV6MwI

Part 3: Consent and Consensus

Image 28: Participants connect and take a break before the Day 2 Hot Topics session. Photo by CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2025.

One driving reason for hosting the Symposium was the feeling of carbon mitigation and removal projects in the mid-Columbia progressing quickly into development without sufficient and meaningful consent or consultation secured from affected communities and Treaty Tribes. Many energy and carbon mitigation activities that are conducted or planned are promoted as "renewable" and/or "clean" energy initiatives that will address carbon emissions for our region. These projects can document their carbon removal claims through technological and engineering approaches that can perform rapid draw down of carbon, but the longevity of the "leakage" is still being understood. Compared to natural climate solutions and Indigenous stewardship that suffers from a lack of research and instructional documentation of its benefits, it also requires a longer investment and lag time to transition atmospheric carbon into stored carbon. These initiatives have also inadequately secured or attempted to secure consent from affected communities, which are aligned with "sacrifice zone" areas in the Columbia River basin.

Investment into research and understanding of the carbon management potential of natural and working lands frameworks is required to bring parity to the conversation of which regional strategies to pursue. There also needs to be a more robust and transparent process for communicating potential benefits and risks of a range of carbon management strategies that are possible for our region. International frameworks like Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

(FPIC) that were explicitly created for Indigenous communities to resist development efforts globally can provide a pathway for all our Pacific Northwest communities alike.

On the first day of our gathering, Whitman College partner Denise Fernandes, Assistant Professor of Global Environmental Politics hosted a dialogue about consent and carbon mitigation, and developed a companion report from the student research effort created by the event. She was joined by Whitman students Benjamin Anderson and River Woodruff.
From that report:

> "For a few participants, consent was synonymous to "approval." One participant did ask a provocative questions: '*Does lack of consent equal a veto?*' Another participant stated '[consent is] the right to say NO.' Another member stated, '[consent is the] approval to let someone or something change your life in some way,' Consent was interpreted as an 'opinion' or 'honoring that opinion.' The perspectives ranged from colonial to decolonial practices to Queer and Indigenous perspectives. These perspectives varied in the types of politics needed to engage with carbon mitigation technologies, the types of social practices needed to shape the implementation of these technologies in the PNW, and the ways we as a community can dream and imagine new spaces of life and existence that have been neglected by Western conceptions of space and place… Finally, community members interpreted consent as a relationship 'towards something, someone, someplace' rather than a one-time transaction or market-based interaction. Consent is not built without the creation of trust and a strong relationship. During the circle time discussion, community members expressed 'that [the] foundation of consent is the act of mutual care.'"

Please find the full report and associated Chapbook in the Symposium report Appendix A, and on the CTUIR archive website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/

Each day of the event offered an opportunity to reflect with a group discussion and offer "testimony" to the gathering. The aim of the discussion time was to allow Symposium participants a space to work through their thoughts and feelings experienced as we learned and connected. These sessions were recorded only to be able to offer a general summary, while the recordings themselves will not be published.
Testimony differed from discussion in that it provided participants an opportunity to express their [description]. Many participants throughout the event and in the post-event follow up meeting expressed confusion about the structure and intention of the Testimony opportunities. Future gatherings may need to better define the Testimony opportunity if organizers choose to include this feature in the event.

In this section are notes and highlights from facilitated discussions on each of the event's three days.

Day 2 Discussion – Hot Topics

- SWCD – When proposing – listen to worse outcomes – emotional reaction, include facts [can't] move to best.
- Kate/Geologist – Thankful for research. Life cycle of operation, where you test/experiment matters, what is the depth of drinking water?
    - Good to explore and learn
    - Glad DOGAMI mentioned regulatory ownership
- Has Tribe considered Primacy for Class 6 UIC permits?
- Bobby: Invite ancestors, guides, guardians, elements to guide us.
    - Digging deep – against law unless trained/blessed with ancestral connection to land – we know what we need to do to care for the land, water – but we have been deemed hostiles for doing that.
    - Restoring 25% of coastal habitats is more than all electric vehicles. Ecological considerations that feed and care for us – localized economy and commerce. This restore – simple solutions – life is so manipulated.
- Kat/CTUIR member – haven't started but are there deadlines?

Day 2 Discussion – Land and Systems/Working Lands Science

- Carbon credits with Umatilla Wheat Grain agriculture?
- $0.5M chemical fertilizers going into land each year. How can we stop using these chemicals?
    - Linked to ALS and other health issues
- "To force something to grow is not right."
- Are producers open to discussing alternative soil amendments? No, they need to see someone do it first. Desire to see it in Umatilla.
    - "This is the way we've always done it." Arguably not true, only the last 70ish years.
- "Salmon Safe" Certified → Harmonization of Salmon process with First Foods Process
    - Learning about this in Walla Walla
- Toxics → Tires and dust in relation to Salmon/river toxics
    - How do we set planetary boundaries for toxics? We do not have ways to measure this
    - Hundreds of unknown chemicals that can't be traced, no solution to figure this out. More about reducing the production of harmful elements
- Calculative vs. Relational thinking
    - Technical answer? No
    - Relational elements and stressors in immediate environment
- Does climate change start in soil? Without soil health, we have nothing
    - Geophysical system
- Deforestation, desertification
- What is the most effective way to build community and engage with one another (to talk about climate change)?

