



## **SYNOPSIS**

Indigenous communities around the world and in the U.S. resist threats to their sacred places—the original protected lands—in a growing movement to defend human rights and restore the environment.

In this four-part documentary series, native people share ecological wisdom and spiritual reverence while battling a utilitarian view of land in the form of government megaprojects, consumer culture, and resource extraction as well as competing religions and climate change.

Narrated by Graham Greene, with the voices of Tantoo Cardinal and Q'orianka Kilcher, the series exposes threats to native peoples' health, livelihood, and cultural survival in eight communities around the world. Rare verité scenes of tribal life allow indigenous people to tell their own stories—and confront us with the ethical consequences of our culture of consumption.

## STANDING ON SACRED GROUND EPISODES



*Pilgrims and Tourists*. Indigenous shamans of the Altai Republic, Russia (southern Siberia), and a northern California tribe find common ground resisting government megaprojects.

**Profit and Loss.** From Papua New Guinea to the tar sands of Alberta, Canada, native people fight the loss of land, water and health to mining and gas industries.





*Fire and Ice*. From the Gamo Highlands of Ethiopia to the Andes of Peru, indigenous communities protect their sacred lands from development, competing religions and climate change.

*Islands of Sanctuary*. Aboriginal Australians and Native Hawaiians reclaim land and resist the erosion of culture and the environment.





# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT BY CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD



Thirty-five years ago, listening to Hopi elders, I first understood the message of a chorus of indigenous voices around the world: that the environmental crisis is a spiritual crisis—the absence of a conscious connection to land and water inevitably leads to violence and threatens all life. Each film I have produced explores this environmental-spiritual crisis, and reveals the clash between proponents of a utilitarian view of private property and communities that bear responsibility for sacred land. The films spark dialogue about western culture's relationship to nature and the growing global yearning to reconcile with native people and the earth.

In the spring of 2005, I was invited to screen my last film, *In the Light of Reverence*, in Tokyo at a UNESCO conference on sacred sites, biodiversity and cultural landscapes. Hundreds of people attended and I was amazed at the rapidly growing international interest in this issue, and the sense of urgency

about threats to sacred places around the world. Indigenous people are asserting their land rights on every continent and it became clear to me that these stories need to be documented on film—now.

MY GOAL IS TO ARTFULLY AND ACCURATELY TELL STORIES OF INDIGENOUS PEOPLES' RESISTANCE TO THE DESTRUCTION OF SACRED PLACES, AND TO USE THIS TO INFORM, INSPIRE, AND GIVE STRENGTH AND HOPE TO OTHERS.

The *Standing on Sacred Ground* film series is simultaneously an amazing opportunity and a heart-breaking challenge. It is

the culmination of seven years of preparation, and is only possible because of the good will and trust generated by past works and long-standing relationships. My goal is to artfully and accurately tell stories of indigenous peoples' resistance to the destruction of sacred places, and to use this to inform, inspire, and give strength and hope to others. These stories of conflict and triumph are doorways that transform our perception. It is a privilege to be granted access to these communities and their spiritual practices, and we are aware of the great responsibility we have, to both our subjects and our audience, to produce meaningful films that aid traditional cultures in their struggles.

Support for indigenous worldviews and values—and protection of sacred places—strengthens the earth's biological and cultural diversity. This makes the world a healthier and more vibrant place. A sustained international effort is already transforming public awareness of issues surrounding sacred natural sites. Cultures are banding together to defend against attacks on their resources and their past—and our common future. The time for this transformative film series has arrived.

After I returned home from my visit to Japan, a Hopi friend, Leonard Selestewa, and his wife and daughter visited my family in the Santa Cruz Mountains of California. We took them to see the towering redwoods near our home. Standing by a clear stream in the green forest, the desert-dwelling corn farmers experienced the tall trees' magic. The place brought back a memory for Leonard: "My grandfather told me: 'To be Hopi, your prayers have to encompass the entire world.""

