



Self-determination, environmental health stewardship and water health disparities

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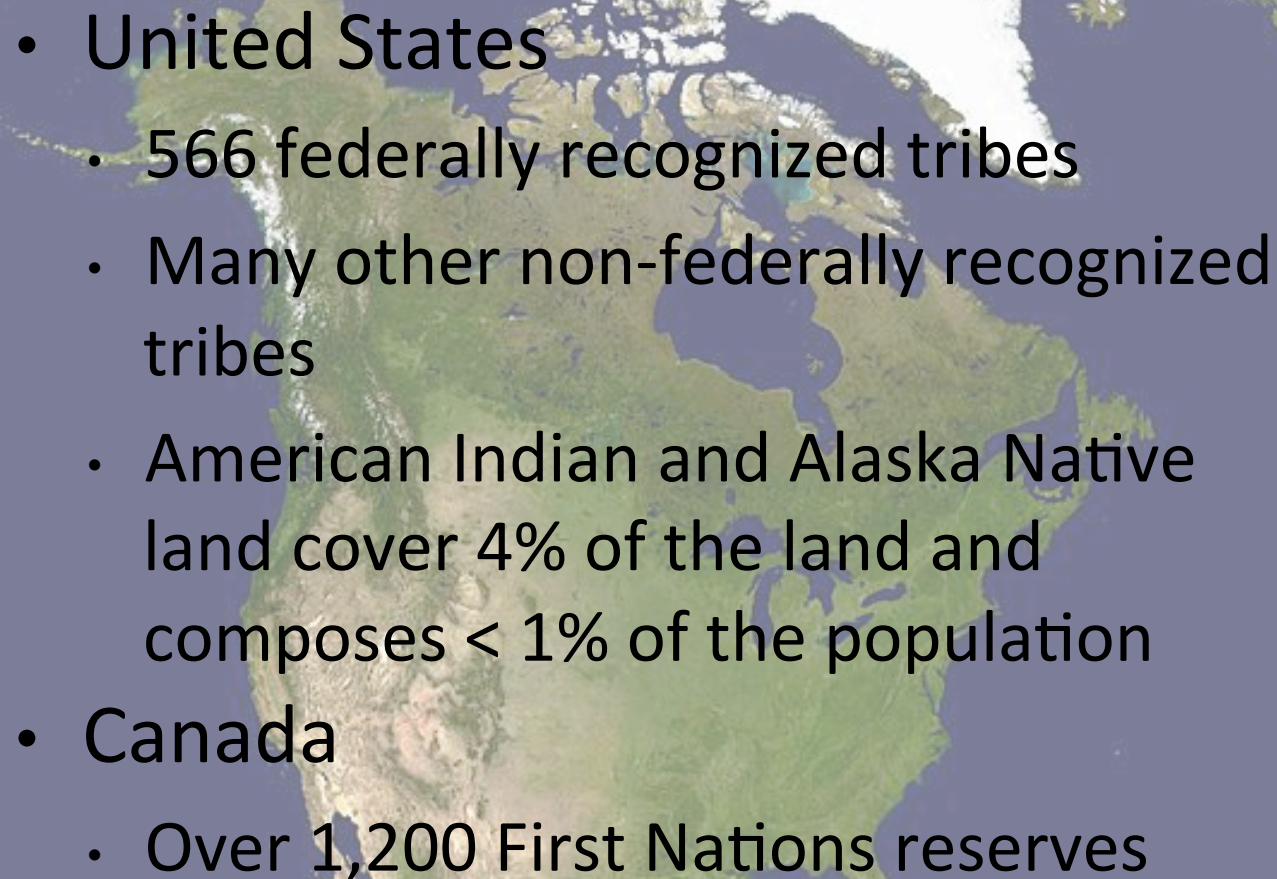
PEPH Webinar