- Schools used to send a tree home with kids. This doesn't happen anymore. Kids need to be more in the know about soil, plants, stewarding the land etc.
- Unsure how to get concerns of monocrop industrial agriculture to Tribe… fields need to be revitalized
    - Things NEED to change
- Quick and efficient is the bottom line, didn't used to be like this
- Not taking care of Mother Earth. Gashing her open and not healing her wounds that we cause.
- [Representatives] tied to Agriculture, Economics too → change is routed through legislature but [Tribes] can't compete with lobbies and others [driving this process]
    - Tribes forced to live by rules written by others, BIA often interacts with Tribes periodically/superficially [rather than meaningfully]
    - Land fractionation makes it hard to get consensus for action
- Importance of meeting new people and forging partnerships + knowledge exchange. Say what you need and what you can give – make this a cultural norm.
- How do I get someone to care as much as me? How can I align with people outside this room that have different goals? How can I foster a culture of reciprocity and care?
- This is overwhelming
- There are needs and forces that shape how we conduct all our lives. Storytelling and cultural dialogue are going to help connect our actions now with (likely delayed) negative impacts of the future.
    - When people lose the knowledge that their perspective + voice is valued, things can go astray very quickly
- There has to be a leader to lead by example and then offer help
    - Not effective to try to talk people into things (neighbor prescribed burn disagreement example)
- Barriers to doing the right thing – cost (valuing $ over other things – health, family, land, food)
- What can we learn from the pandemic? We are at the mercy of who grows our food
    - Positives that came out of pandemic but disappeared after funding did
    - Tribes can't always react fast enough to capture funding opportunities
- Creativity!

<u>Day 3 Discussion – Closing</u>

- Improvements in water cycling → need to rehydrate our environment
- With funding to Tribes, are there other ways for Tribes to indicate support other than a resolution?
- Reserved rights supersede colonial policy, avoid tokenization of those who align with answers you want to hear
- Compartmentalization of government creates unnecessary obstacles
- As we transition, are we outsourcing our impacts?
    - Is there space to think about retrofitting existing vehicles to reduce mineral extraction impacts?

    - ODEQ has a diesel vehicles….[missing info]
- Improve infrastructure for walking and biking
- Efficiency retrofits that aren't constrained to allow for innovation → performance standards instead
- Some transportation improvements in rural areas can be complicated
    - Rail lines and train routes could expand opportunity (+1)
    - Circular economies and small scale enterprises
        - Ex: energy saved during pandemic gave us a glimpse
    - Conservation and our own responsibility
- Indigenous people have survived this before
    - Systems change to prioritize decarbonizing, not offsetting
    - Existing approaches perpetuate colonization → food sovereignty (+1)
- Prioritize Tribal sovereignty
- Not just CO_2 → education to farmers and communities on added benefits around NO_2 → is there a way to foster collective solutions that may be difficult to quantify?
- Quality of life improvements are urgent for mass transit
- Language revitalization as part of climate solutions
- Think holistically and LISTEN
- Relying on Traditional/First Foods creates resilience
    - Threats to First Foods from pollution/contamination
    - Non-cooperation from governments in addressing toxics
    - Fears around future generations' access to First Foods, always a price to pay for anything
- Indigenous people did not create climate crisis but are most impacted → waste outsourced to Indigenous people like in Alaska, reducing plastic and other waste
- If people got out of the way, the earth could heal
    - Thousands of distinct TEK approaches are hopeful
    - Global South is a living example of what collapse might look like, what do we do next? Tribal communities have the roadmap
- Breaking down silos, greater collaboration across agencies and with Tribes, regular conversations, build partnerships
- Celebrate that we CAN work together and have hard conversations

Poste Event Feedback Survey

In planning and facilitating this event, the organizers wanted to include opportunities for participants to provide feedback as much as possible. It is part of securing consent to offer ongoing opportunities to offer feedback and veto actions, and our follow up survey was designed to understand the effectiveness of our event's ability to convey information in an accessible way, and to document support for future similar events. Data from these questions are helpful to show participants were engaged in the development of the event

Please find the results of this follow up survey in the following section.

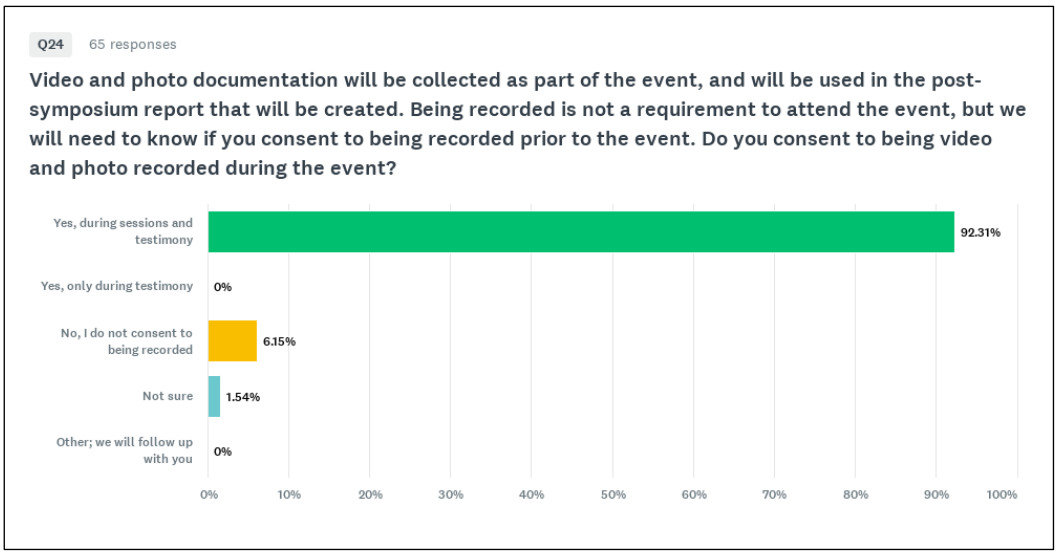


Figure 2: Visualization of responses to the question "Video and photo documentation will be collected as part of the event, and will be used in the post-symposium report that will be created. Being recorded is not a requirement to attend the event, but we will need to know if you consent to being recorded prior to the event. Do you consent to being video and photo recorded during the event?"