Preserving what we love at home and beyond has never been a greater challenge. Listening to native people and learning from them has never been more crucial. They have preserved the ancient wisdom that we are part of nature, not separate, and that what happens to nature happens to us. Indigenous communities nurture the values that can sustain us in the future and help keep the earth alive.



## ABOUT THE SACRED LAND FILM PROJECT

Standing on Sacred Ground was produced by the Sacred Land Film Project, a project of Earth Island Institute since 1984. To deepen public understanding of sacred places, indigenous cultures and environmental justice, the Film Project produces a variety of media and educational materials—films, videos, DVDs, articles, photographs, school curricula and other materials. The Film Project uses journalism, organizing and activism to rekindle reverence for land, increase respect for cultural diversity, stimulate dialogue about connections between nature and culture, and protect sacred lands and diverse spiritual practices. Our last film, *In the Light of Reverence*, continues to be widely screened, and used in schools and universities.

## STANDING ON SACRED GROUND PRODUCTION CREW

Christopher (Toby) McLeod, Producer/Director. Toby McLeod circled the globe for five years filming the Standing on Sacred Ground series. McLeod founded the Sacred Land Film Project in 1984 to make high-impact documentary films relevant to indigenous communities and modern audiences. He produced and directed In the Light of Reverence (P.O.V., 2001) and other award-winning documentary films: The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?, Downwind/Downstream, and NOVA: Poison in the Rockies. Awards include the Council on Foundation's Henry Hampton Award, the John de Graaf Environmental Filmmaking Award, a Guggenheim Fellowship for filmmaking and a Student Academy Award in 1983. His first film was The Cracking of Glen Canyon Damn—with Edward Abbey and Earth First! McLeod holds a master's degree from U.C. Berkeley's Graduate School of Journalism and a B.A. in American History from Yale.

Jessica Abbe, Writer and Co-Producer. Co-produced *Angle of Inspiration*, a 2004 PBS documentary about the effect on the small town of Redding, California, of a startling new bridge by world-renowned architect Santiago Calatrava. Writing credits include *Power Paths* (2008), about the Native American movement toward renewable energy development, and *In the Light of Reverence*. Wrote and produced documentaries on AIDS and San Francisco history. Helped start *Bay Area Backroads*, the highest-rated local program during her tenure as producer, and worked for two years with director Francis Ford Coppola and author Diane Johnson on a screenplay about the search for a cure for AIDS. Holds a B.F.A. in dramatic arts from New York University, and a master's degree in journalism from U.C. Berkeley.

Jennifer Huang, Writer and Co-Producer. Documentary filmmaker in San Francisco for 15 years. At Lucasfilm, wrote and produced *Harlem's Hellfighters: Black Soldiers of World War I*, and contributed to nine other documentary films, with topics ranging from Gertrude Bell to Dracula, from Tin Pan Alley to the Congo. Worked as a writer, field producer and associate producer on productions for PBS, Travel Channel, HGTV, TNT and AZN TV, and co-founded *Hyphen*, an Asian American news and culture magazine. Holds a B.A. in Social Welfare and Ethnography through Cinema from U.C. Berkeley.

Marta Wohl, Editor (*Profit and Loss, Fire and Ice*). Freelance film/video editor with 20 years experience in editing and producing documentary, educational, corporate and broadcast film and video. Recent film credits include *Irena Sendler: In the Name of Their Mothers* (2011), *Claiming the Title: Gay Olympics on Trial* (2009), *Don't Know, We'll See: The Life and Work of Karen Karnes* (2008), *Trading Bows and Arrows for Laptops* (2008), and *Without a Net* (2008). Spent four years as the offline editor in the documentary unit at JAK Films, the production arm of Lucasfilm, editing 25 of the 94 companion educational documentaries profiling historical figures of the early 20th century that surfaced in the 44 episodes of *The Adventures of Young Indiana Jones* television series.



