

Honoring Harley Bastien, Board President 2015 - 2025

Indigenous Vision (IV) honors our late Board of Directors President, Harley Bastien who made his way to happy hunting grounds on September 28th, 2025. Born on July 22nd, 1956 in Brocket, Alberta, Harley Jack Bastien, Ihtoomahmaka, or “He Who Goes First”, lovingly served as President of our Board for over a decade with his unwavering support for the vision and work of Executive Director, Souta Calling Last. Harley was a proud member of the Piikani Nation and dedicated his entire life to protecting land, preserving Indigenous culture, and sharing knowledge for future generations through Harmony Walkers, Inc., and guiding many through hands-on wildlife conservation efforts like his annual Piikani Friends Along the River, or P.F.A.R. Fish Rescue.



Photo: Headshot provided by Harley for IV Website

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In Early October, Souta joined Harley's family and friends at the Buffalo Rock Tipi Camp to continue the 30+ years of the fish rescue in his name. Harley was passionate about this rescue because the Alberta government continues to shut the canal without regard to the thousands of fish being trapped away from the river, where they assert, "there are no fish present in the canal." Taking matters into his own hands he organized the relocating of thousands of "invisible fish," with many that are endangered and threatened native species, from the drying canal and back to the river so life can continue. Some of the fish are inventoried and measured and relocation is a swift job, thanks to the ever-increasing ingenuity in nets to push the fish towards the shallows to be scooped and lifted into a bucket elevator to small tanks, one aerated and temperature monitored to help reduce the stress experienced by the fish. After a short hold in the tanks the fish are driven to the closest river access point where a fish slide is employed to get them back into the river.

Harley not only leaves behind an incredible legacy of environmentalism, his relationships with fellow community members like the Calling Last family, whom he maintained and shared a devoted regard for Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) with over multiple generations. Harley was one of the many who came to sit on Souta's grandpa Art's living room couch seeking guidance.

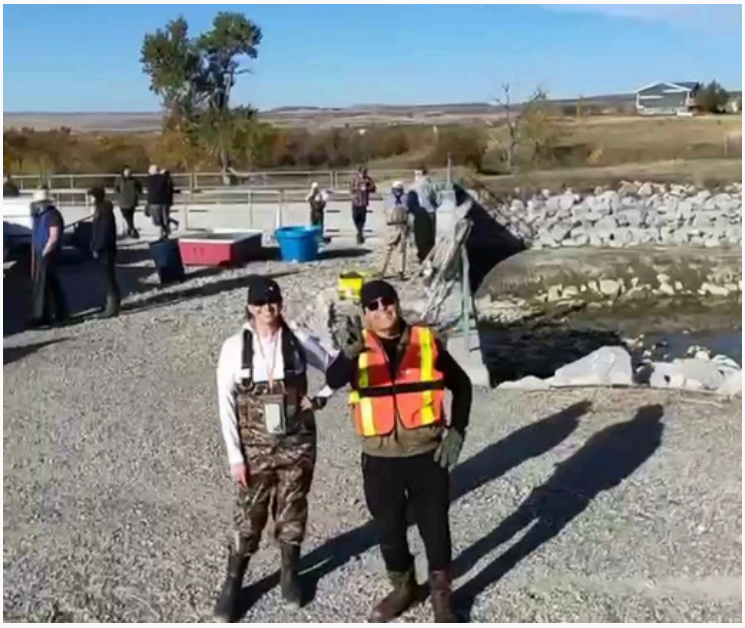


Photo: By Souta Calling Last: Souta and Harley say Oki to a small drone shot of the 2024 Fish Rescue



Photo: By Souta Calling Last Volunteers stand in shallow water of canal waiting for fish to be pushed from inside tunnel

Harley reciprocated the guidance and more, like using his experience guiding anthropological experts new to the field in the 80s when they first arrived in Southern Alberta. This invaluable insight provided to Souta over the years guided the development of the ethics and methodology of the Blackfoot Place Map, and now serves as a presentation Souta does for University guest lectures on the ethics of taking and community participatory research.

Harley was a good business man and thought that Indigenous Vision should be an LLC to protect the work put in by Souta, who ultimately decided on incorporating the organization as a 501c3 because her work would be a collection that belonged to the communities, with her acting as collector and caretaker and assisting with the reincorporation of cultural activities and resources for place based cultural-environmental education and conservation activities. With no other organizations similar to IV in existence at the time, Souta persevered through comments that it was a phantom organization and that she should get a real job utilizing her water resource-mining contamination cleanup training. But the map has proved to protect land and cultural practitioners, empowers youth and communities, and offers a strategy in the clean up of what already exists.



