



ALLIANCE FOR
INDIGENOUS
ENVIRONMENTAL
STEWARDSHIP SUMMIT

ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

APRIL 2024

SUMMARY

ALLIANCE FOR INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP SUMMIT

The envisioning session for the Alliance for Indigenous Environmental Stewardship (AIES) Summit's network brought together a diverse group of Indigenous environmental leaders and stakeholders to collaboratively define the future direction and impact of the network. Central to the discussion was the question, "What collective impact do we envision for AIES, and what specific goals can we make to realize this vision?" The envisioning session outlined essential strategies and ideas to support the network's future work. The network members identified six main themes: organizational development, leadership training, community engagement, paradigm-shifting, sustainable funding, and wellness initiatives. Through vibrant discussions and interactive activities, participants generated many ideas and actionable goals to propel the network toward a sustainable and impactful future rooted in Indigenous leadership and values.



HOW WE GOT HERE



We proposed to use the grant funds to support:
A Summit bringing 25-30 professionals working in conservation organizations across the country, focusing on those working to advance Indigenous conservation and tribal partnerships, together in person for a two-day gathering.
A consultant to provide strategic planning and facilitation support.

The objective of the Summit is to convene a group in person and consider options for how to move forward as a more formal body. At the Summit we will:

- Dig deeper on shared priorities and goals;
- Identify spaces of systemic and collaborative change opportunities in conservation;
- Build camaraderie; and
- Support each other in preventing burnout/ensuring wellness, and discuss ways our organizations can support retention of professionals in this space given the unique burdens put on people working to advance Indigenous partnerships and priorities in conservation and environmental spaces. (The group also intends to pursue funding elsewhere to support this aspect of our ongoing work).

The desired outcomes of the three-day Summit for Staff Supporting Indigenous Conservation were for participants to:

- Develop deep relationships;
- Create a common language;
- Decide collectively how to maintain community; and
- Identify spaces of systemic and collaborative change opportunities in conservation.

- 25-30 individuals representing at least 10 organizations attend the Summit.
- The Summit generates a draft document outlining shared priorities.
- The leadership group develops a post-Summit action plan.



ABOUT THE EVENT

CORE PLANNING COMMITTEE



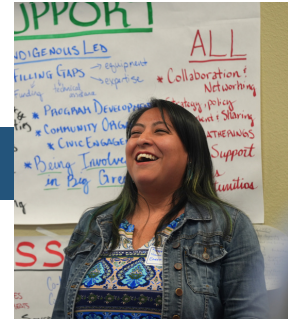
STARLYN MILLER
(LITTLE SHELL
CHIPPEWA/MENOM
INEE/MOHICAN)
THE WILDERNESS
SOCIETY



