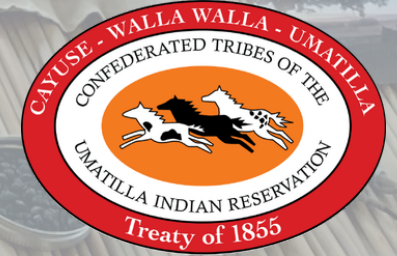


DNR First Foods Policy Program Carbon & Culture Symposium



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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 Naknuwíłama 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 Naknuwíłama 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 Australia
- 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 Naknuwíłama 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 NDTIA!P 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", Issabella 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.