Table 3: Detailed Responses from Question 24 of the Pre-Event Registration Survey

Registration Response	Percentage	Responses
Yes, during sessions and testimony	92%	60
Yes, only during testimony	0%	0
No, I do not consent to being recorded	6.%	4
Not sure	1.5%	1
Other	0%	0
Total		65

Of the Symposium registrants, 92% indicated they gave consent to be documented during the event, while 6% did not give consent.

The need to demonstrate what it looks like to secure meaningful consent from a community was an explicit facet of the Symposium's organization and facilitation. Registration for the event offered the ability for participants to express their consent to being documented and to veto being recorded or photographed.

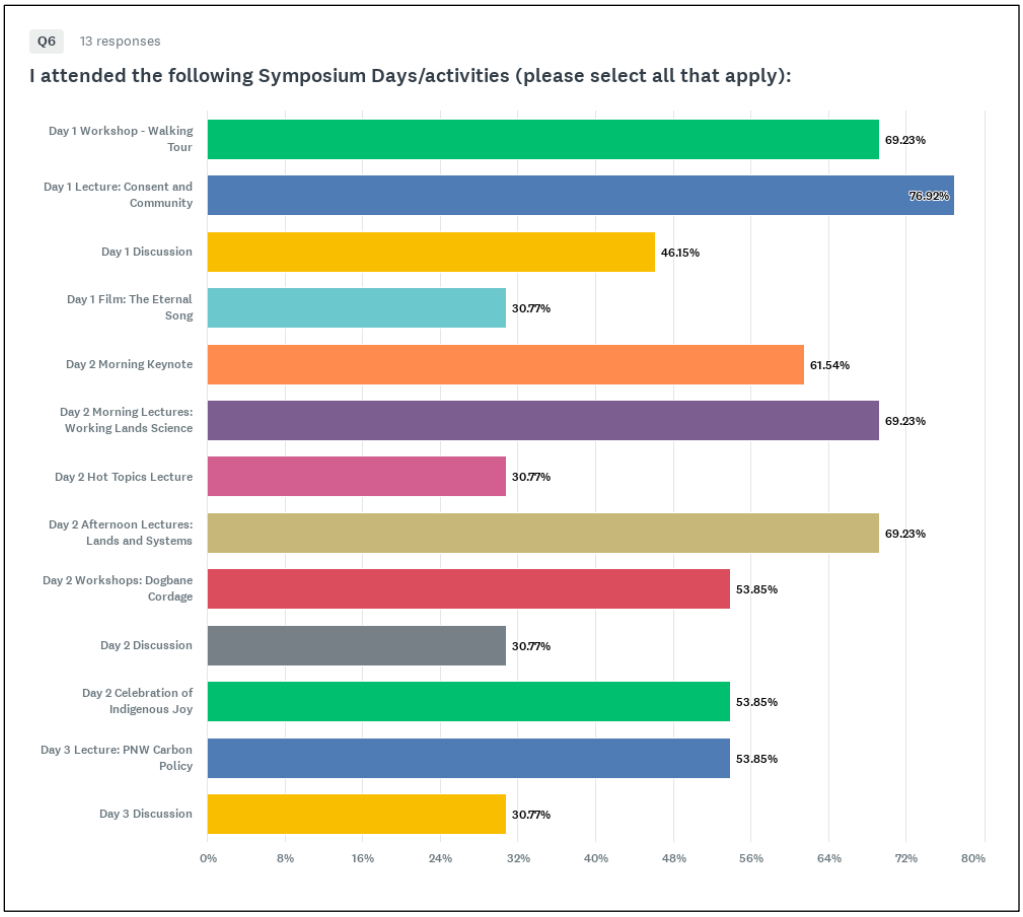


Figure 3: Visualization of responses to the question "I attended the following Symposium Days/activities (please select all that apply)."

Table 4: Detailed Responses from Question 6 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
Day 1 Workshop – Walking Tour	69%	9
Day 1 Lecture: Consent and Community	77%	10
Day 1 Discussion	46%	6
Day 1 Film: Eternal Song	31%	4
Day 2 Morning Keynote	61.5%	8
Day 2 Lecture: Working Lands Science	69%	9
Day 2 Lecture: Hot Topics Session	31%	4
Day 2 Lecture: Lands and Systems	69%	9

Day 2 Workshop: Dogbane Cordage	54%	7
Day 2 Discussion	30.1%	4
Day 2 Celebration of Indigenous Joy	54%	7
Day 3 Lecture: PNW Carbon Policy	54%	7
Day 3 Discussion	30.1	4
Total		88

Many Symposium participants were able to attend the main full Day 2 Keynote (61%) and afternoon lecture sessions (69% each), followed by the Celebration of Indigenous Joy, Dogbane Cordage workshop, and Pacific Northwest Carbon Policy lectures (54% each). The least well attended components were the film screening (31%), Hot Topics lecture session (31%) and Day 2 and 3 Discussions (30%).

Table 5: Detailed responses on Question 7, "Which of the topics, lectures, or discussions did you feel were most beneficial or informational to you?"