Knowing that, in his show of support for Souta's work, Harley wrote into a script he created with his friend Brad Himour, a young adult animated cartoon where Souta is written as the Chief of Piikani Nation, who puts an injunction on unauthorized mining activity in a culturally sensitive area. He was excited to share the script with Souta, and it provided the fuel she needed to bring the organization to its current 10 years. Through Harley's direct mentorship, in the midst of numerous obstacles within western systems where Indigenous process and protocol are nonexistent, Souta was successful in implementing TEK, for the first time ever, into publication at the federal level in a quality assurance project plan document (QAPP) within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2024. He also saw the same study detect PFAS in mink scat using conservation working dogs for the first time ever, making lethal sampling unnecessary when assessing ecosystem population health and food chain contaminants. This work can help to assess the environment's quality and build a tier system of risk levels for people looking to harvest cultural use items, medicine, and food from the environment. It also helps to ensure that native people and subsistence living are not more at risk from the massive amounts of human activity across the land. The maps show the concentration and proximity of the activity around reservations and other cultural use areas. Based on the maps, the activity is heavily located around reservation populations and correlates with the concentration levels where animal disease is being detected. This creates stronger ties and visual evidence of where human activity is concentrated, so is the level of disease and exposure to mining contamination that is increasing the unusable land for harvesting and cultural activities due to degradation to the point of harmful exposure.

"May the Force of Nature be with you."
- Harley Bastien



Photo source; Harley Bastien Facebook Profile

Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center Grand Opening, June 28, 2025

The Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center in Forest Grove, Montana is officially open and there are so many people we need to thank for making this historical event a reality! Here's a detailed breakdown of how things began to roll out once land owner Macie Ahlgren & Souta Calling Last put their dreams in motion together. And the love and community effort put forward couldn't result in anything but success.

On April 12th, 2024 Indigenous Vision was awarded a $15,000 grant from the Montana Department of Commerce, the funding paid for the advertising, promotion, and infrastructure needed for the grand opening celebration. However, the grant was reimbursable and only assisted the grand opening event party. This is the first reimbursable grant received by Indigenous Vision and administratively it required good planning and knowledge of grant guidelines to ensure that expenses would be covered. A total of $14,807.38 was spent to support the event infrastructure, tent, sound system, tables and chairs, town and roadside signage, and advertising for the Grand Opening Celebration.



Photo: Bear Gulch Billboard I-90 Billings, MT

Advertising was the largest expense and was completed through various mediums; $619.31 for Social Media advertising on Facebook and Instagram featuring Save the Date and promotion. Roadside guideway signs helped nearly 150 attendees find the location and totaled $30.93 from The Sign Shop in Lewistown, MT.


Photo: By Souta Calling Last, Bear Gulch Visitor Center Grand Opening guests

$450 was spent on a Montana Lifestyles Magazine advertisement, where the Bear Gulch The Grand Opening advertisement was a beautiful half-page feature. $10,843.40 was used for a YESCO billboard located along I-90 in Billings that will continually be up and running into the spring of 2026.

L-Town Rentables provided $300 worth of tables and chairs for guests to enjoy our bison, berries, burgers, and brats bbq. During the event a bear curiously walked into the event surprising guests gathered around the visitor center! The young honey brown colored bear realized how many people were there and decided it was best to run away. Neither bear, nor human was harmed during the exciting and unforgettable encounter. To have the event rain or shine, $804.16 was spent on party tents, thankfully on the day we were greeted with a perfectly sunny day.