Quinn Costello, Editor (*Pilgrims and Tourists*, *Islands of Sanctuary*). Freelance editor and post production supervisor from the Bay Area who has worked on a wide variety of documentaries with an emphasis on environmentalism, social activism and issues pertaining to indigenous communities around the world. His work has been seen on PBS, Sundance Channel and Learning Channel. Post Production Supervisor credits include *American Masters—Sam Cooke: Crossing Over*. Editing credits include *Mustang—Journey of Transformation* and *Global Focus: The New Environmentalists*.

**Andrew Black**, **Videographer**. Work includes documentary and feature films released theatrically and broadcast on PBS, BBC, Learning Channel, Channel 4, Sundance Channel, Discovery Channel, IFC and others. Worked with Michael Moore on *Fahrenheit 911* and *Sicko*. Shot *The Weather Underground* by Sam Green, which was nominated for an Academy Award, Documentary Feature category. Annually shoots *Global Focus*, a PBS series that features environmentalists from around the world.

**Will Parrinello, Videographer.** Shot and edited *In the Light of Reverence*. He was director of photography for the Academy Award-nominated *Tell the Truth and Run: George Seldes and the American Press* and produced *Emile Norman: By His Own Design, Mustang—Journey of Transformation, Dreaming of Tibet, on Tibetan refugees*, and *Little Italy*, on Italian-American culture. He produces segments for films about about the winners of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.

**Vicente Franco, Videographer.** A producer and cinematographer, he was a 2003 Oscar nominee for Best Documentary a for *Daughter from Danang*, winner of the 2002 Sundance Grand Jury Prize. His credits include the Academy Award nominated documentaries *Freedom on My Mind* (2004), and *The Most Dangerous Man in America* (2010), the POV specials *Discovering Dominga* and *Thirst*, and the PBS *Latin Music USA*, *In Search of Law and Order* and *Making Peace*. He shot *Botany of Desire*, and his latest production was *Summer of Love*, for PBS American Experience the about the San Francisco Haight Ashbury hippie community in 1967.

**David Wendlinger, Sound Recordist.** Worked on a range of projects worldwide for the BBC, Google, Discovery and National Geographic, among others. Since 2006, worked on short films about the winners of the prestigious Goldman Environmental Prize.

**Erin Lee, Associate Producer/Assistant Editor**. Worked in post-production for several films on Caribbean culture and provided support on location for large-scale music festivals on the islands. Currently produces videos for the San Francisco School of Bartending, SF Mixology and the Evolutionary Healing Institute in Miami.

Marlo McKenzie, Associate Producer—New Media. Writer and filmmaker who has worked in theater in Germany, helped to start a video production company that trains homeless youth in Australia. Holds a M.F.A from the College of Fine Arts in Sydney, Australia, where she produced a 30-minute documentary called what brand are you?—reconnoitering happiness, and holds a B.A. in telecommunications and digital media arts from Michigan State University.



## **SCREENING HISTORY**

Church of the Red Rocks, Sedona, AZ
Sedona Public Library, Sedona, AZ
Visionfest LA, Pasadena Center for the Arts
In the Tar Sands of Utah, Vernal, UT
Arizona State University Human Rights Film Festival,
Tempe, AZ
Paradigm Shifts Music and Film Festival

Paradigm Shifts Music and Film Festival, New York

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH
Unitarian Universalist Church of Greater Lansing
Zuni Cultural Resources Advisory Team,
Zuni Pueblo

Bacabi Community Center, Bacabi village, Hopi Reservation International House, UC Berkeley

San Francisco State University Sacred Land Symposium

International Funders for Indigenous Peoples — World Summit on Indigenous Philanthropy, New York City

Honolulu Museum of Art, Doris Duke Theatre University of Hawai`i on the Big Island University of Hawai`i at Manoa's Dai Ho Chun Distinguished Lecturer Series Visions of the Wild, Vallejo, California Water, Land and Cultural Survival: Updates on

Ongoing Indigenous Struggles in California, San Francisco, California

Cowichan Aboriginal Festival of Film & Art Duncan, BC Berkeley Public Library, Berkeley, California Women's International League for Peace and Freedom

Church Divinity School of the Pacific Berkeley, California University of California, Berkeley David Brower Center, Berkeley, California Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian, Environmental Film Festival in the Nation's Capital

Wesleyan University Symposium, Middletown, Conn.