Addressing Historical Inequities: Environmental Justice for Native
Americans

August 21, 2013

Outline

- Self-determination
- Environmental health stewardship
 - First Stewards
 - Water health disparities
- Indigenous water values and structured decision-making

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- United States
 - 566 federally recognized tribes
 - Many other non-federally recognized tribes
 - American Indian and Alaska Native land cover 4% of the land and composes < 1% of the population
 - Canada
 - Over 1,200 First Nations reserves

Treaties

- The U.S. government's commitments to Tribal nations
- Federal employees should understand the federal responsibility to tribes
 - Uphold a government-to-government relationship,
 - Support and honor tribal self-determination and
 - Support and honor treaty-protected rights to access cultural resources within usual and accustom lands

“Through the treaties we reserved that which is most important to us as a people: **The right to harvest salmon in our traditional fishing areas.** But today the salmon is disappearing because the federal government is failing to protect salmon habitat. Without the salmon there is no treaty right. We kept our word when we ceded all of western Washington to the United States, and we expect the United States to keep its word.”

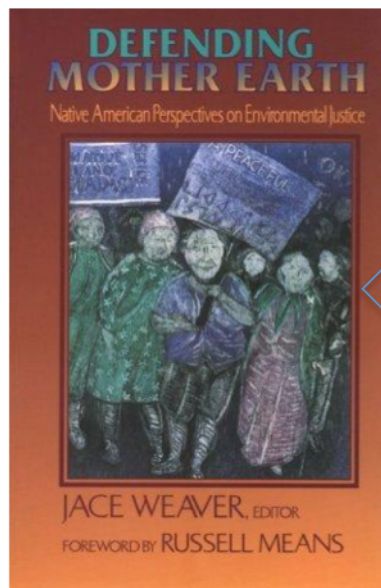
– BILLY FRANK JR., CHAIRMAN OF THE NORTHWEST
INDIAN FISHERIES COMMISSION

Why is self-determination important?

- Tribal nations are uniquely connected to land and water
 - We can't take our treaty rights somewhere else
 - May be defined by reservation boundaries and jurisdictions
 - This connection is taught through creation stories and Indigenous worldview
- Former policies of colonization, assimilation, relocation and termination were dehumanizing and unjust

pedagogy. discrimination ethnic
foods **social** living racial
traditional **loss** access
destruction globalization barriers
culture policies disconnection denial
support migration services
conditions **cultural**
racism **health** factors
socioeconomics land
exclusion practices related
history language relocation
colonization
dismissive housing bias
inadequate

The importance of self-determination to water?



“The leading item on the Native agenda is one of sovereignty, **the right to make decisions** that affect their lives.”