I really liked and benefitted from the pre-read about creating and participating in a trauma-informed space as part of the convening. I loved the Dogbane Cordage workshop and the community that was built during that time. I got the opportunity to engage with some youth attendees and would love to see youth presence be an even bigger focus in future convenings. The discussion session after the Lands and Systems lectures was very rich. It was neat to be able to get people from different backgrounds and livelihoods in the same space to discuss controversial issues in a safe/brave space with a smaller group.		Many of the topics that were presented were very interesting and relevant to my work, which includes conservation and restoration of a variety of habitats and managed agricultural areas in the region. Particularly interesting and relevant were presentations addressing range, agriculture, aquatic, and forest management and monitoring topics.
Consent, Hot Topics, dogbane, all discussions	Carbon policy	Dogbane Cordage
All were valuable	Consent and Community and Carbon Policy. the information was great and I feel like I need to learn more on the topic.	Witnessing the failed, so called, Community Engagement attempt by that carbon injection research group. It really put a fine point on how far we have to go in collaborative, relational, and inclusive works. Also, I was a big fan of the dog bane hemp workshop. I got to learn and

		think and connect with my hands to history, technology, culture, biology, and spirit.
The Working Lands Science was a good way to showcase the research and practice of the same	It was very insightful to join the working lands discussion. Hearing concerns from community members helps guide the work we do.	just sharing story of requested legend Nayshthla
We were there all of day 3 and the discussion was varied, most informational with diverse speakers. New ideas. The ending of the day was inspiring and hopeful. Day 3 was wonderful; wish we could have been there for Day 1 and 2. Listening to the State programs was helpful as we learned what is happening here in Oregon. The discussion opened the topics to what others are doing and although it may not be what I would pursue they were very important in understanding how others are addressing CC. I really liked the discussion; it was a strong and important way to end a very rewarding day. I like to hear opinions of others. The closing ceremony touch me greatly. This ceremony has stayed with me over the last weeks and I continue to think about it's impact. All of us, from all over, brought together to address CC with respect and to have it all in a ceremony that may be as old as Tribal Culture was a perfect ending that allows me as noted to go forth with hope and a commitment to continue to fight for these values in my own way.		

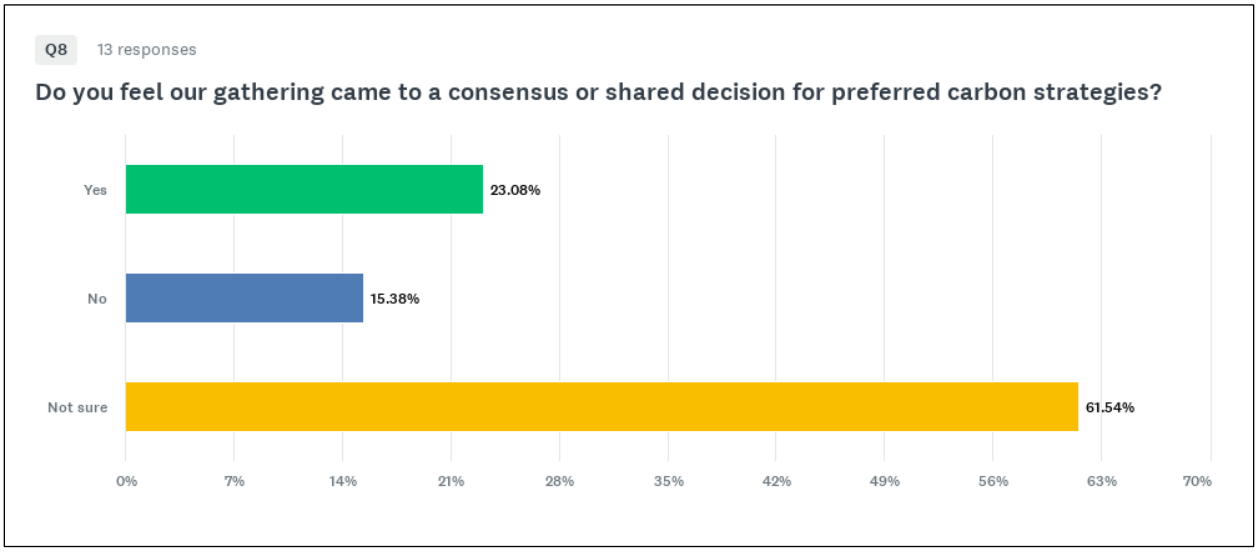


Figure 4: Visualization of responses to the question "Do you feel our gathering came to a consensus or shared decision for preferred carbon strategies?"

Table 6: Detailed Responses from Question 8 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
Yes	23%	3
No	16%	2

Not Sure	61%	8
Total		13

When asked if our gathering came to a consensus or shared decision, most felt they were “Not Sure,” (61%), compared to “Yes” (23%) and “No,” (16%). This feels acceptable for the event, as it was one of the first opportunities for our community to learn about these strategies and have space to discuss them. One participant expressed that the question was misleading because it implies one solution must be selected when in reality is will be many solutions implemented in collaboration.

Table 7: Written answers to Question 9, “Please explain your answer to Q7.”

Moved toward consensus	I said the story and shared how it still exists	There was a difference in ideologies and the ways we want to work towards carbon mitigation in the future
There is a lot to learn about this subject matter for those who are just hearing about it. There is still a lot of work to do to educate	I think we all were like minded and it was great to hear other's voices.	Working in at Traditional Arts environment the dogbane plant is intriguing with it's properties to deter pest and preserve food.
Bringing us all together was the most important. The ideas will continue to bounce around in all of our consciousnesses and I want for consensus, but coming together was likely the best consensus.	I feel as if some people left with the idea that carbon management was another way to generate revenue/funds. I do not believe they are looking towards the future impacts that may result from carbon activity.	I'm unsure, in part, because I had to leave early but also, it what i did see didn't seem like a consensus on a solution, per say, but a consensus on the way to develop/discover one. Relationally with Tribal leadership.
I don’t think such a consensus is possible, but I appreciate the symposiums effort to bring together tribal, practitioner, and community voices to have meaningful dialogue and find opportunities for partnership and alignment.	I didn't attend day 3 due to other obligations so a consensus may have been reached there. Ido think having actual land managers/producers/stewards as part of the conversation would be helpful. It's difficult to effect change if we only discuss concerns in silos and there are some land managers that we work with that would be open to hearing concerns.	I don't know that I felt that there was a consensus about preferred carbon strategies. I think that consensus and/or prioritization of carbon management strategies is something that will come about post-event through virtual convenings, materials, etc

