

Sacred Land Film Project

*STANDING ON
SACRED GROUND*

Teacher's Guide

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and bullfrogfilms.com/guides/ssgguide.pdf

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Standing on Sacred Ground *film transcripts* are available to download from our website.



About the Project

Standing on Sacred Ground is a four-part documentary film series about indigenous people around the world facing threats to land they consider sacred. Each episode is 55 minutes long and each contains stories of two native cultures.

Director's Statement

Thirty years ago, listening to Hopi elders, I first heard the message: The environmental crisis is a spiritual crisis. The absence of a conscious connection to land and water inevitably leads to violence toward the Earth, and threatens all life. It is a message I have heard since from a chorus of indigenous voices around the world, as diverse native cultures defend against attacks on their resources and on our common future. My films explore this environmental-spiritual crisis, and reveal the clash between proponents of a utilitarian view of land as property and traditional communities that view land stewardship as a sacred responsibility. *Standing on Sacred Ground* sparks dialogue about western culture's relationship to nature and the growing global yearning to reconcile with aboriginal people. Internationally, efforts are already transforming public awareness of sacred natural sites and how revered landscapes strengthen biological and cultural diversity. The people in these documentaries have profoundly changed my life and worldview. Please join me in discussing the values, themes, lessons and issues they raise in the films. I look forward to hearing from you—and I hope you find the films to be inspiring teaching tools. —CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD



Narrative Synopses

EPISODE ONE: *Pilgrims and Tourists*

In the Russian Republic of Altai, traditional native people create their own mountain parks to rein in tourism and resist a gas pipeline that would cut through a World Heritage Site. In northern California, Winnemem Wintu girls grind herbs on a medicine rock as elders protest U.S. government plans to enlarge one of the West's biggest dams and forever submerge this touchstone of the tribe.

EPISODE TWO: *Profit and Loss*

Villagers in Papua New Guinea resist forced relocation and battle a nickel mine dumping waste into the sea. In Canada, First Nations people are divided by a tar sands industry that provides economic growth but destroys traditional hunting and fishing grounds and endangers peoples' health.

EPISODE THREE: *Fire and Ice*

In the Gamo Highlands of Ethiopia, elders defend traditional taboos that protect biodiversity and an ancient culture as Christian fundamentalists disrupt their rituals. In the Andes of Peru, Q'eros farmers are forced to adapt to a warming climate that threatens food crops, glacial water and a way of life based on reverence for mountain spirits.

EPISODE FOUR: *Islands of Sanctuary*

Aboriginal Australians reclaim indigenous protected areas and battle government collusion with an international mining corporation over a sacred river. Native Hawaiians restore the island of Kaho'olawe, severely damaged after 50 years of use as a military bombing range.

How to Use This Guide

The Teacher's Guide for *Standing on Sacred Ground* is designed for high school classrooms and can be used in many subject areas, particularly social sciences and environmental studies. You will find many of the sections also appropriate for use in middle school and university settings. This guide contains discussion questions and activities to help you use the films productively before or after students watch clips from them. In this guide, each episode is

SUBJECT AREAS

Activism
American Studies
Anthropology
Asian Studies
Australia
Business Practices
Canadian Studies
Capitalism
Climate Change/Global Warming
Developing World
Environment
Environmental Ethics
Environmental Justice
Geography
Global Issues
Health
Human Rights
Humanities
Indigenous Peoples
Leadership
Mining
Native Americans
Pacific Studies
Pollution
Recreation
Religion
Science
Technology
Society
Sociology
Toxic Chemicals

linked to six key themes. We understand it may not be practical to use all four hours of the film series, and we encourage you to select and adapt the film stories and activities to your classroom's needs. Note that the DVDs allow you to select one location if all you have is 30 minutes and you want to focus on one place and one culture.

Many of the questions, activities and writing assignments in this guide encourage viewers of *Standing on Sacred Ground* to reflect on complex situations, not to reach definitive answers. Previewing the films will help you decide which issues and themes you want to raise in your classroom.

Getting Started

To get started, and help you decide which film episode will be most relevant for your classroom, we have posted eight [90-second film clips](#) on our website to give you a taste of each of the eight stories. You may also choose to view [transcripts of the four films](#). The series is designed to be viewed from start to finish, but each film stands alone. You can watch any individual film, or any 30-minute single location segment in any order.

How This Guide is Organized

- ☼ The guide begins with introductory activities that may be used with any part of the series. We suggest using these discussion questions before showing a film, especially as a way to prepare your class for discussion of religious and spiritual topics.
- ☼ There are four sections in the guide, one for each film. Each section contains a set of learning objectives and a viewing guide with basic comprehension questions, recommended for high school classes.
- ☼ Questions and activities for each film are organized by theme. Select the topics that you want to focus on in your classroom rather than moving through each topic in sequence.
- ☼ You will find suggested activities and film clips alongside discussion prompts that can be used to enhance or supplement your in-class discussions of the film's content.

- ☼ The guide ends with concluding activities that may be taught with any part of the series. You might want to use these to inspire reflection after viewing and discussing the films.

An ideal way to use the four films is to show them through an entire semester or school year, returning to themes and questions, and carrying the reflection and discussion over months in relation to other lessons, history, books, readings, stories, activities and field trips. You may choose to conclude the semester or school year with a culminating project or service-learning experience that draws on the film's central themes.

Relevant Common Core Standards

The discussion prompts and activities found in the *Standing on Sacred Ground* Teacher's Guide are fully aligned with the English Language Arts (ELA) Common Core State Standards. In the pages of this guide, you will find many opportunities to engage your students in thoughtful discussion, critical thinking, writing, research and service learning opportunities.

A note about Common Core's language: You will notice that many of the standards ask students to consider claims made by the author or the speaker. Depending on how you choose to interpret the standard, you may view the filmmaker and the people interviewed in the films as authors and speakers.



Relevant Common Core Standards

Reading – Informational Texts; Grades 9-10; 3 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.9-10.3)

Analyze how the author unfolds an analysis or series of ideas or events, including the order in which the points are made, how they are introduced and developed, and the connections that are drawn between them.

Writing; Grades 9-10; 1.B (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.1.B)

Develop claim(s) and counterclaims fairly, supplying data and evidence for each while pointing out the strengths and limitations of both claim(s) and counterclaims in a discipline-appropriate form and in a manner that anticipates the audience's knowledge level and concerns.

Writing; Grades 9-10; 7; Grades 11-12; 7 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.WHST.9-10.7, 11-12.7)

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question) or solve a problem; narrow or broaden the inquiry when appropriate; synthesize multiple sources on the subject, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 1.A (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.A)

Come to discussions prepared, having read and researched material under study; explicitly draw on that preparation by referring to evidence from texts and other research on the topic or issue to stimulate a thoughtful, well-reasoned exchange of ideas.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 1.D (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.1.D)

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives, summarize points of agreement and disagreement, and, when warranted, qualify or justify their own views and understanding and make new connections in light of the evidence and reasoning presented.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 3 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.3)

Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric, identifying any fallacious reasoning or exaggerated or distorted evidence.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 9-10; 4 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.9-10.4)

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance and style are appropriate to purpose, audience and task.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 11-12; 1.C (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.C)

Propel conversations by posing and responding to questions that probe reasoning and evidence; ensure a hearing for a full range of positions on a topic or issue; clarify, verify or challenge ideas and conclusions; and promote divergent and creative perspectives.

Speaking and Listening; Grades 11-12; 1.D (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.11-12.1.D)

Respond thoughtfully to diverse perspectives; synthesize comments, claims and evidence made on all

sides of an issue; resolve contradictions when possible; and determine what additional information or research is required to deepen the investigation or complete the task.

History/Social Studies; Grades 9-10; 6 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.9-10.6)

Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 2 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.2)

Determine the central ideas or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary that makes clear the relationships among the key details and ideas.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 6 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.6)

Evaluate authors' differing points of view on the same historical event or issue by assessing the authors' claims, reasoning and evidence.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 8 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.8)

Evaluate an author's premises, claims, and evidence by corroborating or challenging them with other information.

History/Social Studies; Grades 11-12; 9 (CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RH.11-12.9)

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.



INITIAL DISCUSSION QUESTIONS AND ACTIVITIES

You may choose to engage students with these discussion prompts before viewing the films.

Learning Objectives

- ☉ Understand what is meant by *sacred* and *sacred ground*.
- ☉ Reflect on your own attitudes about places that have been significant in your life.
- ☉ Explain why places have different meanings for different people.
- ☉ Describe what might make a place have special or spiritual value for someone.
- ☉ Identify influences on your own personal value set.

What is Sacred?

The following prompts and activities can help guide students' exploration of the concept of *sacred*.

- ☉ Have students write down their own definition of the word *sacred*. Share it with a partner and compare ideas. As part of a class discussion, ask students whether it is possible to have multiple definitions that are correct. Why are there different definitions in the class?
- ☉ Provide definitions of the word *sacred* (see box).

sacred

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
1: dedicated or set apart for the service or worship of a deity; devoted exclusively to one service or use (as of a person or purpose) **2:** worthy of religious veneration; entitled to reverence and respect. **3:** of or relating to religion: not secular or profane. **4:** highly valued and important.

Oxford English Dictionary
1: connected with God (or the gods) or dedicated to a religious purpose and so deserving veneration. **2:** (of writing or text) embodying the laws or doctrines of a religion. **3:** regarded with great respect and reverence by a particular religion, group, or individual.

In Episode 1, *Pilgrims and Tourists*, Onondaga Chief Oren Lyons says, “We use the word *sacred*. That’s not an Indian word. That comes from Europe. It comes from your churches. We have our own ways, and our own ways to say things. The way we use it is: a place to be respected.” (28:16)

- ☉ Does this broaden or change your understanding of the concept *sacred*? If so, how?

Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Do you have to believe in God or follow a particular religion to view something as sacred?
- ☉ Do people from different cultures have different interpretations of what is sacred? Why?

Other possible words to explore as a class include *divine*, *spiritual*, *holy*, *venerate*.

FILM CLIP

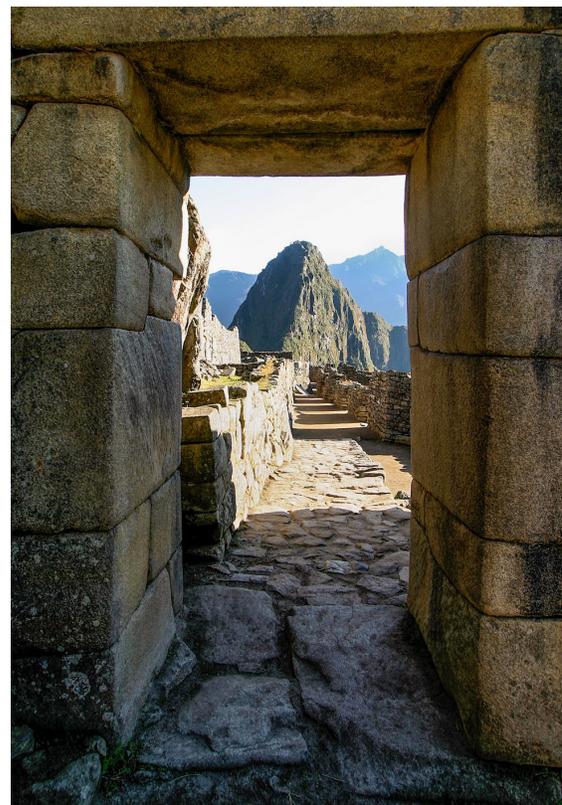
Show Satish Kumar’s explanation of *sacred* in the Special Features section on the *Pilgrims and Tourists* DVD, “What is a Sacred Place?” (4 minutes).