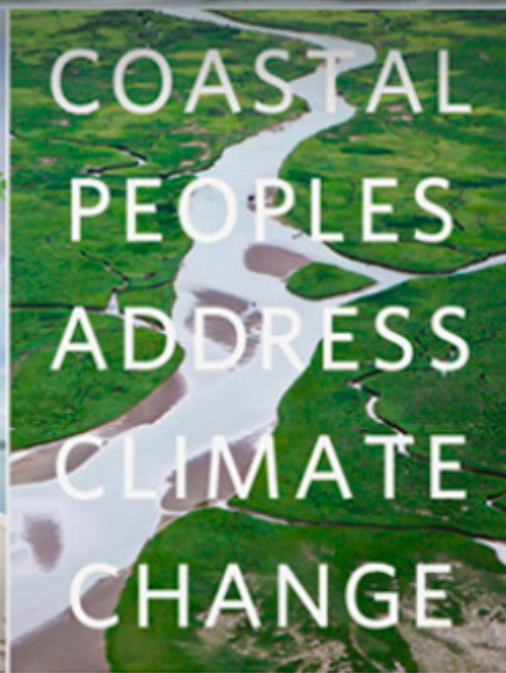


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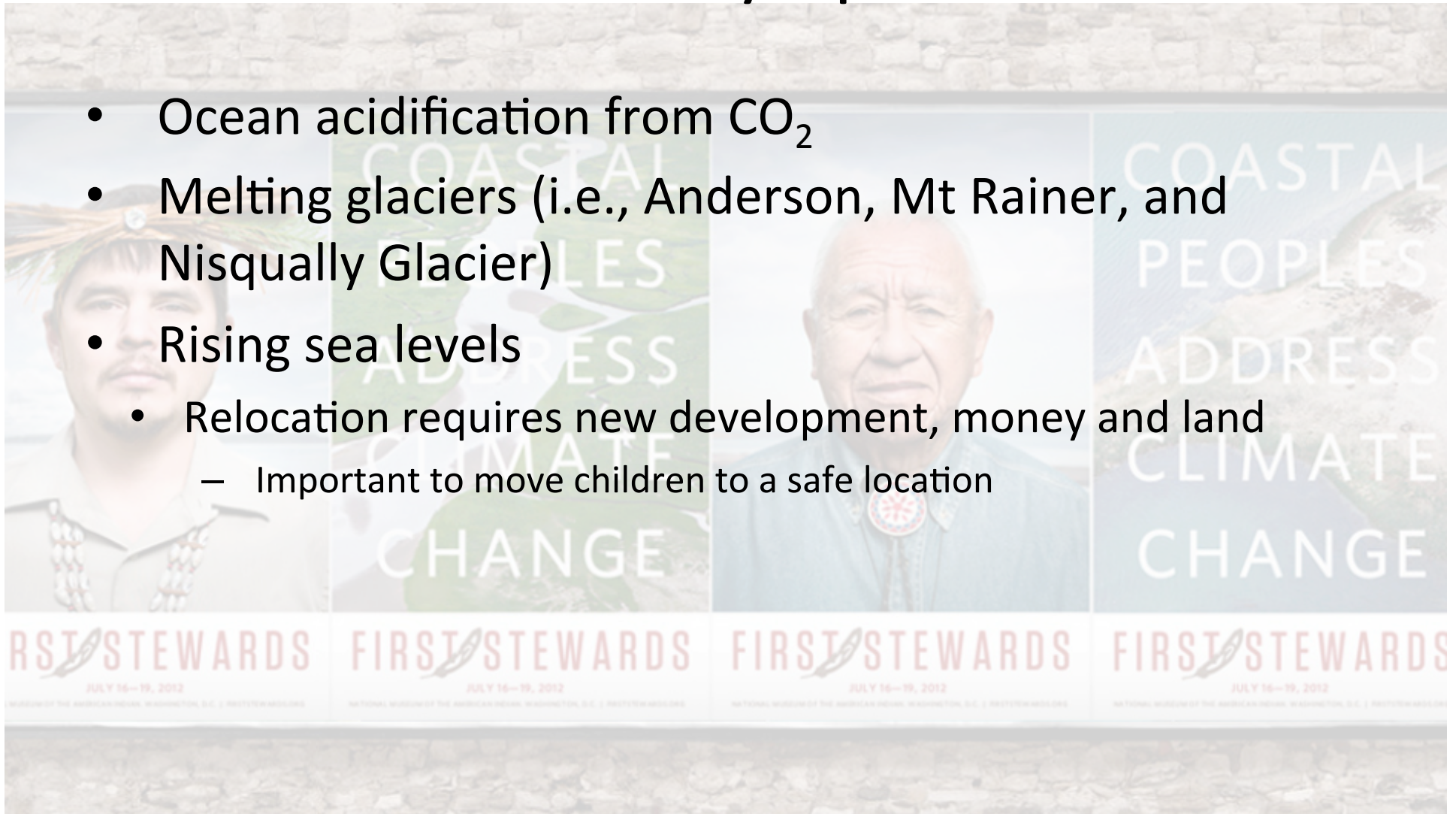
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Water Concerns Voiced at First Stewards Symposium

- Ocean acidification from CO₂
- Melting glaciers (i.e., Anderson, Mt Rainer, and Nisqually Glacier)
- Rising sea levels
 - Relocation requires new development, money and land
 - Important to move children to a safe location



Concerns Voiced at First Stewards Symposium

- We encourage the federal and regional agencies to work together!