Event organizers also wanted to evaluate how well our gathering did at our desired goal to improve knowledge of carbon management strategies for the mid-Columbia region. Below are results from the Post-Event Feedback Survey

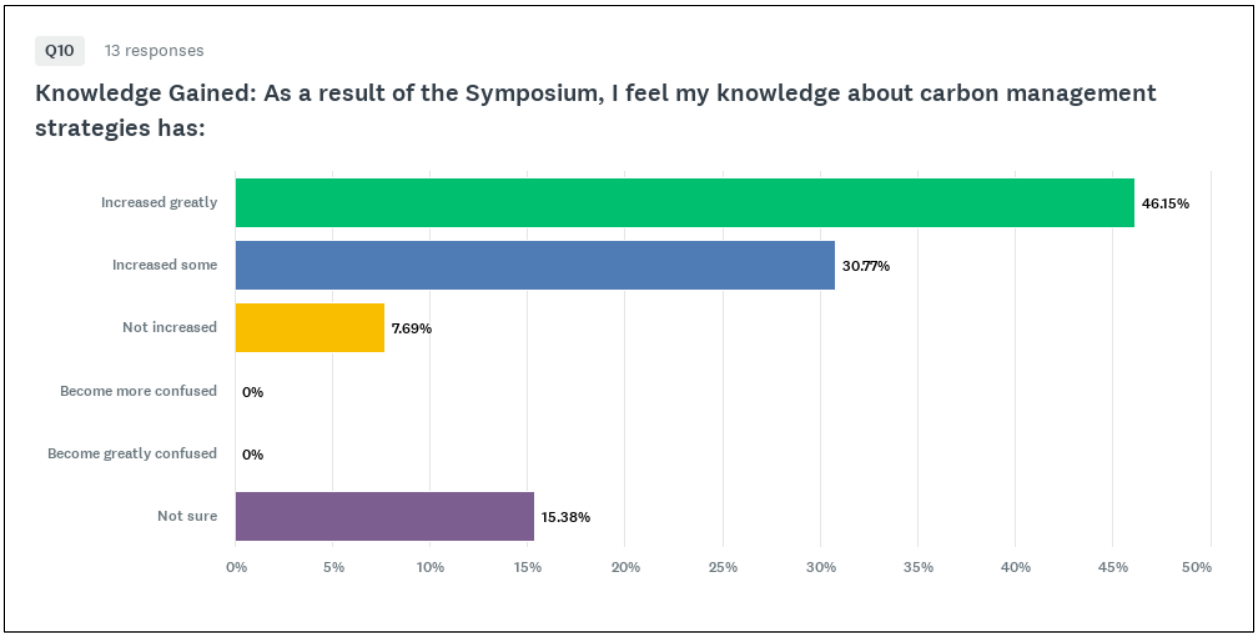


Figure 5: Visualization of responses to the question "As a result of the Symposium, I feel my knowledge about carbon management strategies has:"

Table 8: Detailed Responses from Question 10 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
Increased Greatly	46%	6
Increased Some	31%	4
Not Increased	8%	1
Become More Confused	0%	0
Become Greatly Confused	0%	0
Not Sure	15%	2
Total		13

Based on the small number of responses, 46.1% of respondents felt their knowledge of carbon management strategies "Increased Greatly" or "Increased Some" (31%), though 15% were not sure and 7.7% felt it had not increased. This indicates a robust and effective delivery of information about carbon management strategies.

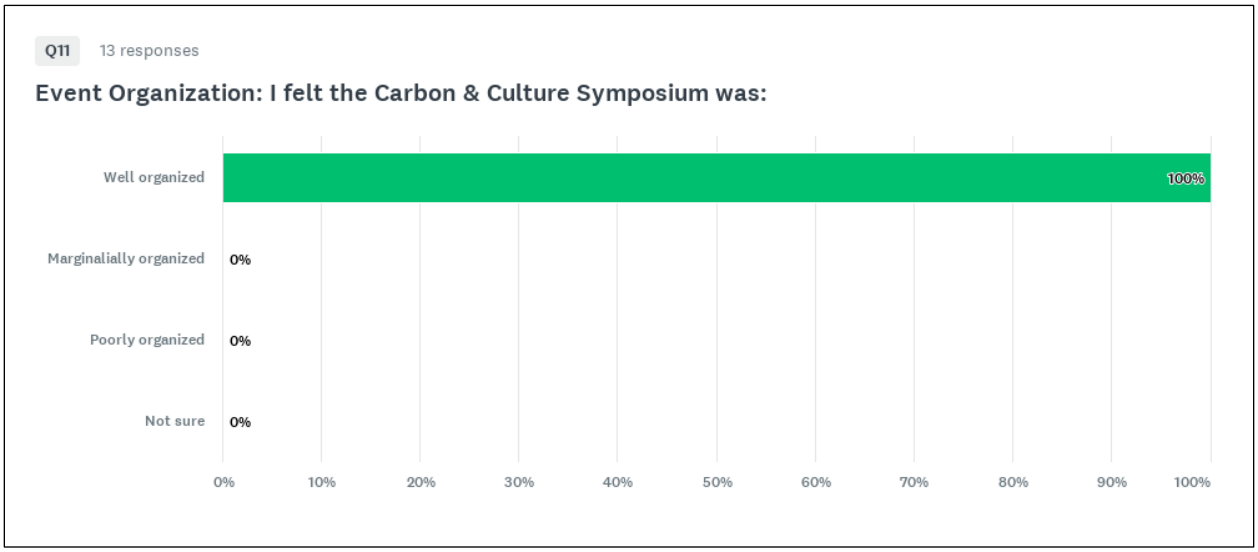


Figure 6: Visualization of responses to the question "I felt the Carbon & Culture Symposium was:"

Table 9: Detailed Responses from Question 11 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
Well Organized	100%	13
Marginally Organized	0%	0
Poorly Organized	0%	0
Not Sure	0%	0
Total		

Based on the small number of responses, 100% of respondents felt the event was "Well Organized" with two skipping the question. Thank you to event organizers and partners for their excellent efforts!