Have students write down their reactions and share with a partner. Did their understanding of *sacred* change?

What is Sacred Ground?

The following prompts and activities can help guide students’ exploration of the concept of *sacred ground*.

- ☉ Has a place or experience ever changed you? Ask students to discuss their own experiences, and guide the class to draw parallels and distinctions between each other’s experiences.
- ☉ What makes a place sacred? Encourage students to consider places they themselves might consider to be sacred: What do these places have in common? After watching segments of the film revisit this question and ask students what the sacred places depicted in the films have in common.



Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Are there places that you would be sad to see changed or destroyed? What does it feel like to be in these places?
- ☉ Are there places in nature that are special to you? How were you introduced to these places? How do you experience these places?
- ☉ Other possible words to explore as a class include *Holy Land*, *hallowed ground*, *consecrate*.
- ☉ What is the cultural purpose or function of a sacred place? What is its value?
- ☉ Places considered sacred could include a cemetery, a battlefield (consecrated or hallowed ground) or a place where a historic or legendary event took place. Examples include Gettysburg and 9/11 Ground Zero in Manhattan. (See box at right.) Why might people view these places as sacred? How is that different from a place in nature where one goes to pray or receive instruction—from nature, God or the spirit world (see box at right)? What is the difference between a place made sacred by human events that happened there as compared to a “place of power” respected because of human perceptions of what is divine?

ACTIVITY

Take-home assignment: Ask family members and friends to reflect on sacred places or experiences in their own lives. Add these reflections to the class’s understanding of what a sacred place is, its purpose and its value. Consider these questions:

- The world’s dominant religions all have sacred sites. It is unlikely that any country would consider putting something like a natural gas pipeline through the holy cities of Jerusalem or Mecca. Why is it different for the world’s indigenous peoples?
- Have you ever walked past a site of cultural or religious significance and not been allowed to enter because you were not a member of the culture or religion? How did that make you feel? To what extent do you think someone, or a group, has the right to determine which sites are off limits to other people?

Sacred natural site:

Areas of land or water having special spiritual significance to peoples and communities. Many traditional indigenous communities throughout the world have given a special status to natural sites such as mountains, volcanoes, rivers, lakes, springs, caves, forest groves, ponds, coastal waters and entire islands. Many of these have been set aside as sacred places. The reasons for their sacredness are diverse. They may be perceived as abodes of deities and ancestral spirits; as sources of healing water and medicinal plants; places of contact with the spiritual realm, or communication with a “more-than-human” reality; and sites of revelation and transformation. They are sometimes the burial grounds of ancestors, places of pilgrimage, the locale of a temple, shrine or church, or sites associated with special events, saints and spiritual leaders. (from *Sacred Natural Sites: Guidelines for Protected Area Managers*, Robert Wild and Christopher McLeod, Editors, 2008)

You can read more about how to define sacred sites at [What Is a Sacred Site?](#) on the Sacred Land Film Project’s website.



Exploring Values

Values are the basis for ethical action and they inform and guide us. Values vary across cultures and individuals and are usually aligned with belief systems including ethical or moral values, doctrinal/ideological (religious/political) values, social values and aesthetic values. Qualities or things we value might include spirituality, respect, honor, relationships, family, security, wealth, status, safety, experience, wisdom, language, humility, reciprocity, sharing and more. It is important for students to recognize that they all enter the classroom with different value sets, and none is more valid than another.

- ☉ How do you think your language, religion, gender, socioeconomic status and geographic location have influenced your values?
- ☉ What do you value most deeply?
- ☉ Indigenous values are often taught through story. The Onondaga people of New York were instructed long ago by a visitor called The Peacemaker to base all decisions on their effect seven generations in the future. Is this an effective way to teach a value—in this case: “always consider the future”?

ACTIVITY

Creating a values chart can help students better understand various belief systems and provides a basis for understanding and discussing conflicting values. When discussing value sets, it is critical not to suggest that some values are better than others.

Have students list and discuss:

- Some of their personal values
- The values of capitalism
- Judeo-Christian values
- Add values of indigenous peoples as you watch the films.

Ask students: Where are there overlaps, similarities or differences? Do you see any values in direct conflict with each other?



Property ownership and religious freedom are two core American values. The films show multiple examples of these two values coming into conflict.

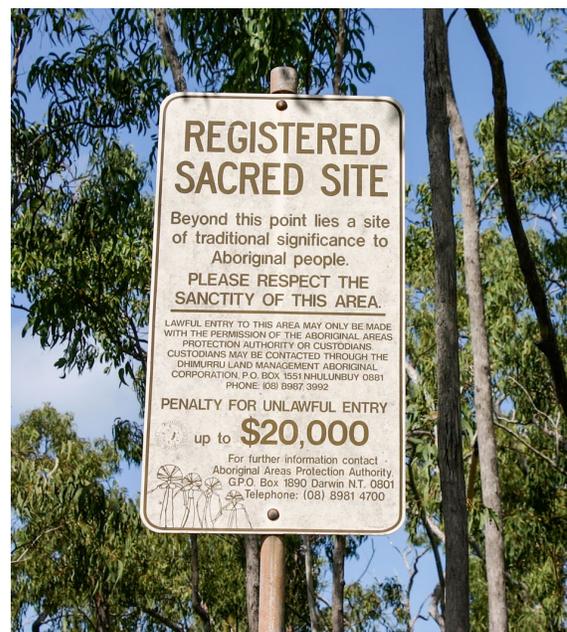
- ☉ What is the value of property ownership? What is the value of religious freedom? Ask students to create arguments in support of each value.
- ☉ Ask students to imagine a situation in which someone's private property has religious significance to someone else. How would they weigh each value to help them make a decision about who gets access? (This question is explored in *Islands of Sanctuary* about conflicts in Australia and Hawai'i, see page 93 of this guide.)

Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Do you think sacred sites should be protected regardless of where they are located and what their non-sacred (or material) value might be? Why or why not?
- ☉ Who owns the rights to sacred places—or is “ownership” the wrong question?
- ☉ Does residence in a place give somebody ownership or rights to that place?
- ☉ How long does someone need to live somewhere before his or her voice becomes important in advocating for the place?
- ☉ Is there somewhere you would fight for? Why might people pay attention to you or ignore your concerns?

In Western thinking, there is an ownership link to the land on which we live. There is the tendency to value land as property. In *Pilgrims and Tourists*, Satish Kumar, editor of *Resurgence* magazine, says, “We have to shift our attitude from ownership of nature to relationship with nature. The moment you change from ownership to relationship, you create a sense of the sacred.” (1:57)

- ☉ What does Satish Kumar mean by this?
- ☉ What is the difference between owning a forest or a lake, and having a relationship with that forest or lake?
- ☉ When might it be practical or impractical to own things like air, trees, water and land?



Extension questions to go deeper:

- ☉ Where would you place yourself on the spectrum of owning versus having a relationship with nature?
- ☉ What life experiences have contributed to this?

Exploring the Meaning of Indigenous

- ☉ Have students write what they think are the definitions of “indigenous peoples,” “traditional peoples” and “native.”
- ☉ Provide various definitions and discuss the similarities and differences (see box).
- ☉ Do you think that being indigenous gives someone the right to make decisions regarding their land? What about an indigenous person who no longer lives on his or her traditional land?

indigenous

Merriam-Webster Dictionary
indigenous: produced, living, or existing naturally in a particular region or environment.

Oxford English Dictionary
indigenous: originating or occurring naturally in a particular place.

Although the United Nations has not adopted an official definition of “indigenous peoples,” the U.N. working definition, as cited in the 2004 document “The Definition of Indigenous Peoples” is:

Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.





Fire and Ice

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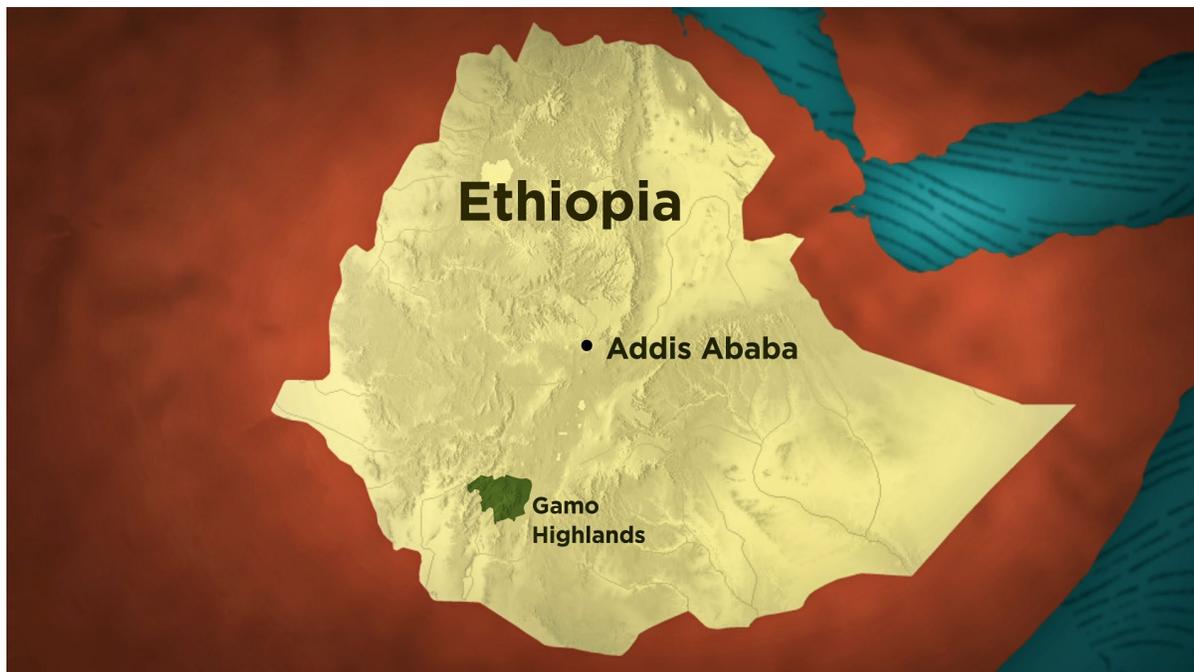
Learning Objectives

- ☉ Describe the relationship between geography and cultural identity.
- ☉ Identify the environmental, economic and political issues of the indigenous peoples of Ethiopia and Peru.
- ☉ Discuss the varying impacts of Christianity on indigenous communities.
- ☉ Explore the impact of increasing population density on religious tolerance.
- ☉ Compare worldviews from different philosophical and spiritual traditions.
- ☉ Explain the influence that religion, including creation stories, has on human attitudes toward land use.
- ☉ Describe the Gamo and Q'eros peoples' attitudes toward nature.
- ☉ Describe how climate change is impacting the Q'eros culture and land.
- ☉ Explain the relationship between biodiversity, indigenous traditional knowledge and cultural diversity.
- ☉ Identify and evaluate the techniques and themes the filmmakers utilized to tell stories and build characters.
- ☉ Explain how the film is an historical document.
- ☉ Distinguish between objective and subjective treatment of the people and issues depicted in the film.