Benefit

Bellingham Human Rights Film Festival, Bellingham Tofino Film Festival, Tofino, British Columbia Wild & Scenic Film Festival, Nevada City, California American Indian Film Festival, San Francisco, Calif. Bioneers Conference, San Rafael, California Roxie Theater, San Francisco, California David Brower Center, Berkeley, California Mill Valley Film Festival, Mill Valley, California Cascade Theatre, Redding, California Multimedia Art Museum, Moscow, Russia Uch Enmek Mountain, Altai, Russia



# **FILM FESTIVALS**













# **AWARDS**

John de Graaf Environmental Filmmaking Award for *Standing on Sacred Ground* and for lifetime achievement in documentary film, Wild and Scenic Film Festival, 2014

Best Documentary Feature Award, Native American Film Festival, 2013



## **CREDITS AND KEY INTERVIEWS**

### ALL EPISODES

**Christopher McLeod**, Producer/Director **Graham Greene (Oneida)**, Narrator

## **Key Interviews**

**Satish Kumar,** Indian author and philosopher

Winona LaDuke, Anishinaabe activist Barry Lopez, Author Oren Lyons, Onondaga Chief

### **PILGRIMS AND TOURISTS**

Jessica Abbe, Writer and Co-Producer
Quinn Costello, Editor
Tantoo Cardinal, Storyteller
Jennifer Huang, Co-Producer
Erin Lee, Associate Producer
Marlo McKenzie, Associate Producer
Ashley Tindall, Associate Producer
Will Parrinello, Director of Photography
Andrew Black, Director of Photography
David Wendlinger, Sound
Jon Herbst, Composer

#### **Altai Production Crew**

Chagat Almashev, Field Producer

## **Key Interviews**

**Caleen Sisk**, Winnemem Wintu Chief **Danil Mamyev**, Founder of Uch Enmek Nature Park, Altai, Russia

#### Profit and Loss

Jennifer Huang, Writer and Co-Producer Marta Wohl, Editor
Jessica Abbe, Co-Producer
Erin Lee, Associate Producer
Marlo McKenzie, Associate Producer
Ashley Tindall, Associate Producer
Andrew Black, Director of Photography
David Wendlinger, Sound
Jon Herbst, Composer

# **Key Interviews**

John Chitoa, Bismark Ramu Group Rosa Koian, Bismark Ramu Group Mike Mercredi, Activist Clayton Thomas-Muller, Activist Dr. John O'Connor, Physician Dr. David Schindler, Ecologist

#### FIRE AND ICE

Jennifer Huang, Writer and Co-Producer
Marta Wohl, Editor
Q'orianka Kilcher, Storyteller
Jessica Abbe, Co-Producer
Erin Lee, Associate Producer
Marlo McKenzie, Associate Producer
Ashley Tindall, Associate Producer
Andrew Black, Director of Photography
Christopher McLeod, Director of Photography
Vicente Franco, Director of Photography
David Wendlinger, Sound
Wilfredo Ilizarbe, Sound
Tom Disher, Composer

## **Key Interviews**

Makko Wareo, "The father of Milo Mountain," Ethiopia Ben Orlove, Anthropologist and glaciologist Mohamed Ge'as, Minister of Culture and Tourism, Ethiopia Zerihun Woldu, Ecology Professor, Ethiopia



# **CREDITS AND KEY INTERVIEWS (CONTINUED)**

## **ISLANDS OF SANCTUARY**

Jessica Abbe, Writer and Co-Producer

Quinn Costello, Editor

Rhoda Roberts, Storyteller

Luana Busby-Neff, Storyteller

Jennifer Huang, Co-Producer

Erin Lee, Associate Producer

Marlo McKenzie, Associate Producer

Ashley Tindall, Associate Producer

Will Parrinello, Director of Photography

Andrew Black, Director of Photography

David Wendlinger, Sound

Stefan Smith, Composer

Charles Johnson, Composer

Kawika Kahiapo, Composer

## **Hawaii Production Crew**

Matt Yamashita, Field Producer

Derek Kekaulike Mar, Logistical

Coordinator

Joshua Kawika Pastrana, Production

**Assistant** 

## **Australia Production Crew**

Charles Roche, Field Producer

## **Key Interviews**

Bardayal Nadjamerrek, Artist and

Aboriginal leader, Australia (deceased)