Photo By: Souta Calling Last Bear Gulch Grand Opening crowd

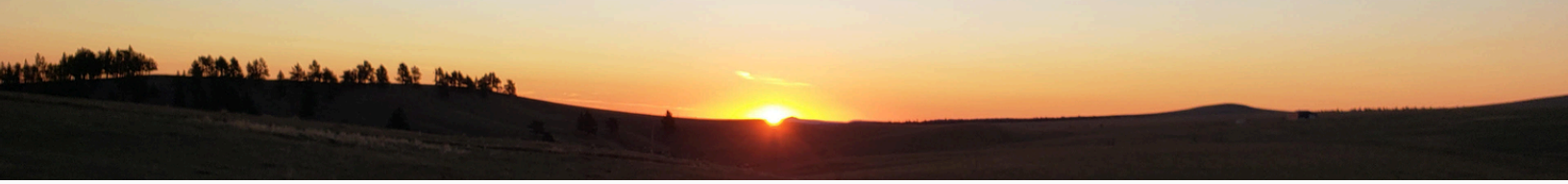




Photo By Melissa Spence: Grand Opening MC talks about importance of place and person

The event was MC'd by professional MC and Educator Jesse DesRosier, who also contributed to many of the exhibits for the Visitor Center as a special rights holder for some of the content featured. With his rights and participation, this makes the exhibit culturally appropriate at the highest standards within the community. $1299 was spent on a solar generator to power the Peavy Speakers and a Mic. Finally, $460.58 for Portable Toilets and a handwashing station was used to accommodate guests and sanitary needs for the event. Unfortunately, only $13,000 of these expenses were reimbursed through the state grant.

Blackfoot Elder and cultural teacher Mike Bruised Head or Niina Piiksi, or 'Chief Bird' of the Blood Tribe, led the group in a Pipe Ceremony; the first in over 100 years in that area. It symbolized not just the return of the Blackfeet to the land, but the commitment to friendship and peace between the wonderful Ahlgren family and all those who want to engage with the historical teachings of Bear Gulch.



Photo by Melissa Spence; Mike Bruised Head sings honor song for Souta

Grandson of Chief Earl Old Person of the Blackfeet Nation, Arlan Edwards, who is an educator and cultural knowledge keeper, shared his gift of song and drum with us through the day's events. After the Pipe Ceremony the crowd gathered outside the visitor center for the official ribbon cutting but not before we got to our gift giving where we honored those who helped us make the event so special.



Photo: Licenced image of Unidentified, Four Horns, and Jim Rabbit. Provincial Archives of Alberta, from the Harry Pollard fonds, P51l;

Once the ribbon was cut attendees were officially given access inside the visitor center where they could take in the 16-ft timeline assembled with help from Janita Tall Man, Blood & Blackfeet, who is a currently a student at the University of Montana in the Anthropology Program, along with a heavy shield 3D topographic tabletop map of the land and heavy shield sites with Blackfoot specific designs and symbolism, Macie's personal collection of arrowheads collected from her other property where a 70+ tipi ring camp located by a spring marked with a small effigy.

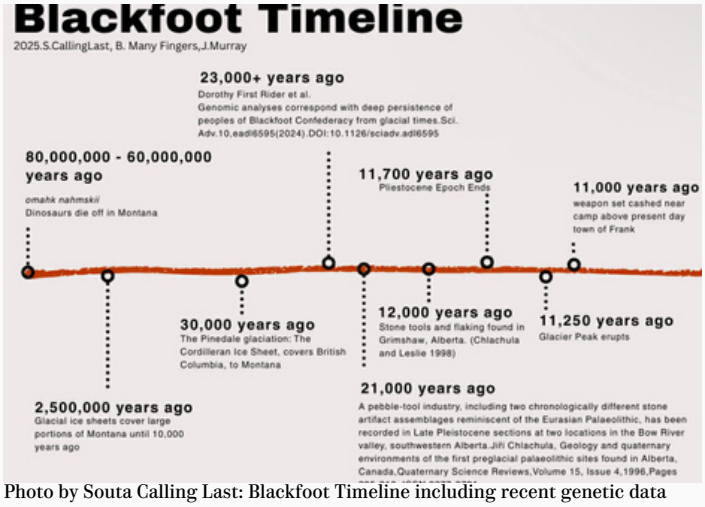


Photo by Souta Calling Last: Blackfoot Timeline including recent genetic data spanning 16ft across the Visitor Center wall to present day