Viewing Guide

This two-page viewing guide can be helpful in focusing students' viewing of the film. You can print copies of pages 50 and 51 and ask students to fill them out during the film or use them for comprehension prompts after they have watched it. You might also want to allow students time to write their initial reflections or their own discussion prompts after viewing the film.





ETHIOPIA

1. What is the significance of the *Masqala* celebration to the people of the Gamo Highlands in Ethiopia?
2. What is a *dubusha* and what happens there?
3. Describe the tradition of *woga*, the indigenous belief system of the people of the Gamo Highlands? Who enforces it?
4. How has the sacred grazing meadow, or *kalo*, been protected?
5. What ritual sacrifice takes place on the sacred Maylo Mountain and why?
6. What changes have elders and guardians of the sacred Naggasa Forest noticed?
7. For centuries the Ethiopian Orthodox Church peacefully coexisted with indigenous cultural practices. What has changed in the last 20 years?
8. The caretaker of sacred Muta Mountain has been forbidden to hold his rituals on the mountain. Who took over the site and what have they built there?
9. What interrupted the ceremonial “presentation of the brides” at sacred Dorbo Meadow?
10. How do traditional knowledge and customary practices protect biodiversity?





PERU

1. What benefits does the Q'eros annual 30-mile pilgrimage from Qochomoqo to Mt. Ausangate for the Qoyllur Rit'i festival ensure for the Q'eros people?
2. How did the Q'eros manage to escape the punishment of Spanish conquistadors in the 16th century?
3. What environmental changes have the Q'eros noticed in *Pachamama* (Mother Earth) and the *apus* (local mountain spirits) in recent years?
4. The potato has both a cultural and a symbolic relationship in the Q'eros culture. What problems are being caused for potato crops by changing weather patterns?
5. How does *anyu* (cooperation, reciprocity) function as a tradition in Andean culture?
6. How are the Q'eros practices different from other Peruvian communities at the Qoyllur Rit'i festival?
7. How is climate change affecting Q'eros grazing areas for llamas and alpacas?
8. What will happen in Peru as the glaciers continue to melt away?
9. How has global warming caused a change in the *ukuku's* glacial ice ceremony during the festival of Qoyllur Rit'i?
10. What is the Potato Park and who created it? Why is the park of interest to international visitors, such as Ethiopians?



CONFLICTING RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church was founded 2,000 years ago, and coexisted with traditional religious practices of remote Ethiopian communities for centuries. Starting in the 1960s, missionaries from Protestant churches in Europe began converting people in Ethiopia to evangelical, fundamentalist Christian denominations, such as Kale Heywot (Word of Life) from Holland. The missionaries and their new Protestant converts were intolerant of animistic spiritual practices, which they labeled as “paganism” or “devil worship.” As the Protestants converted many Orthodox church members, the Orthodox Church was compelled to compete, and the Orthodox Church became more conservative and less tolerant of traditional animistic practices.

Ethiopia’s 1995 Constitution protects freedom of religion, just as the constitutions of 1930 and 1955 guaranteed freedom of worship. There is no state religion in Ethiopia, and it is a crime to incite one religion against another.

- ☉ What is fundamentalism?
- ☉ How is evangelical Protestantism challenging the centuries-long peaceful coexistence between the Ethiopian Orthodox Church and traditional spiritual practices of remote rural communities?
- ☉ Do fundamentalism and evangelism necessarily pose a problem for other religions?
- ☉ Why do you think many people in indigenous communities have adopted Christianity?



All sides in this conflict believe firmly in the truth of their religious convictions.

- What might tolerance look like in a situation such as this, where all sides believe they have the truth?
- How have you resolved conflicts in which two people or groups firmly believed they were in the right?
- Different religions have different concepts of God or the spiritual world. Why are tolerance and mutual respect important as population density increases?

ACTIVITY

To learn about the history and to gain a sense of the conflict in Ethiopia's Gamo Highlands read the [site report on the Gamo Highlands](#) on the *Standing on Sacred Ground* website.

STANDING ON SACRED GROUND

FILM CLIP

Watch 11:50–16:44 on religious conflict in the Gamo Highlands.

- What has brought Christians into conflict with traditional peoples in the Gamo Highlands?
- What do you think has led to increasing conservatism of Christian groups in Ethiopia?
- What are the values of each group? Which values are in conflict?
- What do the Christian leaders think about *woga*?

“Some people still oppose the takeover of this site [Muta Mountain]. We feel that those who oppose it lack adequate knowledge. But the church continues teaching these people and they are repenting.”

—Dawit Merid, Ethiopian Orthodox Church (15:38)

Dawit Merid expresses a view common among missionaries that non-believers need knowledge. “Zeal” is a quality attributed to missionaries, fundamentalists and enforcers of Church law.

- How does this play out in the scenes in Ethiopia? In Peru? (Note: this question may be sensitive in your classroom setting. Use discretion when discussing topics that may ask students to challenge each other's values or beliefs.)
- How are dominant religious groups interrupting traditional spiritual practices in both Ethiopia and Peru? Does this happen in the United States?



Questions to go deeper:

- ⦿ What is *superstition*? Who defines it? Who judges it?
- ⦿ Do you think *woga* is superstitious? Is there environmental value or ecological wisdom in *woga*?
- ⦿ Does *woga's* taboo against cutting trees in sacred groves reinforce positive values such as respect, or, as the Christians assert, does the threat of punishment mean citizens live in fear?
- ⦿ What is your reaction to the concept of prophecy, and to rituals aimed at communication with the unseen spiritual world?
- ⦿ Do you think it is important to respect and protect beliefs that might be widely regarded as superstitious?

Spiritual connections to land can lead to environmental protection as well as conflict.

- ⦿ Would it help strengthen their case, and chances of survival, if the traditional elders of the Gamo Highlands could “prove” that their animistic practices result in a healthy, balanced environment?
- ⦿ What tools might help conflicting communities, with different beliefs about land value and use, find common ground to respect each other and the environment?
- ⦿ Where religious practice is legally protected, should the state enter into, or mediate, interreligious conflicts over land? If so, how?
- ⦿ Can you identify other examples of religious conflict over a place?
- ⦿ Why do religious beliefs make resolving these conflicts especially challenging?



FILM CLIP

Watch “Indigenous Reflections on Christianity” (14 minutes) in the Special Features on the *Fire and Ice* DVD.

- How would you summarize the interviews you heard?
- How do the people interviewed in this film clip contrast Christianity with their indigenous spiritual traditions?
- How would you characterize the impact of Christianity on aboriginal communities throughout the world?
- How does Hawaiian scholar Davianna McGregor explain the Christian relationship with land? Do you agree with her assessment?
- How does Anishinaabeg author Winona LaDuke connect the idea of salvation with mining? Do you agree with her assessment?

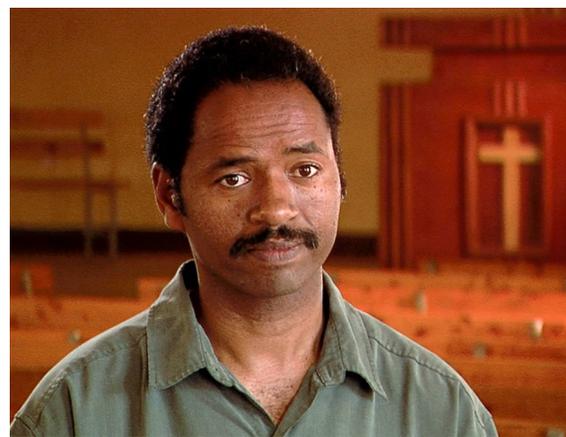
Worldview and Land

The following activities ask students to consider how differing worldviews affect entire cultures’ attitudes about land use and stewardship. You may select any of the following activities to stand alone or teach them as a sequence.

“People are afraid to plow Dorbo because they think God will destroy them. It’s a sacred place, it shouldn’t be touched. Okay. But what God has given them to use they should really subdue. They should be using the land, because it’s given to people. They should come out of that fear. It’s like bondage.”

—Theophilus Tesfaye, Pastor, Kale Heywot Church (22:56)

- ☉ What is Theophilus Tesfaye’s attitude toward land?
- ☉ Is this a uniquely Christian or Western view of land use?



Suggested resources for further learning:

- [Alliance of Religions and Conservation](#)
- [The Forum on Religions and Ecology at Yale](#)

FILM CLIP

Watch “Satish Kumar on the Origins of the Problem” (4 minutes) in the Special Features on the *Islands of Sanctuary* DVD.

- How does Satish Kumar explain the evolution of the Western worldview of the Earth and the human relationship to nature?
- What evidence have you seen that supports or contradicts his explanation?
- What is the “living quality” of the Earth that he experiences?
- What is the impasse he describes?

ACTIVITY

Socratic Seminar on Differing Worldviews

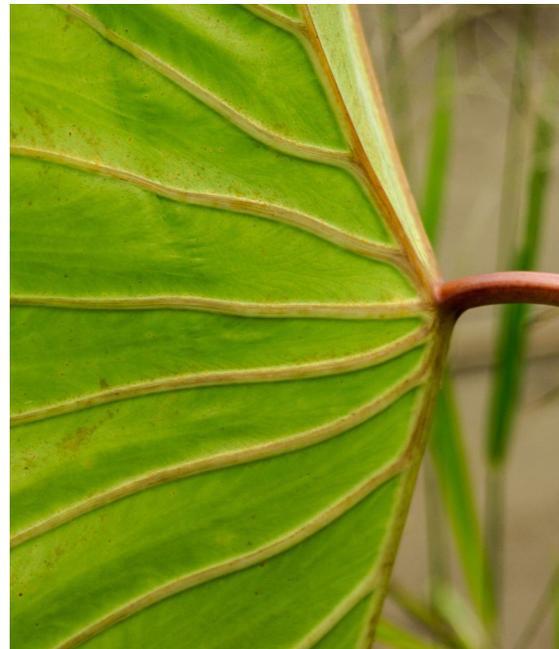
The following Socratic Seminar asks students to consider various religious teachings and philosophical explanations that provide insight and cultural instruction about how humans should interact with the Earth.

Prepare students for the Socratic Seminar by having them read Handout #1 (pages 57 to 62). There are spaces provided on the handout for students to summarize what they read and record their reactions.

