

# Sacred Land Film Project

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Broadcast Premiere of Four-Part Film Series, *STANDING ON SACRED GROUND*, Timed with Asian-Pacific American Month**

*Debuts on WORLD Channel Beginning Sunday, May 17 at 9:00 PM (ET)  
Through Sunday, June 7 (check local listings)*

Berkeley, CA — ***Standing on Sacred Ground***, a four-part documentary series, eight years in the making, on Indigenous struggles over sacred sites, enjoys its national broadcast premiere on the WORLD Channel, Sunday, May 17 at 9:00 PM (ET) (*check local listings*). The next three episodes will run weekly through June 7, 2015. In addition, public television stations nationwide will have access to the programming via the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA), which has also accepted the series for broadcast distribution beginning in April 2015. The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television's nonfiction, news and documentary programming to U.S. audiences through local public television stations and streaming online. WORLD reached 35 million unique viewers 18+ last year.

*Standing on Sacred Ground*, produced by the Sacred Land Film Project, shares stories from eight Indigenous communities around the globe resisting threats to lands they consider sacred in a growing movement to defend human rights, protect culture and restore the environment. In the series, Native people share ecological wisdom and spiritual reverence while battling government megaprojects, consumer culture, competing religions, resource extraction and climate change.

In episode one, ***Pilgrims and Tourists***, Indigenous shamans of the Altai Republic of Russia and a northern California tribe find common ground resisting government projects: Shasta Dam and a Gazprom pipeline. In episode two, ***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 oil industries. In episode three, ***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. In the final episode ***Islands of Sanctuary***, Aboriginal Australians and Native Hawaiians reclaim land and resist the erosion of culture and environment.

"Public television viewers will now have the opportunity to access global perspectives from a chorus of Indigenous voices defending against attacks on their resources, and on the future we share," said producer and director, Christopher "Toby" McLeod. "We are proud to partner with The WORLD Channel, NETA, Vision Maker Media and Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC),

who are constantly striving to provide public television stations with diverse, enlightening programming for their audiences.”

The films are now available for public television stations to schedule in time for broadcasts timed around Earth Day on April 22, 2015. The WORLD Channel premiere of episode one of ***Standing on Sacred Ground*** on May 17 coincides with Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month (May).

“We know having these films available to public television stations in May, timed with Asian-Pacific American Heritage Month, will allow local stations to provide their viewers with important content that focuses on the issues facing many Native cultures in their areas,” notes Leanne K. Ferrer, Executive Director of Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC). “We also understand some stations may choose to hold some or all of the films to air in November during Native American Heritage Month.”

The film series has screened to great acclaim around the world since its release at the Mill Valley Film Festival in October 2013. It received the Best Documentary Feature Award at the Native American Film Festival 2013 and director Toby McLeod received the John de Graaf Environmental Filmmaking Award at the Wild & Scenic Film Festival 2014. The Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian screened the series last year as part of the U.S. Environmental Film Festival, and the films were featured at the World Parks Congress in Sydney, Australia, last November. The films have also been screening in the Altai Republic, Moscow, Peru and Papua New Guinea.

Praise for **STANDING ON SACRED GROUND**:

*“Beautifully illuminates Indigenous peoples’ resistance to environmental devastation and their determination to protect our common future.”* —Robert Redford

*“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!”* —Bill McKibben

In addition to the WORLD Channel premiere in May, NETA has distributed ***Standing on Sacred Ground*** to the full public broadcasting system for April 2015. To find out more about the series, visit [www.StandingOnSacredGround.org](http://www.StandingOnSacredGround.org).

**About the Partners:**

*Standing on Sacred Ground* is a co-production of Sacred Land Film Project and Pacific Islanders in Communications (PIC) in association with Vision Maker Media (VMM), with funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

**About Pacific Islanders in Communications:**

The mission of Pacific Islanders in Communications is to support, advance, and develop Pacific Island media content and talent that results in a deeper understanding and appreciation of Pacific Island history, culture and contemporary challenges. Established in Honolulu in 1991 as a national nonprofit media arts corporation, PIC is a member of the National Minority Consortia, which collectively addresses the need for programming that reflects America's growing ethnic and cultural diversity. Primary funding for PIC and the Consortia is provided through an annual grant from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. Visit [www.piccom.org](http://www.piccom.org) for additional information.

**About Vision Maker Media:**

Vision Maker Media shares Native stories with the world that represent the cultures, experiences, and values of American Indians and Alaska Natives. Founded in 1977, Vision Maker Media, a nonprofit 501(c)(3) which receives major funding from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, nurtures creativity for development of new projects, partnerships and funding. Vision Maker Media is the premier source for quality Native American and Pacific Islander educational and home videos. All aspects of our programs encourage the involvement of young people to learn more about careers in the media—to be the next generation of storytellers. Located at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, we offer student employment and internships. For more information, visit [www.visionmakermedia.org](http://www.visionmakermedia.org).

**About the National Educational Telecommunications Association (NETA):**

NETA is a professional association that serves Public Television licensees and educational entities in all 50 states, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico. Since 1967, our reason for existing is to connect Public Television people and ideas, by providing quality programming, educational resources, professional development, management support, and national representation. For more information, visit [www.netaonline.org](http://www.netaonline.org).

**About the Sacred Land Film Project:**

For 30 years, the Sacred Land Film Project has produced documentaries, journalism and educational materials—films, DVDs, articles, photographs, school curricula and website content—to deepen public understanding of Indigenous cultures and environmental issues. Our 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor is the nonprofit Earth Island Institute.

**About 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 Dam – 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.

**About The WORLD Channel:**

The WORLD Channel delivers the best of public television's nonfiction, news and documentary programming to US audiences through local public television stations and streaming online at [worldchannel.org](http://worldchannel.org). WORLD reached 35 million unique viewers 18+ last year (55% adults 18-49) and over-indexes in key diversity demographics. Online, the WORLD Channel expands on broadcast topics and fuels dialogue across social media, providing opportunities for broad and diverse audience interaction. (Source: *Nielsen Local Buyer Reach Scorecard 01/13-12/13*) WORLD is programmed by WGBH/Boston, in partnership with American Public Television and WNET/New York, and in association with the American Public Television and National Educational Telecommunications Association. Funding for the WORLD Channel is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Ford Foundation. Additional funding for "America ReFramed" is provided by the MacArthur Foundation.

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