

ALTAI PROJECT | AMAZON WATCH | BORNEO PROJECT | GAIA FOUNDATION
PROTECT KAHO‘OLAWÉ ‘OHANA | SACRED LAND FILM PROJECT
WOMENS’ EARTH AND CLIMATE ACTION NETWORK

IUCN WORLD CONSERVATION CONGRESS 2016

BIOGRAPHIES OF KEY INDIGENOUS PARTICIPANTS (PARTIAL LIST, IN PROCESS)

Altai, Russia

Danil Mamye is an indigenous leader from the Altai Republic of Russia, in southern Siberia. He is the founding director of the regional Uch Enmek Ethnocultural Nature Park, one of Russia’s most successful regional parks, and director of Tengri School of Spiritual Ecology, an organization that works for the integration of traditional indigenous culture and customs with environmental conservation as well as the overall revival and transmission of Altaian traditional knowledge and culture. A geologist and geographer by education and native-born Altaian, Danil worked for years during the “Soviet Times” in Uzbekistan before feeling called to return to his home Karakol Valley in central Altai Republic.

Borneo

Yahuda Tungang aka “Komeok” is an indigenous Penan from Sarawak, Borneo. Komeok has been on the front lines of human rights and environmental justice campaigns in Malaysian Borneo for decades. He has been involved in dozens of blockades and non-violent direct actions against logging companies since the mid 1990s. Founder and director of the Penan organization Keruan, Komeok has facilitated community programs in education, sanitation, community mapping, and sustainable livelihoods since 1991.

Peter Kallang is an indigenous Kenyah from the Baram River basin. Peter has dedicated the last six years of his life to community organizing to protect his ancestral land from destructive dam development in the Malaysian State of Sarawak on the island of Borneo. A retired engineer, he led the grassroots organization SAVE Sarawak Rivers as volunteer Chairman since 2010. As Chairman of SAVE Rivers, Peter led a coalition of Kenyah, Kayan and Penan communities from remote Sarawak in an unprecedented victory: cancellation of a mega-dam that would have flooded their homes and destroyed vast areas of the world’s oldest rainforests. Peter’s activism led to the longest standing blockades in Sarawak’s history, to the chief minister declaring a moratorium on the Baram Dam, and to the government of Sarawak legally restoring land rights.

Colombia

Aura Tegría Cristancho is a 26-year old indigenous lawyer from Colombia’s U’wa Nation. Since late 2013, she has served as the legal advisor to the U’wa Association of Traditional Authorities and Councils (ASOU’WA). During her tenure, Aura has been central to a number of important advances made by the U’wa people in the defense of their ancestral territory. Extraordinarily, the U’wa were able to successfully challenge a natural gas exploration platform, called Magallanes, which was constructed within their ancestral territory in early 2014.

Ecuador

Nina Sicha Siren Gualinga is a 23-year-old indigenous leader from the Kichwa community of Sarayaku in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Since she was 8 years old, she has been actively involved in local, national and global advocacy efforts in defense of indigenous rights and territories in the

Amazon, and for climate justice. In 2011, she represented Sarayaku youth at the hearing before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights in Costa Rica where Sarayaku won an historic victory against the Ecuadorian government for violating their rights and territory for oil drilling. In 2015, she joined a delegation from Sarayaku at COP21 in Paris advocating for the protection of “Living Forests” by advancing the *Kawsak Sacha* proposal.

Patricia Gualinga Montalvo is a Kichwa leader from Sarayaku, Ecuador. Numbering some 2,000 people, the Kichwa people of Sarayaku live deep in the Ecuadorian Amazon rainforest. They are also known as the “Pueblo del Medio Dia,” or people of the Zenith, which stems from an ancient prophecy of their ancestors: that Sarayaku would be a pillar of territorial, cultural, and spiritual defense, a beacon of light as strong as the noonday sun at its zenith. Ms. Montalvo is one of the key protagonists in the recent historic indigenous rights victory at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. In 2012, the Court found the Ecuadorian government guilty of rights violations when it authorized oil exploration and militarization of Sarayaku’s lands without consulting the community. The decision included the most detailed and binding language to date on indigenous peoples’ right to prior consultation. Patricia will present *Kawsak Sacha*, the Sarayaku’s “Living Forest” proposal to protect their territory and sacred natural sites from oil drilling and logging.

Mongolia

Altantsetseg Tsedendamba, Association for Protection of Altai Cultural Heritage (Altai Uv), is a translator and a ceremonial assistant to Oyunbaata. Altantsetseg is a Mongolian elder of Eesenmend clan, guardians of Mongolian Altai. She has a university degree in chemistry/technology, and is fluent in Russian and has intermediate level of English. Currently she is working for the Association for Protection of Altai Cultural Heritage (Altai Uv).