For the seminar itself, arrange the student desks in a circle. If your class has more than 15–20 students, arrange the desks into an inner and outer circle and hold two discussions in which the inner circle leads a discussion while the outer circle listens. Distribute Handout #2 (page 63) for students to use during the seminar discussion.

Remind students that the goal of a Socratic Seminar is idea exploration. They should not expect to reach conclusions, but rather to have their minds opened and ideas respectfully challenged.

For more ideas on how to arrange a Socratic Seminar, you may want to view this [Teaching Channel video](#) or read this [Facing History and Ourselves Guide to Socratic Seminars](#).





SOCRATIC SEMINAR ON DIFFERING WORLDVIEWS

Directions: Read the following religious and philosophical texts. As you read, highlight or annotate phrases that speak to you personally. Then summarize the text’s instructions or implications for humanity’s relationship with the Earth.

TEXT	SUMMARIZE THE TEXT’S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY’S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:
<p>Bible, King James version Genesis 1:26–29</p> <p>And God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.”</p> <p>So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.</p> <p>And God blessed them, and God said unto them, “Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.”</p> <p>And God said, “Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.”</p>	



TEXT

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT'S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:

**Tao-Te Ching
(translation by Witter Bynner, 1944)**

Chapter 8

Man at his best, like water,
Serves as he goes along:
Like water he seeks his own level,
The common level of life,
Loves living close to the earth,
Living clear down in his heart,
Loves kinship with his neighbors,
The pick of words that tell the truth,
The even tenor of a well-run state,
The fair profit of able dealing,
The right timing of useful deeds,
And for blocking no one's way
No one blames him.

Chapter 29

Those who would take over the earth
And shape it to their will
Never, I notice, succeed.
The earth is like a vessel so sacred
That at the mere approach of the profane
It is marred
And when they reach out their fingers it
is gone.
For a time in the world some force
themselves ahead
And some are left behind,
For a time in the world some make a
great noise
And some are held silent,
For a time in the world some are
puffed fat
And some are kept hungry,
For a time in the world some push
aboard
And some are tipped out:
At no time in the world will a man who
is sane
Over-reach himself,
Over-spend himself,
Over-rate himself.



TEXT

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT'S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:

Qur'an

Qur'an, Al-An'am, Surah 6:165

God has given you the earth as your inheritance. He has raised some to a higher rank than others, so that he may test you in the way you treat this inheritance.

Qur'an, Al-Nisa, 4:126

And to Allah belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth.

Qur'an, 55:7-8

And the heaven He raised and imposed the balance, that you not transgress within that balance.

Hadith

The earth is green and beautiful and Allah has appointed you his stewards over it.

Qur'an, 16:65-69

Allah has sent down rain from the sky and given life thereby to the earth after its lifelessness. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who listen.

And indeed, for you in grazing livestock is a lesson. We give you drink from what is in their bellies—between excretion and blood—pure milk, palatable to drinkers. And from the fruits of the palm trees and grapevines you take intoxicant and good provision. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who reason.

And your Lord inspired to the bee, "Take for yourself among the mountains, houses, and among the trees and in that which they construct. Then eat from all the fruits and follow the ways of your Lord laid down for you." There emerges from their bellies a drink, varying in colors, in which there is healing for people. Indeed in that is a sign for a people who reflect.



TEXT

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT'S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:

Hinduism

Supreme Lord, let there be peace in the sky and in the atmosphere. Let there be peace in the plant world and in the forests. Let the cosmic powers be peaceful. Let the Brahman, the true essence and source of life, be peaceful. Let there be undiluted and fulfilling peace everywhere.
—Prayer from the *Atharva Veda*

"I am the seed of all existence. There is no being, moving or still, that exists without Me." —Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*

O King of trees! I bow before you. Brahma is in your roots, Vishnu is in your body, Shiva is in your branches. In every one of your leaves there is a heavenly being. —*Vikrama Caritam* 65

Oh King, the rivers are the veins of the Cosmic Person and the trees are the hairs of his body. The air is his breath, the ocean is his waist, the hills and mountains are the stacks of his bones and the passing ages are his movements.
—*Srimad Bhagavatam* 2.1.32–33

**The Kumulipo—
Hawaiian Creation Chant**

A line runs through the entire beginning of the chant... "*Komo Ke Akua a'ohe Komo ke Kanaka*," which refers to the tops of the high volcanoes, and translates as: "The place where only gods enter—man cannot," ... which speaks to the way nature works and the sacredness of places where man does not belong...



TEXT

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT'S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:

**John Locke—
*Second Treatise of Government***

Chapter V. Of Property

26. God, who hath given the world to men in common, hath also given them reason to make use of it to the best advantage of life, and convenience.

The earth, and all that is therein, is given to men for the support and comfort of their being...

32. As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates, and can use the product of, so much is his property. He by his labor does, as it were, enclose it from the common... God and his reason commanded him [man] to subdue the earth, i.e., improve it for the benefit of life, and therein lay out something upon it that was his own, his labor. He that in obedience to this command of God, subdued, tilled and sowed any part of it, thereby annexed to it something that was his property...

34. God gave the world to men in common; but since he gave it them for their benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain common and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the industrious and rational...

43. It is labour then which puts the greatest part of value upon land, without which it would scarcely be worth anything.



TEXT

SUMMARIZE THE TEXT'S INSTRUCTIONS OR IMPLICATIONS FOR HUMANITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE EARTH HERE:

Ralph Waldo Emerson from *Nature*

Every natural fact is a symbol of some spiritual fact... Who looks upon a river in a meditative hour, and is not reminded of the flux of all things? Throw a stone into the stream, and the circles that propagate themselves are the beautiful type of all influence.

Man is conscious of a universal soul within or behind his individual life, wherein, as in a firmament, the natures of Justice, Truth, Love, Freedom, arise and shine. This universal soul... it is not mine, or thine, or his, but we are its; we are its property and men...

We know more from nature than we can at will communicate. Its light flows into the mind evermore, and we forget its presence. The poet, the orator, bred in the woods, whose senses have been nourished by their fair and appeasing changes, year after year, without design and without heed, shall not lose their lesson altogether, in the roar of cities or the broil of politics....

We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the universal essence, which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power, but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature, spirit is present; one and not compound, it does not act upon us from without, that is, in space and time, but spiritually, or through ourselves.

Therefore, that spirit, that is, the Supreme Being, does not build up nature around us, but puts it forth through us, as the life of the tree puts forth new branches and leaves through the pores of the old.

“Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads.” —Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*

“There are no unsacred places; there are only sacred places and desecrated places.” —Wendell Berry, *Given*



SOCRATIC SEMINAR ON DIFFERING WORLDVIEWS

Warm-up: What reactions do you have to what you've read? Refer to at least one text.

Questions for Discussion:

- ☉ What patterns emerge from the texts that are guiding cultural instructions for land use?
- ☉ What fundamental differences do you see?
- ☉ How have you seen the teachings of any of these texts manifesting in the world?
- ☉ How do creation stories give us instruction about land use?
- ☉ Under what circumstances might cultural instructions for land use be challenged, changed, amended or discarded?
- ☉ If a culture's creation stories call for communal land ownership, animistic rituals, and practices that protect land, and this evolves into a local legal system (*woga*), is this a social contract?
- ☉ Discuss the real life implications of conflicting worldviews as they played out in Dorbo Meadow in Ethiopia. How do you think this conflict should be resolved?

As you listen to the discussion:

Write down your ideas and comments:

Write down questions that are raised for you:

CREATION STORIES

- What creation story were you raised with? How does this creation story inform how you approach the world? Do you believe it as fact or metaphorical myth?
- What is the Western creation story? Trace how the themes in this story have influenced Western values. (In addition to Genesis, you may want students to consider the Big Bang Theory that emerged in the 1990s as a secular Western creation story).
- How do creation stories give human beings instruction about land use and our relationship to nature?

The Genesis creation story of Christianity gives humans dominion over the Earth. In many places this led to conflict between colonizing European powers and land-based indigenous cultures that see nature as spirited and alive and land as communal property. Throughout history there have been many wars on “paganism” and animistic practices. Over the centuries, many sacred places of indigenous people have been taken, and churches have been constructed on the conquered sacred site. In *Fire and Ice*, the filmmakers documented a key step in this process while filming in the present-day Gamo Highlands of Ethiopia.

- As a current day example of this history, have students discuss the sacred grove on Muta Mountain that was cut down so a church could be built on the mountaintop.
- Do you think Dorbo Meadow might now have a church on the hilltop if the local traditional leaders had not objected to the construction project started by the evangelical Protestants?
- Do you think the Kale Heywot church members chose that location specifically because of its value to the traditional people?

ACTIVITY

Read the Q’eros creation story told in the film:

“In the early days, when Pachamama was young, the spirits of the mountains were still growing. All of the peaks wanted to reach the heavens, but especially Apu Ausangate, who grew higher and higher. The Creator, angered by Ausangate’s arrogance, struck the Apu’s head with a silver cross. Then Ausangate grew no taller, only older, with a white head like the wise men. But the Creator warned him: ‘Your ice and snow will one day disappear, and a great wind will blow. It will blow away everything, even you, the mightiest apu, and the world will be empty.’ ”

- This story attributes consciousness, volition, intention to the high mountains. How might this affect the way people view the mountains?
- The Creator is angered by the mountain’s arrogance. Is this an effective cultural warning? What lessons, values or behaviors would this encourage?
- Is there a prophetic quality to this story?

ACTIVITY

List and compare the stories, sacred objects, customs and rituals from both the Gamo and the Q’eros people. What are the common threads?

The Gamo people in Dorbo Meadow defy the instructions given in Genesis for humans to subdue and have dominion over the land.

- If a culture’s creation stories call for communal land ownership, animistic rituals and practices that protect land, and these traditions evolve into a local legal system (for example, in this case, *woga*), is this a social contract?
- Under what circumstances might these cultural instructions be challenged, changed, amended or discarded?

CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

The term “sacred site” can be misleading. The people of Ethiopia’s Gamo Highlands assert that there are many sacred places that are connected, interdependent and inseparable. In Peru, the Q’eros pilgrimage connects their home territory with far-off Mt. Ausangate and the glaciers above the Qoyllur Rit’i festival.

- To what extent would the creation of legal boundaries for sacred “sites” conflict with the traditional understanding of sacred places as interwoven within sacred landscapes?
- How might the cultural meaning that is infused throughout landscapes be preserved amidst a modernizing, globalizing world?
- Place names, history, memory, songs, rituals of reverence for life-giving elements—these are now referred to as “intangible heritage.” Why is intangible heritage as important as tangible heritage?
- In a secular world, defining a sacred site and protecting it brings the possibility that everything around it might be deemed expendable, because it is not sacred. Discuss why values are as important as definitions and laws.

Peruvian culture is adaptive, in terms of both religion and environment. The Q’eros describe their approach to development as “adaptation-resistance.” The Q’eros strategically assimilate new developments that are useful, reject those that are not, and preserve tradition by adapting it to the present.

- How did the Q’eros adapt the ancient beliefs of the indigenous Incas with those of Catholic colonizers from Spain?