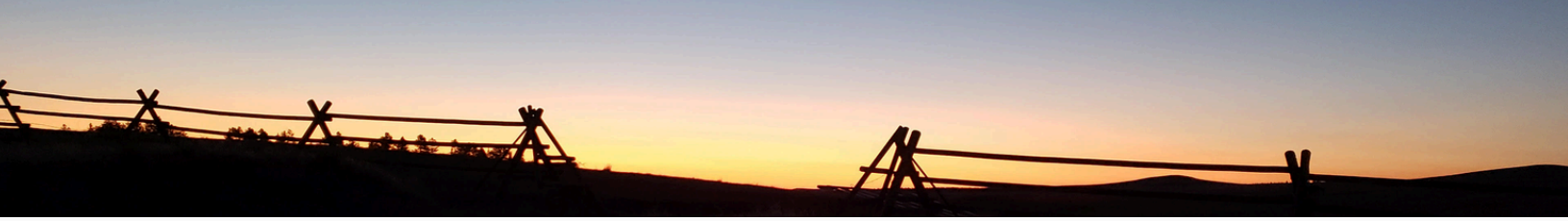




Photo By Melissa Spence: Visitor Center Bear Brave and War Lodge exhibit

Tools such as hammer stones found on the property were likely used to break bones and extract marrow about around the same time as the roasting pits located below the pictographs were in use. A special heavy shield version of tools were commissioned from Marty Heavy Head, Blood Tribe, included a scythe, an axe, a scraping tool, and Spear and are what is found in the heavy shield pictograph and petroglyph images.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Heavy Shield and Blackfeet and Blood Tribe Travelers

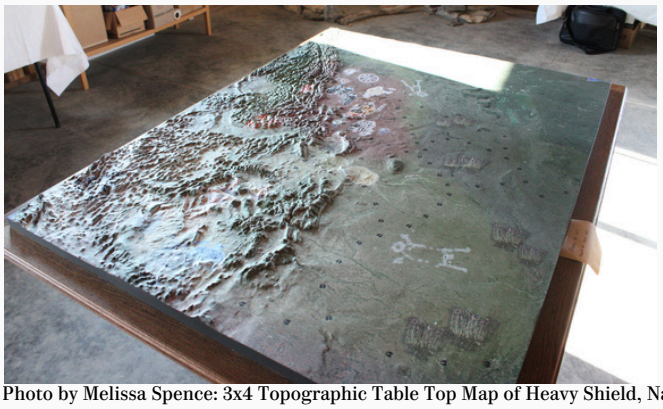


Photo by Melissa Spence: 3x4 Topographic Table Top Map of Heavy Shield, Napi and Medicine Wheel Distribution

Souta provided a bison skull where the passerby must stick their hand into the mouth of the bison to hear the Reggie Crow Shoe story told by Jesse DesRosier about the Blackfeet and the very first treaty made with the Bison Nation--when they agreed to stop eating us. Early photos of the Blackfeet bear braves are prominently on display to show Blackfeet men in their Bear Brave Society headdresses and ceremonial wear.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Blood Tribe Bear Braves 1910 and weapons

By displaying this photo, Souta hopes to help people on tours identify Blackfoot symbolism found in and around heavy shield pictographs, specifically the headdresses that are specific to a Blackfoot War Society. Two life-sized Bear Brave Mannequins are another exhibit displaying bear braves in the process of making a war lodge, or a quick shelter, similar in shape to a tipi, often used when traveling. The photo backdrop of a war lodge is one that Souta located in mapping efforts near the Bob Marshall Wilderness. This visitor center is truly one of a kind for its unique, hand-made displays and exhibits created entirely from a Blackfoot perspective, respectfully curated by Souta Calling Last.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Grand Opening Visitors take in exhibits



The building is still in the final phases of construction and the event was held without finished walls and wiring, so there will be another event in the Spring to celebrate the first year in business. Big thanks to Boyce Lumber out of Missoula, MT and Colin McNeely for your support and donation of nearly $2000 in insulations and materials needed to finish the building interior. There was much more spent in and around town preparing for it on things that were unfortunately not covered, such as food where we bought nearly $1000 in food and cake from local grocery stores and hunters. The landowner provided nearly $40,000 to local contractors for the new building, taking two tries to erect, due to contractor issues with the concrete foundation level, etc. This issue caused us to request an extension, which we were very thankful to be granted. The extension allowed us to get the building and the land in good condition for meeting the public.