Oyunbaatar Tseren, Tengriin Sylder Shamans Association, is a Buryat-Mongolian shaman and the Head of Shamans’ Union Tengriin Sylder in the Dornod Province of Mongolia. He belongs to an ancient lineage of shamans and spiritual practitioners of the Galzuut clan. He started his shamanic work in 1997 by helping his father, a legendary Tseren Zaarin baavai, a shaman of 13 levels of initiation, one of a handful powerful shamans, who survived the purges of socialist times. Oyunbaatar together with his father and his disciples established the Union of Shamans in 2003 and currently is the head of this association. The mission of the organization is “rekindling and revival of authentic forms of Mongolian shamanism, strengthening inter-religious harmony, increasing the inexhaustible spiritual and social capital of the Mongolian people in relation to the surrounding world and nature, carrying out comprehensive studies of transcendental processes and phenomena.” Membership in the Union currently involves around 500 practicing Mongolian shamans. In 2015 he was invited to take part in the International Summit of Sacred Sites Guardians in Borneo and to conduct a ceremony for honoring Mt. Kinabalu and consolidating cultural and spiritual practitioners around protection of sacred sites. His presentations will focus on ecological instructions from the ancestors and ways of restoring and reinforcing reciprocal relations between humans and nature through ceremonies and rituals. A special emphasis of the presentation will be on protection of sacred sites, ceremonies to ancestral spirits, spiritual owners of lands and waters and ceremonies connected to seasons and nature’s cycles.

Kenya

Molu Kulu Galgallo is a Gabbra camel herdsman from the County of Marsabit in northern Kenya. He is a ritual Elder and a holy person (Dabeela) of the Yaa Odhola, a permanent mobile village which also serves an assembly of the Gabbra supreme council of elders, a living holy shrine and capital where the administrative and spiritual life of the Odhola phratry is centred. The Yaa is responsible for the regular performance of rituals that ensure the blessings of God on the whole phratry, held at holy grounds (Arda Jilla). Molu has been a Dabeela for 15 years and in 2014 undertook a pilgrimage to the Turbi sacred region. This is a transition ceremony in which new *luba* (a generation set) is incorporated and a new group of *dabeela* is initiated. Involving a mass migration, it is the grandest, lengthiest and most elaborate of all Gabbra ceremonies, celebrated every seven years (or multiples of seven) by each of the five Gabbra phratry on sacred sites. Molu is now an elder who plays an advisory role (Jars Gorsa) in the Yaa.

Kyrgyzstan

Kamil Mamdaliev, National Ethno-Cultural Complex Manas Ordo, is a prominent Manaschi (reciter of Manas epics) of modern Kyrgyzstan. He is from Kang-Burgo village, in the Talas district. At the age of 12, Kamil was initiated as a Manaschi. Presently he works for the National Cultural Complex Manas Ordo in Talas that has become a new sacred site for many Kyrgyz pilgrims. Kamil will recite an episode of his choice from the Manas Epic, the great, centuries-old epic poem of the warrior Manas, chronicling the story of the Kyrgyz people.

Papua New Guinea

Melchior Ware is an indigenous leader from the village of Bosmun, on the Ramu River, in Papua New Guinea. A marine biologist by training, Mel returned to his home village to lead the fight against the Chinese-government owned RamuNico mine, which threatens the ecological and spiritual health of the sacred Ramu River.

Banak Gamui is an indigenous leader and biologist from Goroka, Papua New Guinea, recently named Executive Director of the Karawari Caves Arts Project, which was founded by anthropologist Nancy Sullivan, who died tragically in a car accident in 2015. Gamui holds a Master's Degree in Biology from the Univ. of Missouri. He spent 7 years co-directing the PNG Institute of Biological Research (2008-2014). Gamui has extensive experience conducting biodiversity and conservation fieldwork throughout PNG where he successfully applied his skills in scientific analysis, facilitation, negotiation and conflict resolution. Gamui teaches Biological Sciences at the University of Goroka, Eastern Highlands Province, and will begin as ED of the Karawari Caves Arts Project in December 2016. At WCC he will attend sessions on World Heritage Site processes to follow on what Nancy started at the last WCC in Jeju, South Korea.

United States

Dorothy FireCloud is an enrolled member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe and is Superintendent of Montezuma Castle and Tuzigoot National Monuments in Arizona. She was Superintendent at Mato Tipila (Devils Tower National Monument) from 2006-2012. She joined the federal government in 1992 as a Water Rights Specialist for the Bureau of Indian Affairs. From 1996 to 1998, she worked for the Pueblo of Zuni developing their water rights program. She worked for the U.S. Forest Service in from 1998 to 2006 as the SW Regional Tribal Relations Program Manager. She also served as the Team Leader of the National Implementation Team on Tribal Relations, which wrote the Forest Service consultation policy on Tribal relations. She is currently a member of the Department of Interior, Government to Government Team, which is

responsible for developing a national consultation policy on Tribal relations.

Caleen Sisk is the Chief and Spiritual Leader of the Winnemem Wintu Tribe, who practice their traditional culture and ceremonies in ancestral territory along the McCloud River watershed in northern California. Since assuming leadership responsibilities in 2000, Caleen has focused on maintaining the cultural and religious traditions of the tribe as well as advocating for salmon restoration, the Human Right to Water and the protection of indigenous sacred sites. She is also currently leading her Tribe's efforts to work with Maori and federal fish biologists to return Chinook salmon to the McCloud River, and to prevent the U.S. government from raising the height of Shasta Dam, which would flood Winnemem traditional territory for the second time.