ACTIVITY

Follow the link to “[Comparing Creation Stories](#),” an activity from the University of North Carolina School of Education in which students read and compare three creation stories from the Cherokee, Judeo-Christian and Yoruba/West African traditions and analyze the impact these stories had on the respective cultures. In these stories:

- Who created the Earth?
- Why was the Earth created?
- Why were humans created?
- What is supposed to be the relationship between humans and land?

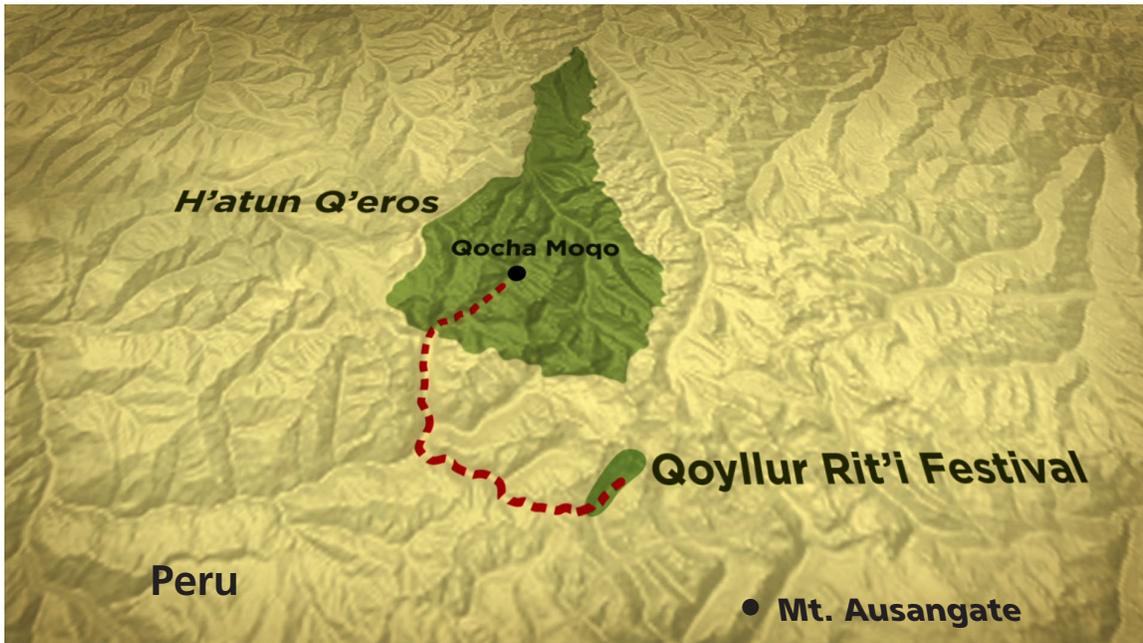
Cultural Landscape

Cultural landscapes represent the combined works of nature and of man. They express a long and intimate relationship between peoples and their natural environment.

Certain sites reflect specific techniques of land use that guarantee and sustain biological diversity. Others, associated in the minds of the communities with powerful beliefs and artistic and traditional customs, embody an exceptional spiritual relationship of people with nature.

Cultural landscapes—cultivated terraces on lofty mountains, gardens, sacred places—testify to the creative genius, social development and the imaginative and spiritual vitality of humanity. They are part of our collective identity.

—UNESCO



Compare the rituals shown in the film as practiced by both Ethiopian and Peruvian traditionalists.

- ☉ How are they similar? How are they different?
- ☉ What rituals do you have in your culture? What is their purpose?

CLIMATE CHANGE

As Peru's glaciers melt away, we see that indigenous people who create virtually no greenhouse gases are suffering the effects of global warming. Whose responsibility is it to control and minimize the release of carbon into the atmosphere? Have students analyze the following three charts (in blue boxes) and discuss the importance of limiting CO₂ in the atmosphere, the ways this can be achieved and the obstacles to action.

FILM CLIP

Watch “Satish Kumar on Global Warming” (6 minutes) in the Special Features of the *Fire and Ice* DVD.

Kumar calls for a paradigm shift in our attitude toward the natural world, saying, “You cannot solve the problem of global warming with the same tools and mindset that created global warming.... We have to shift our attitude from ownership of nature to relationship with nature.”

- What does Satish Kumar mean by these statements?
- What kind of thinking do you think is necessary to slow or halt climate change?

To go deeper with this film clip, see the activity on pages 74–75 in the “Media Literacy” section below.

In the Andes, there are 4,000 varieties of potatoes, and this diversity is a safeguard against a harsh and variable environment. Strength comes from diversity.

- ☉ Discuss how biological diversity and cultural strength create resilience.
- ☉ As the climate becomes increasingly unforgiving and unpredictable, how might we protect food diversity and strengthen food security?
- ☉ As glaciers melt and water sources become increasingly scarce, what other strategies can communities employ to maintain sustainable lifestyles?

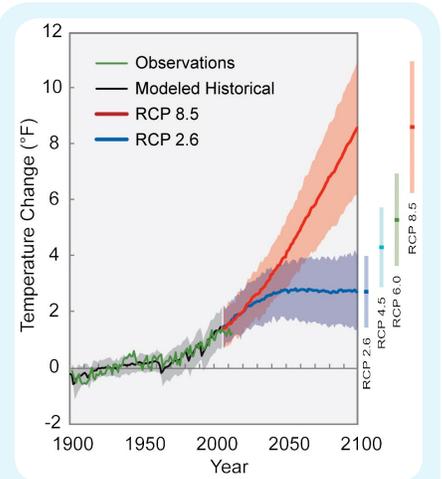


Image credit: EPA
www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/future.html

Emission Levels Determine Temperature Rise

Different amounts of heat-trapping gases released into the atmosphere by human activities produce different projected increases in Earth's temperature. Each line represents an estimate of global temperature rise for a specific emissions pathway. Shading indicates the range of results from various climate models. Projections in 2099 for additional emissions pathways are indicated by the bars at right. In all cases, temperatures are expected to rise, but the difference between lower and higher emissions is substantial.

The lowest emissions pathway shown here, Representative Concentration Pathway (RCP) 2.6, assumes immediate and rapid reductions in emissions and results in 2.5°F warming this century. The highest pathway, RCP 8.5, assuming a continuation current global emission increases, is projected to lead to more than 8°F warming by 2100, with a high-end possibility of more than 11°F. —U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2014

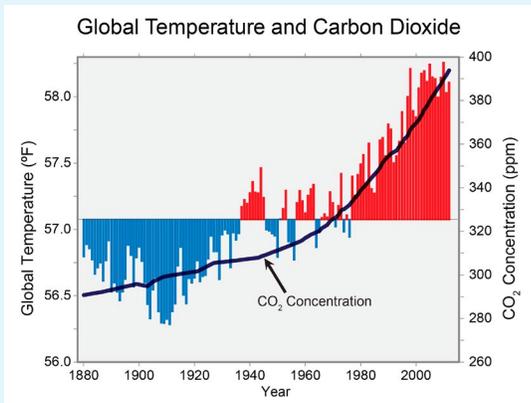


Image credit: EPA
www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/future.html

Global annual average temperature (measured over land and oceans) increased by more than 1.5°F (0.8°C) from 1880 to 2012. Red bars show temperatures above long-term average, blue bars show temperatures below long-term average. The black line shows atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO₂) concentration in parts per million (ppm). While there is a clear long-term **global warming** trend, some years do not show temperature increase relative to the previous year. Some years show greater changes than others. These year-to-year fluctuations in temperature are due to natural processes, such as the effects of El Niños and volcanic eruptions.

(Figure source: updated from Karl et al. 2009)

ACTIVITY

Have students read these two articles and watch the following two film clips about glacier melt. Compare the challenges in countries like the United States and Switzerland to the challenges facing Peru. How are they different? Who suffers the brunt of climate change?

- Read [The Dying Glaciers of California](#) from *Earth Island Journal* (by Jeremy Miller, May 2013).
- Read [As Glaciers Melt, Alpine Mountains Lose Their Glue, Threatening Swiss Village](#) from the *New York Times* (by John Tagliabue, May 29, 2013).



Petermann Glacier, Greenland, 2009

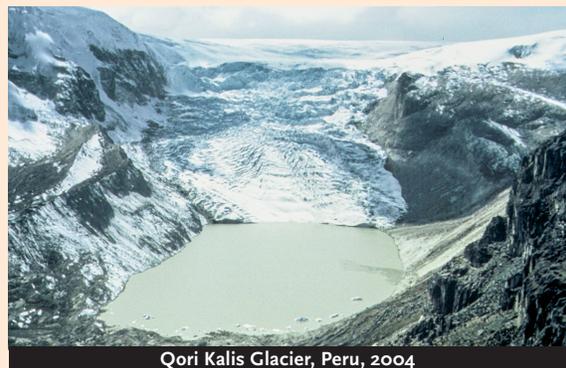


Petermann Glacier, Greenland, 2011

- Watch the CNN report [Glaciers in Meltdown](#).
- Watch the 2-minute trailer for the film “[Chasing Ice](#),” in which environmental photographer James Balog documents the dramatic disappearance of Arctic glaciers.



Qori Kalis Glacier, Peru, 1978



Qori Kalis Glacier, Peru, 2004

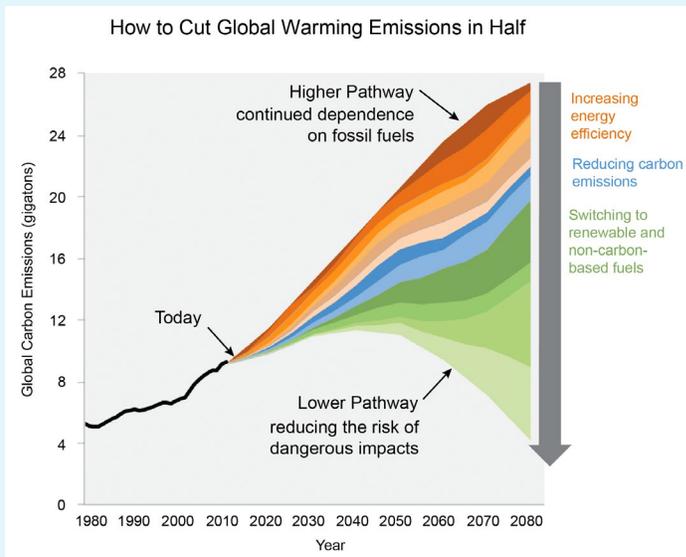


Image credit: EPA www.epa.gov/climatechange/science/future.html

Separating Human and Natural Influences on Climate

The green band shows how global average temperature would have changed over the last century due to natural forces alone, as simulated by climate models. The blue band shows model simulations of the effects of human and natural forces (including solar and volcanic activity) combined. The black line shows the actual observed global average temperatures. Only with the inclusion of human influences can models reproduce the observed temperature changes.

—U.S. Global Change Research Program, 2014

ACTIVITY

Listen to this 2009 NPR story, “In Highland Peru, A Culture Confronts Blight.”

- Describe how climate change impacts the potato crops and the culture of Highland Peru.