JOEL MOFFET
(NEZ PERCE)
NATIVE AMERICANS
IN PHILANTHROPY



TAHLIA BEAR
(FORT MCDOWELL
YAVAPAI/NAVAJO)
WESTERN
RESOURCE
ADVOCATES



STEFANIE TSOSIE
(NAVAJO)
EARTHJUSTICE

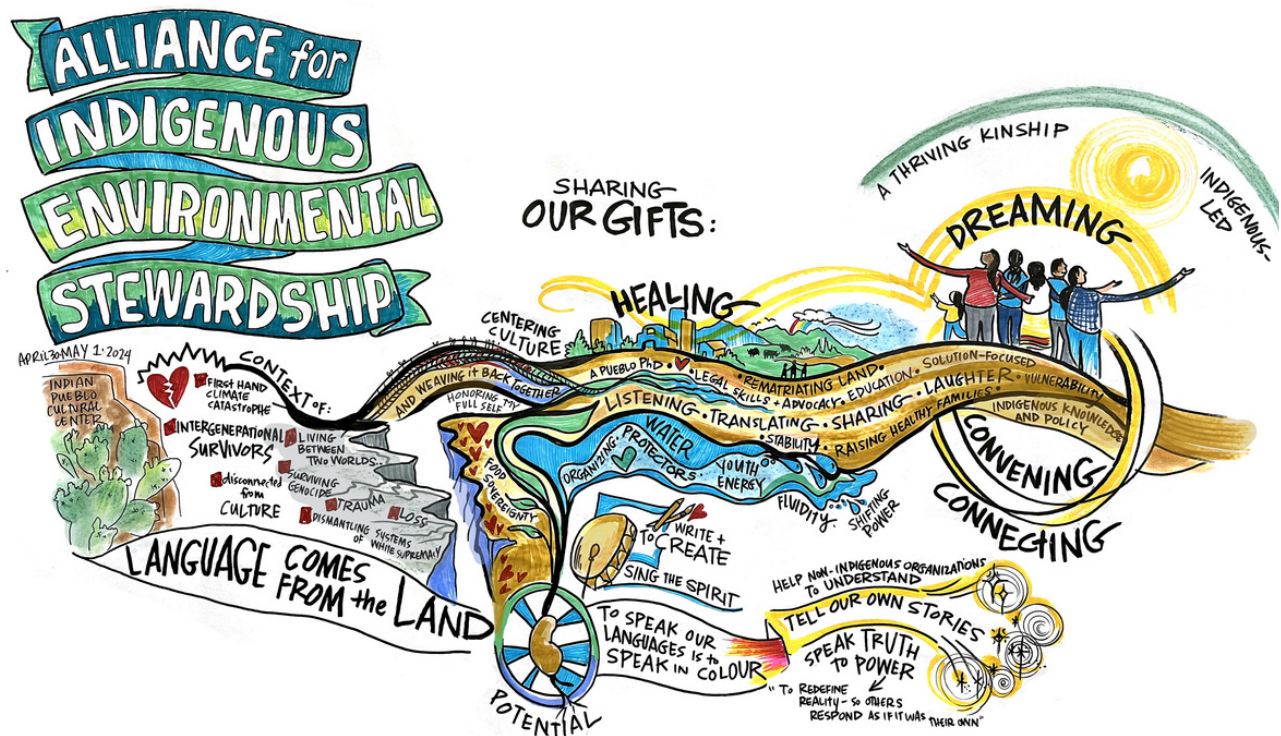
*James Mowdy, The Wilderness Society and Crystal Yankawgé Nelson (Tlingit), The Nature Conservancy were integral to the planning but were not able to attend.

April 30-May, 2024
Albuquerque New Mexico
Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
26 Participants



FACILITATION

"WHAT COLLECTIVE IMPACT DO WE ENVISION FOR AIES, AND WHAT SPECIFIC GOALS CAN WE MAKE TO REALIZE THIS VISION?"



LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES:

Leadership and Training Opportunities emerged as one of the key areas for the Alliance's work. We identified both big-picture opportunities and key elements to include in future work.

- Leadership Development: Creating and implementing development programs.
- Training and Tools: Establishing training sessions and learning labs.
- Mentorship Programs: Supporting youth and young professionals through mentorship.
- Biannual Events: Hosting events to foster community and collaboration.
- Career Support: Providing resources and guidance for career development.
- Annual Gatherings: Organizing yearly meetings to strengthen the network.
- Policy and Advocacy Hub: Creating a clearinghouse for policy experts and advocacy initiatives.

KEY ELEMENTS OF LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

- Connection to Lands/Outside: Emphasize the importance of maintaining a connection to the land and outdoor environments as a foundational aspect of leadership and personal growth.
- Gatherings In-Person: Advocate for regular in-person gatherings to build community, share experiences, and foster deeper connections.
- Time and Space Rest: Recognize the need for dedicated time and space for rest and rejuvenation, acknowledging the importance of self-care.
- Continuous Learning: Provide ongoing learning opportunities throughout the year to support professional and personal development.
- Trauma Awareness: Ensure understanding and awareness of existing traumas, such as land loss, and their impacts.
- Self-Awareness: Encourage practices that help individuals become more self-aware and reflective.
- Peer Support: Foster a network of peer support to share challenges, successes, and advice.
- Political Education: Include political education to keep the community informed about local and broader political issues.
- Decolonizing Norms: Work towards decolonizing professional norms, promoting authenticity, and honoring cultural practices.
- Community Leadership: Invite grassroots leaders to share their knowledge and experiences.
- Knowledge Transfer: Facilitate knowledge transfer between different generations and groups.
- Professional Navigation: Provide guidance on navigating professional environments while staying true to personal and cultural values.
- Balancing Obligations: Address the balance between professional responsibilities and family/personal obligations.
- Advocacy for Ceremonies: Advocate for the inclusion of ceremonies and cultural practices in professional settings.
- Rest Retreats: Organize retreats focused on rest and rejuvenation as vital components of leadership.
- Internships/Recruitment: Develop pathways for internships and recruitment to build the next generation of leaders.
- Ally Support: Create resources for allies to address challenges like emotional labor.
- Warrior Care: Promote discussions on caring for those in leadership roles.

ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Clear Mission: Grounded in Indigenous Right Relations.
- AIES as a Non-Profit Network: Focused on Indigenous leadership.
- Formalizing Network Structure: Such as obtaining 501(c)(3) status.
- Shared Values and Strategic Planning: Setting common values and developing specific strategic plans.
- Project Mapping: Identifying environmental organizations in Indigenous territories (NDN Country).
- Support for Jobs and Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Promoting employment opportunities and preserving traditional knowledge.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Youth and National Trainings: Focusing on empowering the youth.
- Community Knowledge Sharing: Promoting knowledge exchange and collaborations.
- Growing the Network: Expanding the reach and influence of AIES.
- Utilizing AIES as a Superpower: Leveraging the strengths of the network.
- Breaking Through Competition: Fostering a spirit of collaboration and unity.
- Identifying and Creating Capacity for Collaboration Opportunities: Maximizing potential partnerships and cooperative efforts.

PARADIGM SHIFTING

- Storytelling Hub: Celebrating and elevating Indigenous stories and voices.
- Preservation of Ancestral Languages: Connecting language preservation to sacred lands.
- Equity to Access Nature: Ensuring equal opportunities for Indigenous communities to access natural resources.
- Assist with #LandBack: Supporting the movement to return Indigenous lands.
- Healing vs. Conservation Movement: Bridging the gap between healing and conservation efforts.
- Impact and Shift Power Dynamics: Changing the power dynamics to center Indigenous perspectives.
- Strengthening Relationships Between Movements and Policy Change: Enhancing cooperation between advocacy movements and policymakers.

FUNDING

- Increase Support for Indigenous-Led Organizations: Boosting financial and resource support.
- Sustainably Funded AIES: Ensuring long-term financial stability for AIES.

WELLNESS

- Self-Care: Promoting emotional intelligence strategies and methods for self-care.
- Innerstand, Understand, Overstand: Encouraging a deep comprehension and awareness within the community and current realities.
- Youth Empowerment: Helping Indigenous youth become great leaders and role models.
- Opportunities to Reset and Restore: Providing chances for healing and rejuvenation.
- Specific Wellness Retreats: Organizing retreats focused on wellness.
- Environmental Health Restoration Programs: Implementing programs to restore environmental health.

**WELLNESS IS A CRITICAL PART OF THE
WORK OF INDIGENOUS CONSERVATION
EMPLOYEES. AS MINORITIES WITHIN MANY
OF THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, PROPER
WELLNESS AND COMMUNITY ARE KEY
INGREDIENTS TO RETENTION OF
EMPLOYEES.**

FEEDBACK

FROM PARTICIPANTS

Tahoma Peak created a survey for participants to provide feedback. Overall, the feedback was very positive and the event seemed to impact all who attended.

Event Highlights:

Engaging activities like hikes, laughing games, and shared meals fostered strong bonds. Tahoma Peaks Solutions' facilitation and Drawing Change's graphics were highly praised.

Native Wellness Institute's activities brought joy and a positive atmosphere.

The event's thoughtful planning highlighted its importance and need.

Successes:

Structured facilitation and interactive activities kept sessions productive.

Networking and team-building activities created a strong collaborative foundation.

Participants valued discussions on challenges and solutions, identifying common goals.

Personal and organizational work sharing fostered a supportive community.

Areas for Improvement:

Extend the event to a week with more participants (around 60).

Allocate more time for sharing personal stories and in-depth challenge discussions.

Improve seating arrangements for better interaction.

Include more case studies and practical examples for deeper discussions.