Photo by Souta/Dan: Souta picking up dontaions from Colin and Boyce Lumber, Weapons commissioned from Marti Heavy Head and Grizzly donation from MT Fish, Wildlife and Parks Missoula/Bozeman Office

Indigenous Vision is also proud of the amount of money this event provided to Blackfeet artists and knowledge keepers. Nearly $21,650 was spent on art commissions, event MC, Elder and Pipe Ceremony, exhibit weapons, Blackfeet technical skills & Research, and Labor.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Arlan, Jesse and Souta open the event

The event is being considered more than a success within the Blackfeet Community. It's a success for Montana community relations that many are saying will impact the experience and identity of future generations. Thank you to everyone for your assistance in helping us achieve our Mission to revitalize communities, culture, people, and land. We are proud to announce that almost 150 people attended the 4-hour-long rural grand opening celebration. About 25% were from the Blackfoot communities - (Browning, Heart Butte, Blood Tribe, thank you to the many that traveled long distances to take in the historical occasion).

Attendees who visited with Souta, Macie, and another member of the Indigenous Vision team reported that those who were not local (70%) were staying at the Lewistown motels, area Airbnb, and the Bear Gulch dry campground. Many had to drive back to Billings after the event because lodging in Lewistown was sold out. The Indigenous Vision team spent $2,700 at the Yogo Inn and Super 8 Motel for elders and other team members who assisted with the event or traveled more than 5 hours. One group, the Billings Gem & Mineral Society, represented by Kathy Burke presented a $1000 contribution to the Visitor Center and helped to create more unique rural roadside educational opportunities. This is so appreciated! The land owner invested nearly $40,000 of her own money towards getting the building ready for grand opening day. But the dream is significant, and the effort is worth it because it stands to change the way Montanans learn Native American history and what they're learning.

The site hosts about 250 youth annually, including students from Wyoming Schools. One group of 125 youth held an annual Envirothon event where the question was proposed what youth would do if they were the owners of a significant site like Bear Gulch, and the answers were across the spectrum. All in favor of education and protection, with a few in favor of removing public access altogether.

During the event groups of attendees were invited to two hikes starting with an early morning option for those who camped in the area. Another hike was offered in the late afternoon for attendees who wanted to take-in the pictographs during sunset. On this tour, a standup headdress heavyshield was identified by Blackfeet participants, truly a special moment for all the Blackfeet in attendance.

For the non-Blackfoot person, Stand-up headdresses are specific to the Blackfoot, or Nitsitapi People, another confirmation that the site is indeed 90% or more made by Blackfoot hands. Hiking the Bear Gulch Pictographs are available from June to September daily from Wednesday to Sunday. Access is by guided tour only, and offered daily at 10am with an option of special group tours by request including options of dry camping.



Photo by Souta Calling Last: D-stretch image of pictographs at Bear gulch Napi with Phallus

Tour proceeds assist in on-going site protections, education materials, and guide livelihoods. If you're interested in learning about the Land in this distinct and incredible way we recommend you visit the beargulch.net website and make your reservation with the Ahlgren family. Indigenous Vision is thankful for the site protection, empathy, and kindness from the Ahlgren family for being open to a collaboration of this kind on this level. And since June the reviews from visitors have been coming in and the results are wonderful!



Photo by Souta Calling Last: One style of Blackfoot Style Headdress and Heavy Shield



"I can honestly say this was one of the most incredible experiences we had while traveling near Lewistown. Our guide Macie took us on a journey to see pictographs that are thousands of years old, and the way she shared the history, stories, and cultural context brought the site to life in a way I'll never forget." - Jen from Belize, August 2025, Trip Advisor.

We would love to see you at the Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center for the annual season opening in Spring 2026. If you would like to contribute to ongoing expenses and be acknowledged as a friend of Indigenous Vision and the Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center, please make a donation on the Indigenous Vision website with the memo Bear Gulch.

Macie and Souta cannot extend enough heartfelt thanks and gratitude to the Lewistown community and greater Montana community for rallying together to resolve the foundation issues and getting the building raised by the June 28th celebration date! Everyone really pulled together to create a successful Grand Opening Day and the result is a great display of community in this location both past and present. Apologies if anyone was not included but should be, we can still fix it! Please contact Souta to make any corrections, the names will also be listed inside the Visitor Center on our Gratitude Wall:

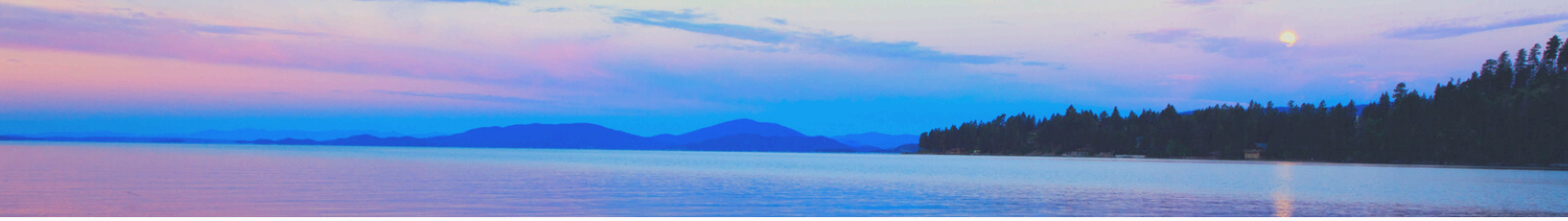
Nikki & Todd Jankord, Building Set Up
Cheryl Gallagher, Building Set Up
Mike & Jackie McGouldrick, Building Set Up
Melissa Spence, Event Planning
Stormy Gallagher, Logistics, Building Set Up
David & Seana Gallagher, Event Day Prep and Tours
Xerces and Megan Vodicka, Event Day Prep, Tours, and Site Protection
Mike Bruised Head, Name for Macie-Holy Rock Woman, Pipe Ceremony
Jesse DeRosier-Special rights holder for exhibit content, Event MC
Joe Wagner- Material and Set Up of Cairns and War Lodge
Colin McNeely- Coffee and gas money, In-kind Interior finishing materials donations
Mike Stevenson - Otter, Bear, and Beaver Fur Donation
MT Fish, Wildlife & Parks - Missoula/Bozeman Offices Grizzly Donation
Boyce Lumber, Missoula - Interior finishing material
Bloedorn Lumber, Lewistown - Building Construction
Spika Manufacturing, Lewistown - Donation
Kodiak Concrete, Lewistown - Building Construction
H&E Equipment - Building Construction
Montana Lifestyles Magazine
The Sign Shop, Lewistown
Yesco Advertising
Missoula Rug Cleaning - Saving rescued movie set Bison hides - Exhibit and Honorarium Gifts
Maryanne Mattson - Donation
Janita Tall Man - Exhibit: Blackfoot Timeline
Evelyn Makayla Martin - Exhibit Art: Blackfoot Travelers
Rebecca Many Grey Horses - Exhibit Editing/Translations
Marty Heavy Head - War weapon and tool Set
Deb Red Shirt - Parfleche honorariums
Orlando Calling Last - Bison rawhide for heavy shield
Gheri Hall - Exhibit Editing/Narrative: War Lodge
Jessi Shea-Building Set Up
Christen Falcon-Raffle Tipi Set Up
Eddie and Maggie Johnston-Roatch - Raffle Tipi Set Up
Angela Johnston-Roatch - Raffle Tipi Set Up
Aaron and Jessica Schauf - Tipi Donation
Billings Gem & Mineral Society - Donation
Jim Keyser - Site research
John and Mavis Greer - Site research

Thank You



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 IV Dream Tipi Raffle and The Bear Gulch Pictograph Visitor Center

Overall, the event was a huge success and we're still seeing small celebrations within the Blackfoot Confederacy communities. Comments and feedback from the community say the event and the information about the pictographs have been culturally empowering and life-changing. Recently, Souta received a transfer at her community ceremonies to assist in her work that "involved going to many magical places like Bear Gulch." Souta is deeply honored to be recognized and equipped for the work by community members in this way.



MMIWarriors Retreat, Flathead Lake

Indigenous Vision's annual MMIWarriors Retreat took place along beautiful Flathead Lake in Rollins, MT, September 19th to 21st. Thank you to the Flathead Lake United Methodist Camp (FLUMC) and staff for sharing their stunning location and space with our participants and giving us all their respect and hospitality over our two night stay on the property. This camp was designed to provide a warm and restful environment to women and girls who are working and living through the MMIW (Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls) crisis in the surrounding area. Our attendees joined us from the states of Washington, Nevada, Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho, and of course Montana to take in a weekend of relaxation mixed with self defense, leisure, entertainment, and movement.



Graphic by Melissa Spence: Official MMIWarriors 2025 Official Camp sticker design

We had the camp almost completely to ourselves and bunked in multiple cabins where 25 women and girls ranging in ages as young as 4 years old to 63 years old made up a diverse intertribal group who had the opportunity to share their stories and aspirations from the past and for the future. With the comfort and overall wellbeing of our group in mind since the initial stages of planning this retreat, IV was able to arrange a variety of events, spaces, and activities spaced out over the weekend to ensure plenty of time for exploring the grounds by taking in mini-hikes, swimming, kayaking the lake, or simply resting in one of the peaceful cabins and healing setting.