BIODIVERSITY AND TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

- What is biodiversity?
- What causes its disappearance?
- What happens when we lose it?
- Why does biodiversity have global importance?
- Why should we protect biodiversity and, in particular, endangered species?
- Is it possible to economically quantify the value of a species?

Biodiversity

Biodiversity is the variety of all life forms on earth—the interconnected species of plants, animals and micro-organisms—and the ecosystems of which they are a part.

FILM CLIP

Watch the online clip [Sacred Sites and Biodiversity](#) (6 min) which contains three scenes from *Standing on Sacred Ground* from Australia, Papua New Guinea and Ethiopia.

According to the World Bank, indigenous people make up 4% of the world's population and control 12% of the Earth's land surface. That land contains 80% of the remaining biodiversity on the planet.

- ☉ If 4% of humanity is preserving 80% of all plant and animal species, what can we conclude about these cultures' traditional knowledge, customary laws and values in relation to sustaining life on Earth?
- ☉ Examine the photograph of Kayapó territory in the Amazon (at right). Discuss how the ecological values of indigenous people are evident in the photo.
- ☉ How do the value systems associated with sacred places lead to preserving biological diversity?
- ☉ Could cultural laws associated with sacred places explain why indigenous cultural landscapes contain a disproportionate amount of the Earth's remaining biodiversity?

Areas of high biodiversity tend to coincide with a high number of distinct ethnic groups speaking different languages. Traditional knowledge of ecology and sustainable environmental practices are communicated via these different languages by indigenous, tribal and other local communities. Terralingua, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) that works to sustain the diversity of life, defines biocultural diversity as “diversity in both nature and culture. It's a living network made up of the millions of species of plants and animals that have evolved on Earth, and of the thousands of human cultures and languages that have developed over time.”

- ☉ What are the links between biological and cultural diversity?
- ☉ What relationships did you see in the two stories presented in the film?



Photo courtesy of cfcanada.org/kayapo.shtm

This satellite image shows Kayapó lands in the Amazon Basin of Brazil. The green area comprises the Xingu Indigenous Park with smoke plumes rising from burning primary forest remnants outside the indigenous territory. Dark green areas are indigenous lands and surrounding brown areas are agricultural ranch lands.

ACTIVITY

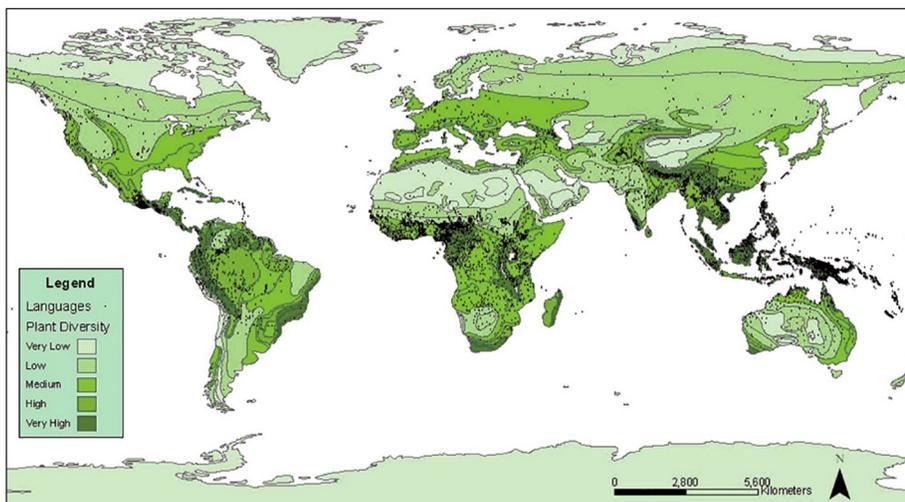
Visit the website “[Conversations with the Earth](#)” to hear indigenous perspectives on climate change.

- What observations do indigenous people make about climate change?
- Do you believe the first-hand perspectives of these indigenous people?



The Western worldview (and creation story) separates culture and nature, whereas indigenous traditional knowledge blends ecology and spirituality. Referring to “traditional ecological knowledge” in the context of Western science often misses the fact that spirituality is an inherent part of how indigenous cultures relate to land and the biodiversity of their territory.

- ☉ Examine the map below and discuss the dynamics of why cultural diversity—including linguistic diversity (many languages)—is highest where biological diversity is high, and vice versa.



Map courtesy Rick Stepp/Terralingua

- ☉ What does Alejandro Argumedo mean when he says, “The Q’eros think like a mountain, a lake”? How is the Q’eros’s cultural relationship with nature different from ours?

Additional Resource

Read “What are the Links Between Biological and Cultural Diversity?”

FILM CLIP

Watch 24:18–26:57 on biodiversity in the Gamo Highlands.

- What is the relationship between traditional knowledge and biodiversity?
- How can sacred places and *woga* (local law) preserve biodiversity?

According to Zerihun Woldu (at left below), ecology professor at Ethiopia’s Addis Ababa University, 300 sacred sites in the Gamo Highlands keep biodiversity intact. His research shows that there is 35% more biodiversity in the sacred groves than in unprotected forests. Woldu believes biodiversity can be protected by giving non-sacred groves the same status as sacred groves.



With a group of researchers from the university and the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, Professor Woldu has mapped sacred sites and collected data on plant and animal diversity in order to better understand the role of indigenous stewardship. Where a location is defined as sacred, the

people have a strict set of rules guiding human conduct and resource use there. In collaboration with many members of the community, and in consultation with local elders, the researchers were able to define 12 types of “major traditional sacred locations.” These include:

- *kashaa* (forest)
- *dubushaa* (outdoor assembly places)
- *boncho zummaa* (mountains)
- *boncho shafaa* (rivers)
- *kalloo* (pasture lands)
- *bonchetida fultoo* (springs)

The Gamo have also designated sacred areas for lamentation (grieving) and consider some caves, stones and paths to be sacred as well, with soil from those areas used as a traditional medicine.

- ☉ How does designating these types of sacred locations help to preserve biodiversity?

There are 4,000 known varieties of potato. Maria Scurrah of the International Potato Center says (at 54:18) “The best way to protect biodiversity is to have a healthy culture living inside that ecosystem because they have been preserving it.”

- ☉ Why is this the case?
- ☉ What evidence can you point to from the film?
- ☉ Why will diversity in the potato crop help create resilience for both the potatoes and the cultures of the Andes?
- ☉ What can the Ethiopians and Peruvians learn from one another? What can we learn from them?





FILM CLIP

Watch 52:16–54:05 on the [Potato Park](#).

You can read more at the [International Potato Center](#) and the [Potato Park](#) website.

- Why is a genetic bank for potatoes especially important with regards to climate change?
- What are the dangers of monocultures?
- Why is it important that local people manage the Potato Park?

ACTIVITY

Read and analyze excerpts of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change's (IPCC) technical paper on climate change and biodiversity.

Use the table of contents to decide what you'd like to focus on in your classroom. You may want to print out sections and cut out each paragraph to create a jigsaw in your classroom, during which students read different sections of the report and teach each other.

“People are very much attached spiritually to crops and to the land, and to the mountains. It's not in books or in classrooms. You have to practice. You have to touch it with your hands. You have to eat it. You have to be part of it.”

—Alejandro Argumedo, Director, Asociación ANDES (54:31)

- Discuss what Alejandro Argumedo means by this statement.
- What do you think is “spiritual” about connecting to the land in this way?

MEDIA LITERACY

- What are the key ideas and themes in the film *Fire and Ice*? What is the film’s message?
- What did you take away from the film? Does this correspond to what the filmmakers were trying to say?
- How are the Gamo and Q’eros peoples represented in this documentary?
- Did the filmmakers give fair treatment to all sides?
- Did they present an objective view of the events? Give examples from the film to support your claim. Is it possible to present a completely objective point of view?
- Does this film advocate a point of view? If so, what is it? How can you tell? How does this affect your viewing of the film?
- How did the filmmakers contrast the two stories of the Gamo and Q’eros and the threats to their natural environments? Did having two stories juxtaposed affect your understanding of the subject matter?
- How did the filmmakers use music in the film?
- How do you think your own background, values or experiences affected your viewing of the film?

ACTIVITY

The Special Features section of the *Fire and Ice* DVD, contains an interview with Satish Kumar in which he discusses global warming. Watch “Satish Kumar on Global Warming” (6 minutes) and then look at the full transcript of Satish Kumar’s interview response, found in Appendix B.

- The filmmakers used several short sound bites from this long interview answer throughout the four films in this series. Which segments of Satish Kumar’s interview did the filmmaker choose to include in the “Satish Kumar on Global Warming” segment? In the final cut of the films?
- Do you think these were effective editing choices?
- Do you think they fully represented Satish Kumar’s views?
- Is it ethical to cut up and reorder long answers and use short sound bites?



FILM CLIP

Watch “The Director’s Backstory: Filming the Riot in Dorbo Meadow” (8 minutes) in the Special Features section of the *Fire and Ice* DVD.

- What surprised you about this story?
- What did you learn about the filmmaker’s process?
- In the final edited film (19:33–22:55), do you think the story is told accurately? Fairly? Objectively? Is it overly dramatized?
- Is the filmmaker sympathetic to one side of the conflict? What evidence could you point to?

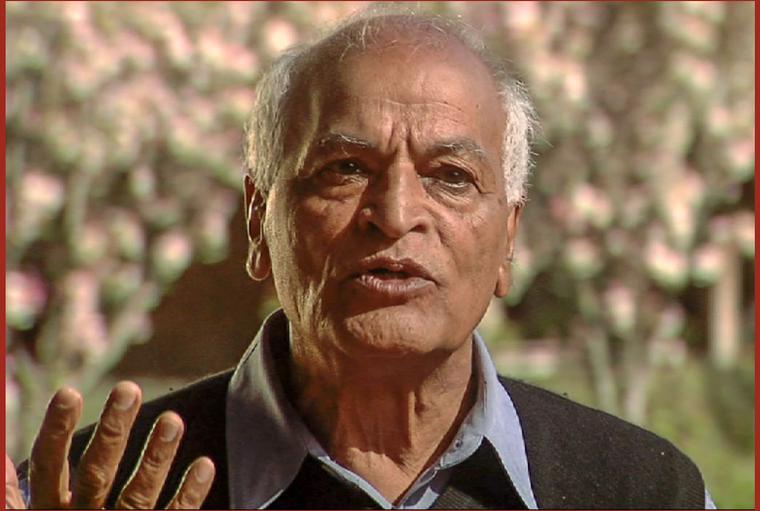
FILM CLIP

Watch 35:31–36:32 where a female narrative voice tells the Q’eros creation story.

You might also want to view clips from the other films that utilize a female narrator’s voice to tell indigenous cultural stories. In Episode 1, *Pilgrims and Tourists*, watch 22:17–22:55 on the Ukok Princess of Altai, and 38:28–38:53 on the 20 sacred mountains of the Winnemem. In Episode 4, *Islands of Sanctuary*, watch 12:45–13:12 on Australia’s Rainbow Serpent and 45:22–45:48 on the Hawaiian gods Kane and Kanaloa.