Feedback and Comments:

Deep appreciation for the planning and execution of the event.

Emphasis on the need for ongoing support and future gatherings.

Prioritize mental wellness and environmental health restoration programs.

Highlight the importance of decolonizing spaces and integrating Indigenous knowledge.

Participant Motivations:

To connect and build a supportive community.

To discuss collaboration and unique challenges of Indigenous-led organizations.

To gain insights from other Indigenous leaders and share experiences.

To understand and implement policies like Free, Prior, and Informed Consent.

DRAFTED VISION STATEMENT

"A thriving Indigenous kinship
to land and all relatives"

During the envisioning session, AIES drafted a vision statement that encapsulates the organization's core values and aspirations. The revised vision, "A thriving Indigenous kinship to land and all relatives," reflects a commitment to strengthening relationships with the land, promoting holistic well-being, and upholding the responsibilities intrinsic to Indigenous culture. This vision aims to guide AIES in its mission to support and empower Indigenous communities, ensuring a sustainable and impactful future.

Keywords used in all drafted versions of the statements included:

- Healing/healed/healthy
- Restorative/rebirth
- Kinship/relatives
- Land/Mother Earth
- Indigenous
- Thriving/Freedom
- Responsibility
- Respect for ancestors

Constellations: ideas
about a shared vision



NEXT STEPS

SHORT TERM

Referral Network: Develop a referral network spreadsheet or LinkedIn page connecting individuals with resources.

“Ask Auntie” Program: Establish a program for professional and personal advice, with calls focused on educational and personal issues.

Conservation Recommendations: Provide policy recommendations for conservation organizations.

Acronym Cheat Sheet: Create a cheat sheet for commonly used acronyms.

Restorative Gatherings: Plan in-person gatherings designed to be restorative and restful.

Internal Resources: Build an internal resource database to support community members.

Peer Support Network: Establish a peer support network for mutual support.

Monthly Calls: ongoing monthly calls called Indigenous Leaders in Conservation calls and the suggestion is that we organize a schedule for those calls to address some of the suggested topics.



NEXT STEPS

MID TERM

Develop a Clear Mission Statement:

- Finalize the Vision statement and core values.
- Formulate a mission statement grounded in Indigenous Right Relations, reflecting the core values and vision of AIES.
- Communicate this mission to all stakeholders and incorporate it into all organizational materials.

Formalize Network Structure:

- Establish governance and operational frameworks to support the organization's growth and sustainability.
- In the future, the network may want to become more formalized and will need to begin the process of obtaining 501(c)(3) status to formalize AIES's structure as a non-profit network.

Secure Sustainable Funding:

- Develop strategies for sustainable funding to ensure the long-term stability of AIES.

Action Planning and Follow-up:

- Establish a detailed action plan with timelines and responsibilities for the above recommendations.
- Schedule regular follow-up meetings to track progress, address challenges, and adjust strategies as needed.
- Engage stakeholders continuously to ensure their input and support throughout the implementation process.



NEXT STEPS

LONG TERM

Create the AIES Website: Develop a comprehensive and accessible website as a digital hub for resources, information, and community engagement. Include sections for training materials, best practices, event information, and a clearinghouse of policy experts.

Implement Leadership and Training Programs: Develop and roll out leadership development programs, training sessions, and learning labs. Establish mentorship programs to support youth and young professionals within the community. Organize biannual events and an annual gathering to foster community and collaboration.

Promote Community Engagement: Launch initiatives for community knowledge sharing and collaboration. Expand the network by identifying and creating opportunities for partnerships and cooperative efforts.