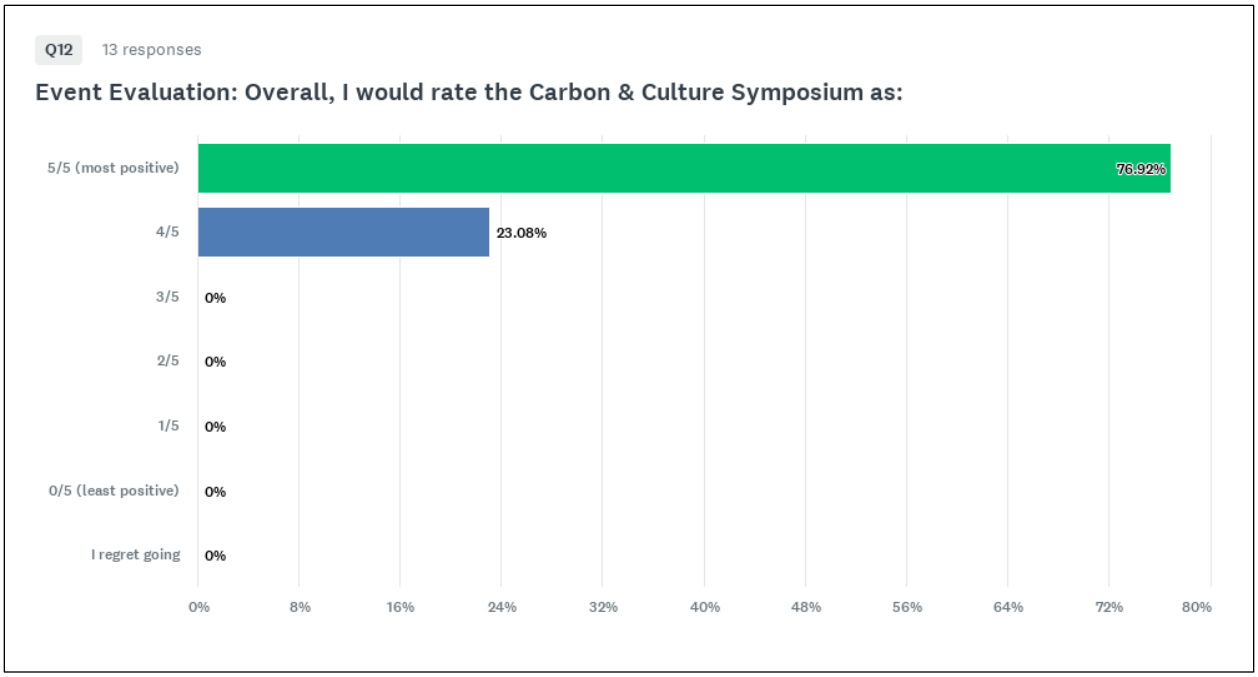


Figure 7: Visualization of responses to the question "Overall, I would rate the Carbon & Culture Symposium as:"

Table 10: Detailed Responses from Question 12 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
5/5 (Most Positive)	77%	10
4/5	23%	3
3/5	0%	0
2/5	0%	0
1/5 and 0/5	0%	0
I regret going	0%	0
Total		13

Based on the small number of responses, 76.9%% of respondents rated the event "5/5" and "4/5" at 23.1% and two skipping the question.

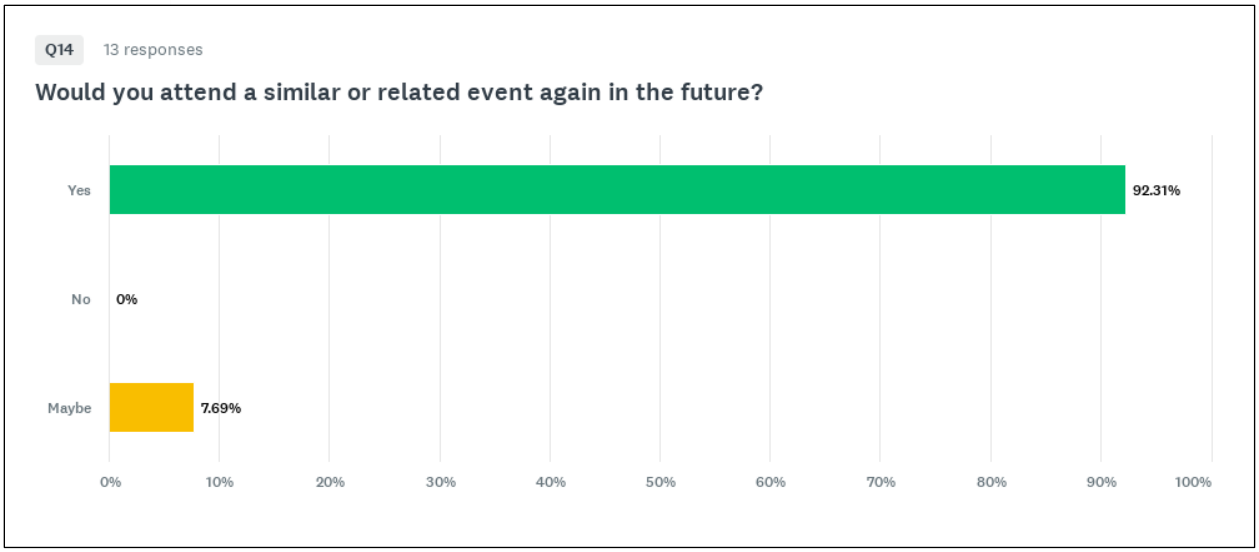


Figure 8: Visualization of responses to the question "Would you attend a similar or related event again in the future?"