- How is this narration treated as compared to the factual narration in the rest of the film series?
- Why do you think the filmmakers used a female voice to tell these cultural stories? What effect does this have?
- Was this an effective storytelling technique?
- Why do you think the filmmakers included these stories in this way?
- How is music used in these storytelling sequences?
- Does giving cultural stories their own omniscient narration add credence to the story?

Discuss Satish Kumar's comment (at 29:55):
"You cannot solve the problem of global warming with the same tools and mindset which has created it. The problem is our attitude towards the natural world. We don't want to stop our consumerism. We don't want to stop our materialism. But climate change is forcing us to rethink our relationship with the earth."



CONCLUDING QUESTIONS

Compare and contrast the beliefs, customs and rituals of the indigenous cultures depicted in the four episodes of *Standing on Sacred Ground*.

What are the specific issues and challenges of the indigenous cultures depicted in the four episodes of *Standing on Sacred Ground*?

What strategies are used to confront these challenges?

How can the eight indigenous cultures depicted in the four episodes of *Standing on Sacred Ground* help and learn from each other? Is there value in networking and mutual support?

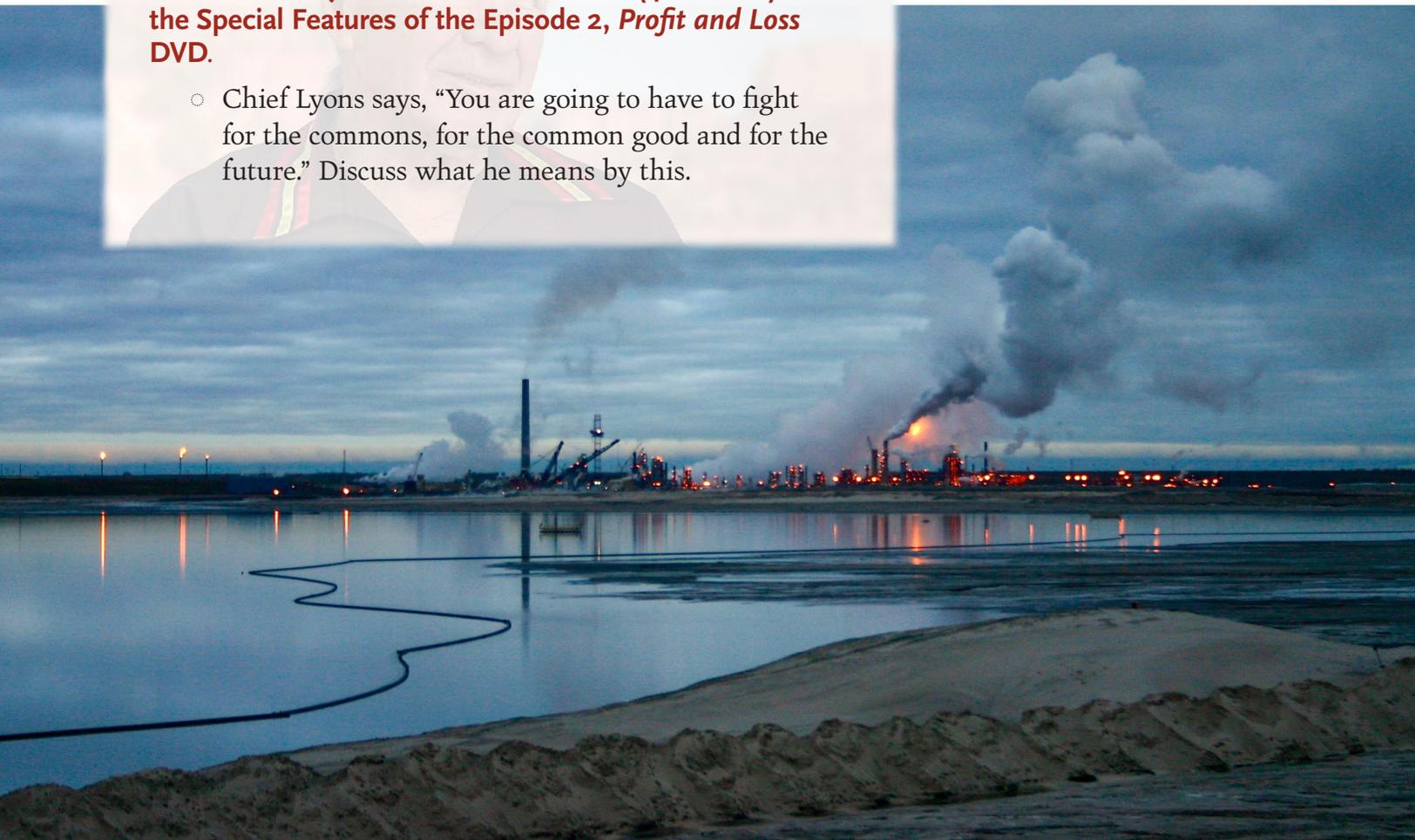
What do the beliefs, traditions and values of indigenous people offer us as we think about ways of relating to the environment in the modern world?

Why does preservation matter in terms of culture and the environment?

FILM CLIP

Watch “Oren Lyons on Profit and Loss” (4 minutes) in the Special Features of the Episode 2, *Profit and Loss* DVD.

- Chief Lyons says, “You are going to have to fight for the commons, for the common good and for the future.” Discuss what he means by this.



Appendix A

U.N. UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (1948)

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, therefore, the General Assembly proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.



Article 1

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2

Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3

Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4

No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5

No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6

Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7

All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of the Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.



Article 8

Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10

Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11

1. Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense.

2. No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

Article 12

No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

2. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14

1. Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.



2. This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15

1. Everyone has the right to a nationality.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16

1. Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.
2. Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.
3. The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.



Article 17

1. Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.
2. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression: this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20

1. Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.
2. No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21

1. Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.
2. Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.
3. The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22

Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23

1. Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.
2. Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.
3. Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.
4. Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.



Article 25

1. Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

2. Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26

1. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

3. Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27

1. Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

2. Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28

Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.



Article 29

1. Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.
2. In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.
3. These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30

Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.





Appendix B

SATISH KUMAR INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT (APRIL 26, 2008)

This transcript goes with the Media Literacy activity in Episode 3, *Fire and Ice*, on page 75.

In the DVD Special Features clip “Satish Kumar on Global Warming” the interview bites were reordered. Here is the actual order of interview comments in order spoken, with the sounds bites used in the clip printed in bold:

(Sound bite #3) In the olden days we used to think that one nation is superior to another nation and we called it nationalism. We used to say one race is superior to another race and we called it racism. One gender is superior to another gender and we called it sexism. And we are trying now to be free of such nationalism, racism, sexism, but still humanity is suffering from this idea that human species are superior to all other species. And I call this species-ism.

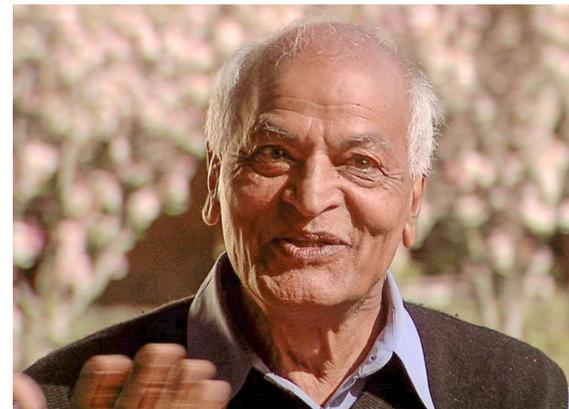
This is where the, the sacredness is lost, because we become ego-centered. Now we have to transform our egocentric thinking to eco-centric thinking. Just one letter we change from G to C. From ego to eco. The moment we become eco-centric then we will recognize the intrinsic sacredness of all life.

So trees have intrinsic sacredness. Birds, worms, bees, butterflies, soil, every, every aspect of the Earth has intrinsic sacred value irrespective of its usefulness to humans. And this is what I call a sacred view of life. The moment we have that deep reverence to nature, the deep reverence to all life upon this Earth then we can celebrate.

We can take joy in our existence and we can take celebration of all the gifts we receive from the Earth. We receive so much from the Earth and we take all that with deep gratitude. So this is a relationship of great gratitude and, and a gift and thankfulness is the way we can create an eco-centric worldview. And then we can live on this Earth for millions and millions of years to come. That to me is pure sacred sustainability.

Q: Where was the point of change where humanity became superior and exploitative that way?

The human egocentric worldview that all nature there is for the benefit of human beings has many different roots. One of the root we find





in Genesis where it is said that human beings have dominion over the Earth. And we have responsibility and duty to subdue the Earth and multiply our numbers and we have been doing a very good job of that.

We are now six billion people or more upon this Earth. So this idea that we have a dominion over the Earth takes us away from our interdependent relationship with the Earth. Rather than thinking that we depend on the gifts of the Earth and gifts of Gods and, and the places, a sacred place, we think it's a place to be exploited. So I would say some of the seeds of this egocentric thinking are in Genesis in Christian tradition.

And then also Newtonian and a kind of rational scientific worldview where we see the, the natural world as inanimate and machine, a clock-work and, and it works like a machine. So we have seen the Earth as inanimate. And that begins to create a worldview of human superiority, because inanimate Earth we can we do what we like.

You can exploit it. It's a resource for you. But the sacred worldview, which I bring from the Hindu, Jain and Buddhist perspective, the Indian perspective, we say Earth is alive. Earth is not only alive, Earth is sacred living. Earth is goddess and therefore we have to revere Gaia, we have to revere the Earth. We have to have reverence for the Earth.

So that worldview cannot go well, cannot sit together well with the idea that Earth is a dead machine and we have to just use it. Then Cartesian thinking also creates dualism and separation. Rene Descartes the French philosopher says *cogito ergo sum*. I think, therefore I am. So, this is the kind of separational, dualistic worldview where we say that I live in my mind.

This is very individualistic and ego-centered again. The Hindu worldview is *so hum*. The other is, therefore I am. You are, therefore I am. The Earth is therefore I am. The water is therefore I am. The sunshine is therefore I am. The trees and birds and bees and worms are butterflies are therefore I am. My ancestors were, therefore I am. My teachers were, therefore I am.

The entire worldview is based in the web of relationships. We are living in the web of living relationships. And, and the whole entire Earth is a web of life. So this living Earth, living soil, living trees, living humans, how can human beings take life and derive life from a dead Earth? How if the dead Earth is dead how can we take full, dead food and be alive?

We have evolved out of the Earth. We have evolved out of water. We have evolved out of rocks and, and fungi. How can we evolve from dead matter into life? So for Hindu view of the sacred life is that life is not just human life. Rocks have life. Rocks have spirit. That's why rocks are sacred. Mount Kailash is sacred, because it is alive. And, the River Ganges is sacred, because river is alive.