Malarndirri McCarthy, Aboriginal

Parliament member, Australia

**Brendan Mackey**, Australian scientist

Davianna McGregor, History professor,

Univ. of Hawaii

Noa Emmett Aluli, Physician and

Kaho`olawe activist

Marcia Langton, Chair of Indigenous

Studies, University of Melbourne

Patrick Dodson, Ecotrust Australia



## **TESTIMONIALS AND REVIEWS**

## Robert Redford, Actor, Director

Beautifully illuminates indigenous peoples' resistance to environmental devastation and their determination to protect our common future.

## Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Grim, Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology

Standing on Sacred Ground is a tour de force! This is one of the most powerful documentary series ever made on indigenous peoples and their resistance to environmental exploitation. Toby McLeod has woven stories of first nations peoples' resilience amidst images of searing beauty and unimagined destruction. An awakening call indeed that should be heard around the world.

## Bill McKibben, Author; Activist; Professor, Middlebury College

Some of the finest minds on the planet are featured in this documentary—and they're talking about the biggest problems our planet has ever faced!

# Dr. Leslie E. Sponsel, Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of Hawaii at Manoa; Author, *Spiritual Ecology: A Quiet Revolution*

This monumental film series is superb in every respect, including the cases, indigenous and other authorities interviewed, historical and political contextualization, and beautiful photography. The films document the fact that throughout the world many sacred places as arenas of peace, power, and reverence for indigenous cultures and their religion and identity are under attack, recklessly transforming them into a focus of conflict, power struggles, desecration, and the violation of human rights. Underlying the cases depicted is a clash of competing spiritual and materialistic worldviews, values, attitudes, and uses of nature.

The films will prove to be of special interest to a wide range of scientific and academic disciplines, government and NGO personnel, and the general public. The series is most relevant for instructors and students in universities, colleges, and high schools for a diversity of subjects such as anthropology, ecology, economic development, environmental studies, globalization, government, history, human rights, indigenous studies, law, social justice, sociology, political science, and religion.

# Peter Nabokov, Anthropologist; Professor, UCLA; Author, Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places

Nothing like this riveting series of four desperately-urgent films about the fate of our planet has ever been seen on television. Patiently, lucidly and devastatingly, director Toby McLeod and his team have traveled the globe and painstakingly tracked eight stories of struggles by indigenous peoples to save the ancestral landscapes that have given them sustenance and spiritual anchoring for thousands of years. *Standing on Sacred Ground* is a magnificent, one-of-a-kind achievement.



# **TESTIMONIALS AND REVIEWS (CONTINUED)**

With astonishing reportorial skill and scenes of heart-crushing reality, McLeod's years of follow-through allow us to witness at first hand the actual confrontations between long-established native enclaves and the overwhelming odds against them and their ancient ways of life—mammoth dams that poison rivers, immense mining operations that contaminate habitats, animals and humans alike, huge land takeovers for squeezing non-renewable oil and gas that leave dead zones in their wake. In each case these David and Goliath struggles are personified by dramatic confrontations between tribespeople and villagers and the bureaucrats and developers attempting to seize their sacred lands, which are hallowed by a host of pre-Christian belief-systems and worldviews.

In each profile we witness stories that are stand-ins for hundreds if not thousands of similar ecological nightmares that are dooming our planet. Nor are these narratives from Siberia, Peru, Papua New Guinea, Ethiopia and elsewhere nostalgic studies of bygone worldviews. The calm knowledge, profound despair yet persistent resilience exhibited by the lonely grassroots fighters for environmental justice who are the spokespeople in these accounts exemplify the vital point made by one of the film's commentators, prize-winning author Barry Lopez: they are as much concerned about the future of the planet at large as they are about being proper custodians of their separate spiritual heritages. Each is a miner's canary whose mournful but militant cry we fail to heed at our peril.