Table 11: Detailed Responses from Question 14 of the Post-Event Feedback Survey

Feedback Response	Percentage	Responses
Yes	92%	12
No	0%	0
Maybe	8%	1
Total		13

Based on the small number of responses, 92%% of respondents said "Yes" they would attend a similar or related event again in the future, with 7.7% answering "Maybe," and two skipping the question. This indicates strong support for the style and approach of our event.

Table 12: Written responses to the Question 13, "Please tell us your thoughts, impressions, and feedback you have on the Carbon & Culture Symposium."

Great location, speakers, attendees	this is worthy of a repeat for others that may not have made it, or possibly a follow up symposium.	Connected community, presented a lot of ideas about actions and next steps
need extra time in between sessions and or break times.	I am fairly new to learning about Carbon and look forward to learning more.	Very well thought out. I wasn't sure what to expect. Very enlightening and thought provoking.
Please see above. I greatly appreciate this conference. I so	Food was incredible - all of the dietary consideration and care	I had a great time meeting and conversing with others, listen to

hope that there will be a second one building on the first. I was so impressed on the third day that I attended. It was one of best I have attended with diverse ideas and respect for all.	that went into it was very evident. Some of the 1:1 conversations that I had during meals were the most impactful pieces of the event for me. The welcome packet was not only beautiful, but useful. I still am finding myself looking back at the packet for info and contacts. I felt that the event design and number of sessions/time between sessions, felt like a good flow as an attendee.	speakers, and really all of it. Ido feel that the structured/scheduled portion of the days were several hours too long. It was a lot to fit into just a couple of days and I get can be hard to find more days as well. It was a great symposium overall. I found a lot of validation for my own interests and works in it. Thank.
I thought it was a wonderful event. Great participation by a variety of tribal, NGO, and state agency staff and a beautiful and well supported venue. Kudos on the organization. The highly reduced representation of Federal agencies was a notable limitation... obviously not due to any fault of the organizers of the event.	Overall I think it was a great event. Being able to converse with community members, again, helps guide our work.	It was a distance for travel but I did my best to share

Table 13: Written responses to the Question 15, “Please tell us your thoughts, impressions, and feedback you have on the Carbon & Culture Symposium.”

I would like to see more educational material available to the public.	Great appreciation for all the work that went into this	This was my first time and I not only enjoyed myself, but also learned so much! Thank you!
Thank you for this outstanding opportunity. All stated above. SOOO hope there is a Part II. Please.	Excellent event and well organized. Add moderators to discussion with prompts. Interdisciplinary discussion with moderator and prompts. Portfolio of solutions.	I was limited to a day visit, and missed dedicated periods in the evening for follow-up conversations. So my biggest regret was not being able to attend spaces where there was more open discussion

Part 4: Building a Shared Future

Youth Engagement and Poster Competition

During the 3-day Carbon and Culture Symposium, we wanted to hear from the youth on their thoughts on carbon management strategies in the Columbia Region. Our focus was to hear the voices of youth in middle school, high school, and college to take part in our poster competition. To better understand their thoughts and knowledge on this topic, themes were created for them to choose from and express their creative ideas through art. The themes that were created were:

1. What does Climate Resilience mean to you?
2. What does it mean to be a Land Manager (farms, ranches, forests, gardens, etc.)?
3. Our Experiences with First Foods and Food Systems (harvesting, processing, ceremony).
4. Our place in the Carbon Cycle.
5. Other topics related to the environment and your vision of the future.

K12 Schools, Colleges, and Universities within the CTUIR Homeland were eligible to enter this poster competition. Poster competition categories include Middle School Traditional, High School Traditional, College Undergraduate Traditional, and Computer Assisted (A.I.) Art.

Students had a month to complete their artwork and turn it in. Overall, there were over 13 students who taken part in the poster competition. We had our judges be from the Crow's Shadow Institution of The Arts to pick out the top three winners in the AI category, High School Digital, and High School Tradition Hand Drawn posters. The winners were announced on the last day of the symposium. Students received a certificate for participation, and a stipend for the winners in each category. Please find digital versions of these posters in the Symposium report Appendix C and on the CTUIR website: https://ctuir.org/departments/natural-resources/first-foods-policy/climate-adaptation/carbon-culture-symposium-fall-2025/carbon-culture-symposium-student-poster-competition/

It was wonderful to see all the students' perspectives on what they thought of the environment and what the future would look like to them because everything we do and change is for the youth to inherit a better world. Our organizing team is grateful to everyone who submitted art and to our judges with Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts!

Image 29: Crow's Shadow members Ken Mayfield, Emma Barnes, and Pat Hall-Walters judge student poster competition entries. Credit: CTUIR DNR FFPP, 2025.

Poster Competition Winners

Winners for the poster competition could either have been selected by the Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts judging panel (Image 29) or be selected as People's Choice by vote of Symposium participants. It was possible for a poster to win both awards.

Image 30: Winners of the People's Choice voter-selected poster award. First Foods Policy Program's Ermia Butler (left in photo) organized the student poster competition as FFPP's Colleen Sanders displays the judge's choice winners Photo is still image from recording by Paul Lynn, 2025.