So this living quality, recognizing that, was lost in Newtonian science and physics, in Cartesian dualism, in the idea of Genesis, where we have, this idea that we have dominion over the Earth. So there are many, many historical roots by which we have come to this impasse now. **(Sound bite #2) But now there is a new awareness arising. People are recognizing that our approach to the Earth and to the environment and to ecology that we can go on exploiting as if it was a dead machine and there was no other value than its value for human benefit.**

That is changing now. And the global warming and the climate change is forcing the issue to people, forcing the issue to rethink about our relationship with the Earth. And I think that is a very important transformation and a change in consciousness taking place at this moment. It is small, but it's beginning.

I said from egocentric worldview to eco-centric worldview there I imply that we have to have an ecological worldview and understand that we are part of this web of life. But sometimes in our Western materialistic and intellectual tradition where rationalism has dominated our thinking even ecology has become a kind of materialistic discipline.

And even ecology has become a scientific rational description of our relationship with the Earth. When you are thinking in terms of Earth being an abode of the divine you are going further than a materialistic or a rationalistic worldview of ecology, what I call reverential ecology.

What I would call even spiritual ecology, because ecology has two dimensions. One dimension is what I call visible dimension. We see the trees. We see the mountains. We see the river. We see the animals, we see the land. We see these things and we can see yes the tree is good for me, because it gives me oxygen. It gives me wood, it gives me fruit, it gives me shade. I have a relationship therefore I can protect it. This is a visible dimension.

When you have reverential ecology you see trees, mountains, rivers, forests not just visible and material dimension, but you see that all these elements have spirit. Tree spirit, mountain spirit, nature spirit, animal spirit as much as human spirit. So when you see this invisible dimension then you come in the realm of reverential ecology and you say thank you tree, thank you for being there.

You are good as you are. You are good who you are. As we value human beings and say you are good as you are and who you are in the same way we say the tree, we say to the tree that you are good as you are, this intrinsic sacredness of the tree we recognize that I call reverential ecology. And when you have reverential ecology then sacred places and sacredness of the Earth becomes a deeply felt realization.



Not an intellectual theory, but a self-realization, because tree is therefore you are. It's the relationship between you and the tree. So, human spirit and tree spirit are in conversation.

Q: What would you say is wrong with the current approach to solving the big problems we have?

(Sound bite #1) In the last few years humanity has suddenly woken up to the problem of global warming and climate change. Scientists, media, politicians, everybody's talking about big problem of global change, global climate change and global warming, but global warming is a consequence of some actions, human actions. Global warming is not a problem in itself.

Global warming is only a symptom of the problem. Now as Einstein said you cannot solve a problem by the same mindset and the same tools, which created the problem in the first place. Now we have to think what is the cause of global warming? Our economic activities? Our technological advances? Our globalization?

All these, our dependence on fossil fuel and use of fossil fuel to create this kind of economic growth and technological advancement. Most of the media, most of the government leaders, business leaders, industrialists, most of the scientists they are saying let's find a new technology. Let's find a new source of energy. Instead of fossil fuel let's have biofuel.

Instead of fossil fuel let's have nuclear fuel. Even solar or wind power, but we will continue to have our economic growth. We'll continue to have our violence to nature. We'll continue to have our technological advancement. We don't want to stop our consumerism. We don't want to stop our materialism. We just want to find a new technological fix. This is a fundamental folly of egocentric worldview.

You cannot solve the problem of global warming with the same tools and mindset which has created the global warming. Global warming is a consequence, a symptom, not a problem itself. What is the problem? The problem is our attitude towards the natural world. The problem is our attitude that we own nature. We are the owners of nature.

We own the land, we own the animals, we own the forests, we own the water, we own the sky. We own everything. This idea of ownership of nature is the root cause of global warming. So, now we have to move if we seriously want to address the problem of global warming we have to shift our paradigm. We have to shift our attitude of ownership of nature to relationship with nature.



We are in relationship with nature. We are in relationship with the trees and the mountains and the rivers and the animals and the sky. The moment you change from ownership to relationship you create a sense of the sacred. That is the key. And this is a big change. It's a change of consciousness. It's a change of mindset. It's a change from capitalism to sacred sense. It's a big change.

We are so caught up in our capitalist finance oriented moneymaking system that we think making money is more important than protecting the natural habitat. Making money is more important than protecting the rainforest. Making money is more important than recognizing the rights of nature. We think human rights are all important and there are no rights for nature. We have to change that. A sense of the sacred requires that we recognize the rights of the trees to remain where they are.

The rights of rivers to flow clean and pristine and un-dammed and unpolluted and un-distracted. The rights of rainforests, the rights of nature are as important as rights of humans. Just human rights without the rights of nature cannot go. If you are to really solve the problem of global warming on a long-term sustainability principal, because Earth is a community.

Human community is part of Earth community. If Earth community is destroyed and you want to just protect human community that's a human folly. So, a sense of the sacred requires to see the Earth as primary community. And trees and animals and birds and mountains and a blade of grass and bees all creatures, all species are members of that Earth community.

This is the idea of the sacred, Earth community. And the divine presence in that community, sacred presence in that community. So, **(Sound bite #4) at the moment people are, even many environmentalists are driven by fear. Fear of doom and gloom and financial disaster and end of civilization. This, this fear is driving lot of environmentalists, but if you have a sense of the sacred then you, you cannot be driven by the force of fear.**

You have to be driven by the power of love. And a power of love is love of nature, love of the Earth, love of animals, love of life, love of Earth community, love of human community. And when you have this power of love driving you and your lifestyle and your vision then you create a new harmonious relationship with the Earth. So I would say the long-term solution is not in fear, but in love.

Appendix C

SPECIAL FEATURES ON DVDS

Episode 1 – *Pilgrims and Tourists*

- Standing on Sacred Ground Series Trailer (2 min)
- Satish Kumar: What is a Sacred Place? (4 min)
- Oren Lyons: We are Part of the Earth (8 min)
- Winona LaDuke on Redemption (5 min)
- Barry Lopez: A Way Out of our Predicament (6 min)
- Nogon Shumarov—Throat Singing (3 min)

Episode 2 – *Profit and Loss*

- Guardians of the Ramu River (5 min)
- Tar Sands Map Rap with Mike Mercredi and Lionel Lepine (19 min)
- Winona LaDuke on Colonization (6 min)
- Oren Lyons on Profit and Loss (4 min)

Episode 3 – *Fire and Ice*

- Indigenous Reflections on Christianity (14 min)
- Satish Kumar on Global Warming (6 min)
- Oren Lyons on *The Wizard of Oz* (5 min)
- Director's Backstory: Filming the Riot in Dorbo Meadow (8 min)

Episode 4 – *Islands of Sanctuary*

- Extended *Kukakuka* ("Talk Story") Beach Scene (8 min)
- Deleted Scene: The Legacy of Kaho'olawe
Protecting the Ancestors at Honokahua (5 min)
- Winona LaDuke's Kaho'olawe story (2 min)
- Satish Kumar on the Origins of the Problem (5 min)
- Oren Lyons on Rights and Responsibilities (5 min)
- Barry Lopez on Storytelling (3 min)
- What Good is an Apology? (16 min)



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 Sacred Land Film Project uses journalism, networking and education 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.

We have two websites, one for the [Standing on Sacred Ground](#) series, and the other for the [Sacred Land Film Project](#).

CHRISTOPHER (TOBY) MCLEOD
Producer/Director

Founder and Project Director of Earth Island Institute's Sacred Land Film Project since 1984. He produced and directed *In the Light of Reverence* (2001) and has made three other award-winning, hour-long documentary films that were broadcast on national television: *The Four Corners: A National Sacrifice Area?* (1983), *Downwind/Downstream* (1988), and *NOVA: Poison in the Rockies* (1990). After 10 years of work, he completed *In the Light of Reverence*, which was broadcast in August 2001 on the acclaimed PBS documentary series P.O.V. (Point of View) and won a number of awards, including the Council on Foundation's prestigious Henry Hampton Award (2005). His first film was the nine-minute short, *The Cracking of Glen Canyon Damn—with Edward Abbey and Earth First!* McLeod has a master's degree in journalism from U.C. Berkeley and a B.A. in American History from Yale. He is a journalist who works in film, video, print and still photography. In 1985, McLeod received a Guggenheim Fellowship for filmmaking, and his U.C. Berkeley masters thesis film *Four Corners* won a Student Academy Award in 1983. Toby has been working with indigenous communities as a filmmaker, journalist and photographer for more than 35 years.



JESSICA ABBE

Writer (*Pilgrims and Tourists, Islands of Sanctuary*) and
Co-Producer

Co-produced *Angle of Inspiration*, a 2004 PBS documentary about the effect on the small town of Redding, California, of a 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*. Helped start KRON-TV's *Bay Area Backroads*, the highest-rated local program during her tenure as producer, and produced *San Francisco in the 1970s*. Jessica 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 (*Profit and Loss, Fire and Ice*) 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. Jennifer holds a B.A. in Social Welfare and Ethnography through Cinema from U.C. Berkeley.



PRODUCTION TEAM

Editors – Quinn Costello, Marta Wohl

Cinematographers – Andrew Black, Will Parrinello, Vicente Franco

Sound – David Wendlinger

Associate Producers – Erin Lee, Marlo McKenzie, Ashley Tindall

Narrators – Graham Greene, Tantoo Cardinal, Q'orianka Kilcher,
Rhoda Roberts, Luana Busby-Neff

Additional Resources

Sacred Land Film Project [Bibliography](#)

Sacred Land Film Project:

- ☉ [U.S. Laws and Court Cases Involving Sacred Lands](#)
- ☉ [International Efforts to Protect Sacred Lands](#)
- ☉ [Select from more than 100 individual sacred site reports](#)
- ☉ [Sacred Land Reader](#) (6 essays, 92 pages)
- ☉ [Ethics for Visiting a Sacred Place](#)

Books

Deloria, Vine, Jr., *God is Red* and *For this Land: Writings on Religion in America*

Feld, Steven and Basso, Keith, *Senses of Place* (especially the essay “Wisdom Sits in Places”)

Nabokov, Peter, *Where the Lightning Strikes: The Lives of American Indian Sacred Places*

World Wide Fund For Nature and Alliance of Religions and Conservation, *Beyond Belief—Linking Faiths and Protected Areas For Biodiversity Conservation*

Articles

Sponsel, Leslie E., 2007, “[Religion, Nature and Environmentalism](#),” *Encyclopedia of Earth*

Sponsel, Leslie E., 2008, “[Sacred Places and Biodiversity Conservation](#),” *Encyclopedia of Earth*

Websites

[Challenging Christian Hegemony](#) (by Paul Kivel, author)

[Intercontinental Cry Magazine](#) – essential news on the world’s indigenous peoples

[Sacred Sites: Places of Peace and Power](#) (by Martin Gray, author/photographer)

[The Cultural Conservancy](#)

Film

In the Light of Reverence – (2001) directed by Christopher McLeod, Sacred Land Film Project, on three sacred site struggle in the U.S.

Curricula

Lessons of our Land – from Indian Land Tenure Association

Project Wet – Water Education for Teachers

Face to Faith – curriculum for teaching about religion in schools

In the Light of Reverence Teacher's Guide