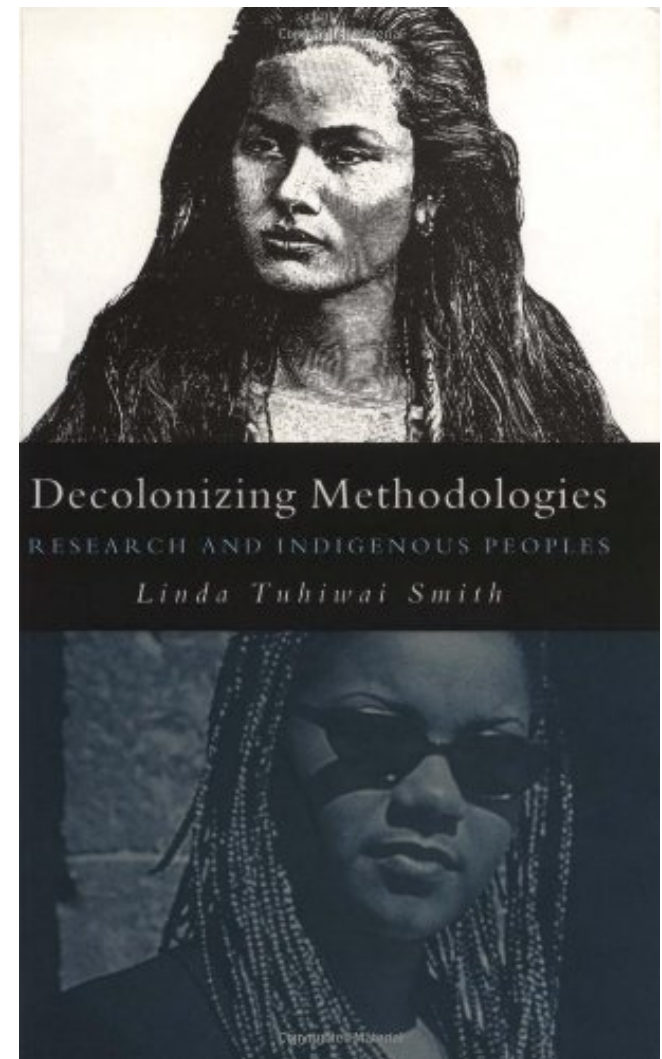
“Sometimes what can happen is the the passing of critical environmental issues from Federal agency to agency, or state to county, etc.”

The past, present and future...

- Traditional Knowledge
 - Use knowledge and skills that have been part of our communities for many generations
- Indigenous values
 - Understand what's important to indigenous communities
 - Make sure our values are reflected in decision-making
 - Recognize that many of the policies are not reflective of who we are, and begin indigenizing policies

Indigenous Research Methodologies

The word itself “research” is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary. When mentioned in many indigenous contexts, it stirs up silence, it conjures up bad memories, it raises a smile that is knowing and distrustful... The ways in which scientific research is implicated in the worst excesses of colonialism remains a powerful remembered history for many of the world’s colonised peoples (Smith, 1999).



My Doctoral Dissertation

- Systematically analyzes indigenous water values using Structured Decision Making
- Two case studies with a focus group in the SW and one in the PNW

“This makes it hard to live in the environment like our ancestors did.”



A close-up photograph of a hand holding an open oyster shell. Inside the shell, a large, smooth, light-colored pearl is visible. The background is a blurred field of many other oyster shells, suggesting a beach or a shell collection. The text "Thank you!" and "Contact: clarita@uw.edu" is overlaid on the image.

Thank you!

Contact: clarita@uw.edu