

## Discussion Guide for Climate Circle

February 7, 2024 @ 1:00 PM EST

- Opening brief reading/reflection/summary of the session to set discussion (Lisa/Justin, 5 min)
  - 60-90 second summary is given by Circle facilitator rather than someone from workshop series.

### Recording of session :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iXd4E0gDERo&t=167s>

### Summary (Lisa):

This session explored indigenous knowledge creation practices in the context of two cultural heritage projects:

- the [Plateau Peoples' Web Portal](#), a collaboration between native tribes and Washington State University to select and curate digital heritage items
- [The Nibi miinawaa Manoomin symposium](#), a collaboration between Tribal Nations of the upper Midwest and the University of Minnesota to host a biannual symposium focused on the significance of wild rice

Major themes of the conversation included:

- The importance of involving tribal people in decisions about the land, based both on treaty rights and their deep cultural and spiritual connection with the land.
- The need to recognize the interdependence of issues like climate change, pollution, garbage, etc. An underlying issue is the Western view that we are detached from the environment.
- Strengthening relationships with each other and the land.
- The importance of enabling indigenous leaders to take a key role in setting research agendas.
- The need to establish authentic relationships with tribes rather than just swooping in with a grant proposal. Being of service is one way to develop relationships.

### Session 4 Shared Notes

### Reflection (Justin):

- “The Three Sisters offer us a new metaphor for an emerging relationship between indigenous knowledge and Western science, both of which are rooted in the earth. I think of the corn as a traditional ecological knowledge, the physical and spiritual framework that can guide the

curious bean of science, which twines like a double helix. The squash creates the ethical habitat for coexistence and mutual flourishing. I envision a time when the intellectual monoculture of science will be replaced with a polyculture of complementary knowledge. And so all may be fed.” - Robin Wall Kimmerer, “The Three Sisters,” in *Braiding Sweetgrass*

- Review of community agreements, agenda, and discussion questions to structure conversation (Justin, 5 min)
  - [Agreements from All We Can Save Circles](#):
    - *Generous Dialogue*: We will ask open and generous questions, offer our own stories and ideas generously, and listen to one another with a generosity of spirit.
    - *Equitable Dialogue*: We will have a single conversation — one voice at a time, with roughly equal time to share. We will each step up or step back as needed.
    - *Confidential Dialogue*: We will ensure that sharings made within our Circle are not shared beyond it, unless someone gives clear permission to do so.
    - *Growing Dialogue*: We will lean into learning, welcome diverse opinions and perspectives, and support our mutual growth in knowledge and power.
    - *Courageous Dialogue*: We will bring our heads and hearts to this space, holding hard truths while looking towards what is possible and how we can best contribute.
    - Additional agreements for this Circle? [Hold for 15 seconds]
  - Many of these points align directly with [DLF Code of Conduct](#), which also guides our space and work together.
- **Group discussion (Lisa/Justin, 40 min)**
  - Icebreaker: What is a relationship that is important to you? Why? (It can be professional, family, or personal.)
  - The panelists spoke frequently about the importance of relationships within indigenous communities and in their relationship to the land. For example, Nakia Williamson-Cloud said that his tribe’s work to preserve salmon was not about the species itself but relationships within the land. He also mentioned several times how the relationship developing with Trevor Bond. What are ways that we as professionals might be able to work with indigenous people to honor these many different kinds of relationships?
  - The panelists acknowledged the difficulty of working with institutions, especially land grant universities. What are some of the challenges that have resonated with you?
  - Two successful collaborations were presented. The Plateau People’s Portal at WSU and the Nibi Miinawaa Manoomin Symposium at UMN. What are some of

the common themes across these two projects? How might they serve as models for others?

- Mike Dockry said that climate change is but a symptom of the dominant culture's broken relationship with the land. What is your response to this observation? If this is the case, what are actions that could be taken to begin healing that relationship?

- **Closing Reflection and Prompt** (Justin, 10 min)

- "The Way of the Three Sisters reminds me of one of the basic teachings of our people. The most important thing each of us can know is our unique gift and how to use it in the world. Individuality is cherished and nurtured, because, in order for the whole to flourish, each of us has to be strong in who we are and carry our gifts with conviction, so they can be shared with others. Being among the sisters provides a visible manifestation of what a community can become when its members understand and share their gifts. In reciprocity, we fill our spirits as well as our bellies." - Robin Wall Kimmerer, "The Three Sisters," in *Braiding Sweetgrass*
- Where are there opportunities for you to either establish or deepen relationships with indigenous people and communities? How might you begin to do that?

### Further reading:

- [Centering relationality](#)
- [Land-grab university](#)
- [Emergence magazine podcasts](#)
- [Subtlefields flowers](#)

### Notes

- Circles will not be recorded, but agendas and community notes will be shared
- Community agreements haven't been written yet, but could we use [All We Could Save Circles as model](#)?

### Desired skill-based programs by attendees:

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