Containing face-offs at strategic sites, incontrovertible visual documentation of environmental wastelands, poignant voices of clarity and appeal that speak with the grave, quiet wisdom of cultures that have survived centuries of crusades to convert, exterminate, or assimilate them—these four dramatic films keep us on the edge of our seat and at the edge of tears. They absolutely must be seen by every citizen on earth.

Dr. Melissa K. Nelson (Turtle Mountain Chippewa), Associate Professor of American Indian Studies, San Francisco State University; President, Cultural Conservancy; Author, *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* 

Standing on Sacred Ground is an extraordinary film series highlighting the struggles, losses and strengths of indigenous peoples working today to protect their sacred places in an industrialized world. Through beautifully filmed case studies where indigenous leaders speak for themselves, this series illustrates how history, law, science and religion converge in the indigenous world, and how critical these struggles are for the well-being of the planet as a whole.

## Rose Aguilar, host of KALW Radio's "Your Call"

You should check out these incredible films. They do a great job of telling the stories we rarely hear about the indigenous people who are standing up to environmental degradation and multinational gas, oil and mining companies. They're also beautifully shot.

San Francisco Chronicle

Epic



## MAJOR FUNDING PROVIDED BY

The Christensen Fund Robert Friede Kalliopeia Foundation **Grousbeck Family Fund** Silicon Valley Community Foundation Newman's Own Foundation Corporation for Public Broadcasting Paula R. & William McLeod Weeden Foundation Paula & James S. Crown Compton Foundation Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation Work-in-Progress Fund, The Tides Foundation George N. Appell Annenberg Foundation Sundance Documentary Fund Charles Engelhard Foundation Robert H. and Elizabeth Fergus Foundation Nu Lambda Trust Berkeley FILM Foundation Louise Bowman Fleishhacker Foundation LEF Foundation Polly & Randy Cherner Theodosia H. Ferguson

And Many Individual Donors

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For a complete list of funders who supported the Sacred Land Film Project of Earth Island Institute with tax-deductible donations over the past ten years, please send a written request to Sacred Land Film Project, 2150 Allston Way, Suite 440, Berkeley CA 94704.



## **CONTACTS AND RESOURCES**

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For production stills, contact Callie Shanafelt: (510) 859-9190, cs@sacredland.org

DVD distributor: Bullfrog Films P.O. Box 149 Oley, PA 19547

Phone: (800) 543-3764 or (610) 779-8226

Fax: (610) 370-1978

Email: video@bullfrogfilms.com

http://www.bullfrogfilms.com/catalog/ssg.html

## **WEBLINKS**

Sacred Land Film Project Website, StandingOnSacredGround.org

Sacred Land History Timeline, <a href="StandingOnSacredGround.org/timeline">StandingOnSacredGround.org/timeline</a>

Standing on Sacred Ground Teacher's Guide, <a href="StandingOnSacredGround.org/teach">StandingOnSacredGround.org/teach</a>

Standing on Sacred Ground Home Discussion Guides, <a href="http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/discussion">http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/discussion</a> Standing on Sacred Ground Trailer (TRT: 2 minutes), <a href="http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/film-series/trailer">http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/film-series/trailer</a>

Standing on Sacred Ground Eight Sample Scenes, <a href="http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/sample-scenes">http://StandingOnSacredGround.org/sample-scenes</a> Sacred Site Reports (more than 100 in-depth sacred site reports),

http://www.SacredLand.org/home/resources/sacred-lands-interactive-map/

YouTube Sacred Land Film Channel, <a href="https://www.youtube.com/user/sacredlandfilm">https://www.youtube.com/user/sacredlandfilm</a>

Vimeo Links to the Films — available upon request

Sacred Ground iPhone App: Search for "Sacred Ground" in the iPhone App Store, choose Makerlab app and download our free Mato Tipila/Devils Tower National Monument app