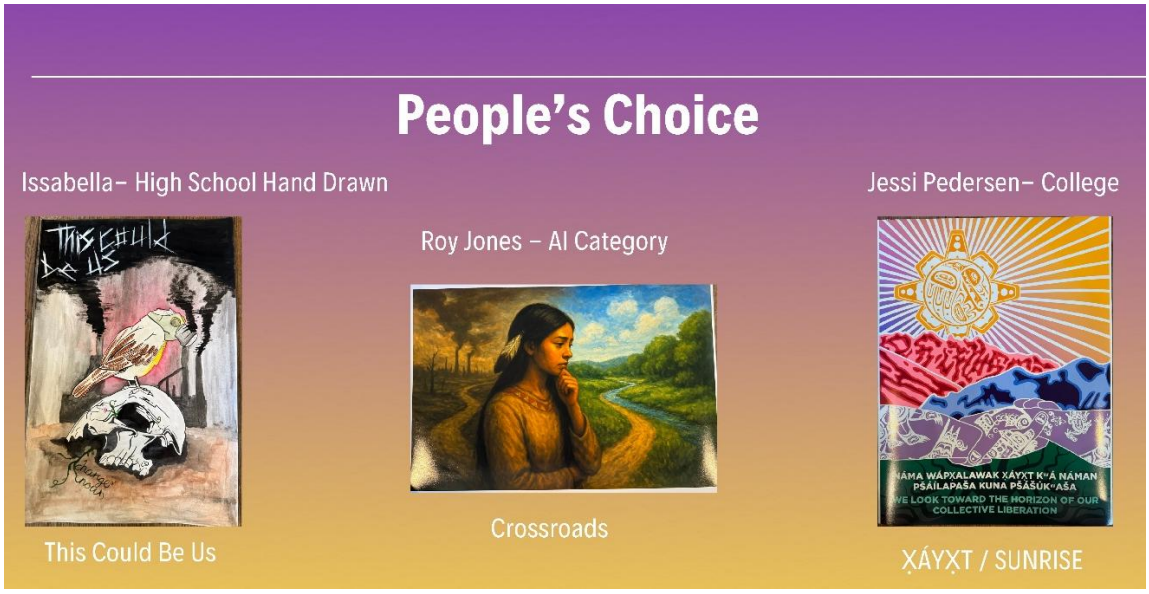


Image 31: Winners of the People's Choice voter-selected poster award. Image by FFPP's Ermia Butler.

Category	Winner
Judge's Selection	
People's Choice	Issabella, "This Could Be Us" Roy Jones, "Crossroads" Jessi Pedersen, "Xayxt/Sunrise"

Closing Remarks

The Carbon & Culture Symposium was a three-day event that was hosted by the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation Department of Natural Resources First Foods Policy Program (FFPP). This event took over 3 years to plan and host the event. The goal of this Carbon and Culture Symposium was to invite agencies such as The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (ODEQ), Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB), Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (DOGOMI), and Cultural Resources Protection Program (CRPP) and many more other partners who attend the planning meetings and participated in the event. Our goal to have all these local agencies and government agencies to come and participate within the event was to help talk about carbon sequestration management plans and strategies within the Columbia basin region on a more local and tribal scale of land usage and first foods being involved with carbon mitigation strategies.
One of the topics we wanted to focus on during this time was the viewpoint through a tribal ecological knowledge on how Native American tribes utilize their traditional knowledge on protecting and preserving their First Foods and lands. Numerous initiatives are being carried out by the Department of Natural Resources' for CTUIR to rehabilitate lands and reintroduce foods and cultural customs that have been absent for a long time. By continuing to practice imparting their information to the next generation, tribal knowledge keepers have been able to support such discussions concerning First Foods and lands. Numerous initiatives are being carried out by the Department of Natural Resources to rehabilitate lands and reintroduce foods and cultural practices that have been absent for a long time. While working with groups like the Wallowa Land Trust, landowners to teach them about what First Foods are growing on the lands and how to identify them for future harvesting excursions. In addition to continuing to pass on their knowledge to the next generation, tribal knowledge keepers have been able to contribute to discussions regarding first foods and lands on a governmental level through restoration initiatives and being able to partner up with other agencies to focus on First Foods and carbon planning.
During the symposium we wanted to include the youth's perspective on carbon and climate change. We reached out to all the schools that are located within the CTUIR ceded homelands, sent them the invitation and requirements creating a poster. The requirements were to choose a prompt they most related too and develop a poster by hand drawn, E-Poster, and A.I categories. The students would have a month to complete their posters on the topic they have chosen to depict through their art. Overall there were 13 students who participated with the poster competition. Crow's Shadow Institute of the Arts partnered up with us on choosing winners in each category. We presented them during the symposium and announced the winners of each category on the last day of the symposium, all posters were wonderful to see each student's interpretation on their thoughts on climate change and expressing themselves.
The Carbon & Culture Symposium was a great way to learn about other organizations' ongoing programs and to get ideas for future project cooperation. It was encouraging to see that other individuals were coming to the same conclusion about how to lower carbon emissions and make strategies to improve our future while also including tribes into these plans to improve future generations as well as our own.

Thank you to our event sponsors:
Oregon Dept of Environmental Quality
The Nature Conservancy
CTUIR Dept of Natural Resources
Cove Ascension School and Naknuwiłáma Tiičámna

Thank you to our event partners:
Whitman College
Crow's Shadow Institute for the Arts
CTUIR Education Department
Global Ocean Health
Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board
Oregon Dept of Geology and Mineral Industries
Oregon State University CBARC, Union, and Burns Stations
Eastern Oregon Legacy Lands
USDA Agricultural Research Service
Washington State University
Columbia River Gorge Commission

Thank you to all who spent time with us:
Blue Mountain Land Trust
Wallowa Land Trust
Wallowology
Portland Metro
Umatilla County Soil and Water Conservation District
Tiicham Conservation District
Intertribal Agriculture Council

And to all who participate in our carbon management!