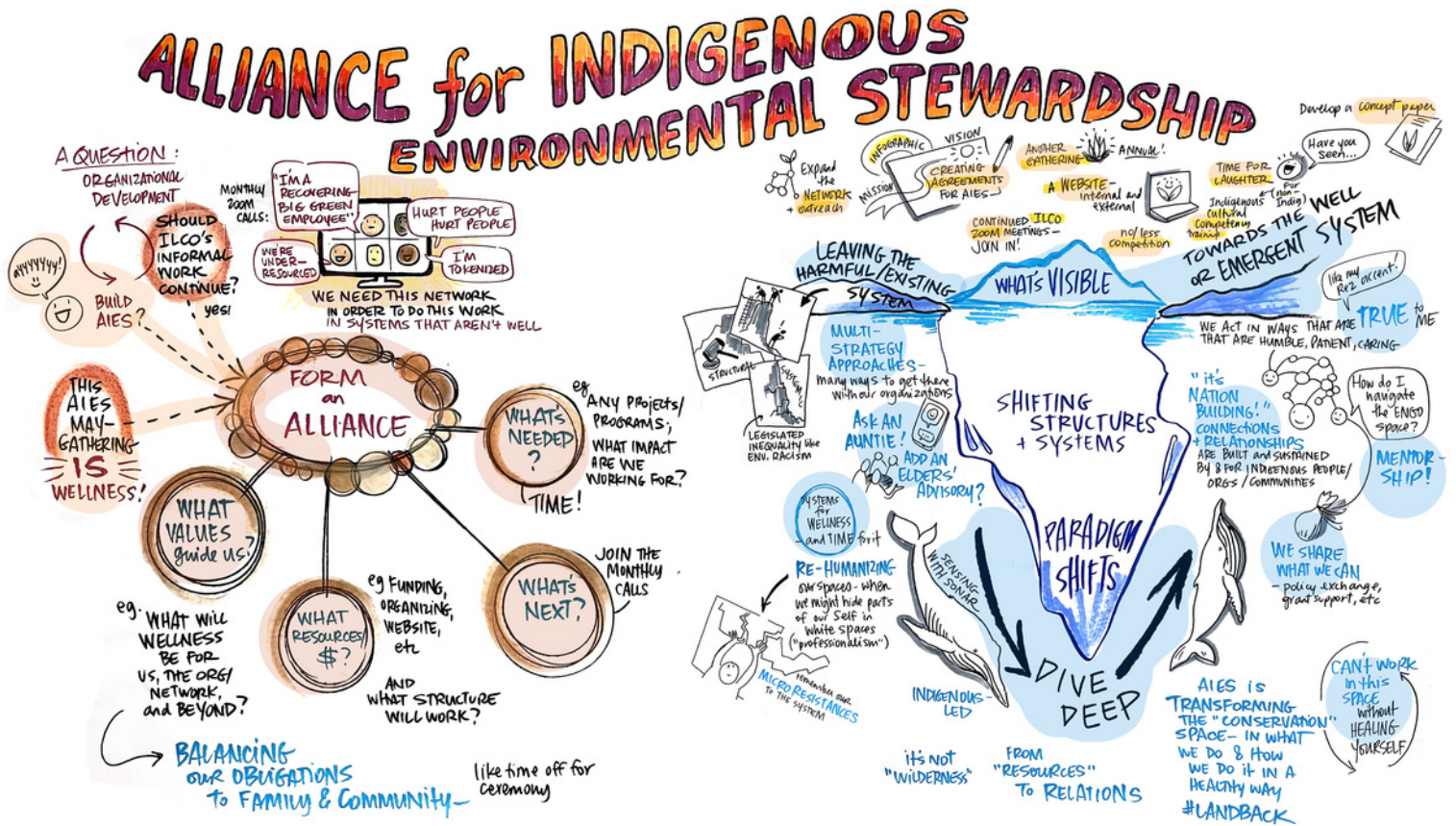
Shift Paradigms and Power Dynamics: Create a storytelling hub to celebrate and elevate Indigenous voices and stories. Strengthen relationships between advocacy movements and policy change initiatives.

Enhance Wellness Programs: Promote self-care and emotional intelligence strategies. Organize wellness retreats and environmental health restoration programs.



CONCLUSION

The envisioning session highlighted the importance of a clear mission, strategic development, leadership training, and the potential establishment of AIES as a robust, standalone organization. The collective goals and specific actions identified aim to foster an impactful and sustainable future for AIES, driven by shared values and community collaboration. The session also emphasized the need for paradigm-shifting, increased community engagement, sustainable funding, and wellness initiatives to support the overall vision of AIES.



ORGANIZING PARTNERS



Facilitators



This event was made possible with the generous support of