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors camp Wellness Room

The first day was spent setting up the common areas of the camp like our Wellness Room with the help of Deborah Redshirt, Blackfeet/Dine, a Firekeeper, and Holistic Healing Practitioner who specializes in Energy Work. The space was created to give the ladies an area to meditate, reflect, pray, smudge, nap, get a massage, or use the red light therapy to heal and help in the recovery of any problem areas where we might be storing tension or unreleased trauma due to the work of MMIWG2S spaces. The Wellness Room was open 24 hours for anyone needing that extra freedom to slow down and release. As attendees arrived throughout Friday afternoon they were signed in, assigned a cabin, and given one of our MMIWarrior's goody bags that included self care items like facemasks, shower steamers, cleansing wipes, sleeping masks, mini native made lipgloss, a first aid kit, an informational brochure on the program, and some snacks.



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors camp attendees gathering at the shore of Flathead Lake



Our first night was dedicated to settling into the campground with the women and girls given free range access to get familiar with the property followed by a home cooked meal by our friend and artist Kristen Upham who joined us at last year's retreat in Pasco, WA and who has been a guest on the IVPodcast. With many attendees fatigued from travelling long distances we headed to our cabins early to rest up for Saturday's exciting schedule.



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors Self Defense with SBG-Missoula

Saturday consisted of our full lineup of events and activities that started with a delicious breakfast provided by the FLUMC staff followed by a two hour self defense session with the all-women team from SBG Missoula (Straight Blast Gym). Led by Bekah and her awesome crew, SBG guided our ladies through the importance of situational awareness in various scenarios, techniques and movements to avoid and prevent potentially violent outcomes, all executed in an approachable and realistic way for our youngest and eldest participants.



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors Self Defense with SBG-Missoula



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors Powwow Yoga with Acosia Red Elk

After a nourishing lunch the ladies were once again given free time to enjoy themselves before the next session which was the powerful Powwow Yoga and Breathwork workshop with the fabulous Acosia Red Elk of the Umatilla Tribe. IV invited Acosia back after experiencing her workshop at last year's retreat and the miraculous effects of her simultaneously high energy Powwow Yoga and grounding breathwork session that had our group releasing their anxieties, stresses, anger, and any other emotions being held in due to the demand of a fast paced and unnatural lifestyle of hustle, community, trauma, family, and the balancing of life general. This was the perfect way to sink into the late afternoon sun, go for a swim in the lake, and rest up for an evening of live music, dinner, and stargazing by the fire.



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 MMIWarriors Powwow Yoga with Acosia Red Elk





Photo by Melissa Spence MMIWarriors evening with Black Belt Eagle Scout

This year we added a live musical element to our event as IV believes in the healing power of music as good medicine. Early in 2025, we began a correspondence with Black Belt Eagle Scout and her team to coordinate a very special and intimate live performance at the retreat to give our ladies a stripped down and exclusive show. Katherine, Swinomish/Flathead, who is Black Belt Eagle Scout, stayed at the camp throughout the weekend and gave us a sublime one-hour show playing many crowd favorites and even taking a request or two from our group. With her partner at the merch table, IV was able to purchase our showgoers a Black Belt Eagle Scout item of their choice with many getting theirs autographed after the show.



Photo by Melissa Spence MMIWarriors evening with Black Belt Eagle Scout performing

As the stars began to sparkle during the New Moon weekend we gathered at the firepit along the lake where the Capoeman family honored their loved one followed by a cacao drinking ceremony led by Deborah Redshirt.



Photo by Melissa Spence MMIWarriors Honor and Opening Song by Miss Pacific Coast

Sunday was our goodbye day where we had our final meal as a group together. It was during this time where the fullness of the event was felt by the organizers and attendees leading to new friendships and connections in sisterhood. The MMIWarriors Retreat would not have been possible this year without the funding from the Tides Foundation, the Return to the Heart Foundation, and Grant Makers for Girls of Color. Thank you to the volunteers who made the weekend flow beautifully and the women and girls from the surrounding communities who showed up for themselves and each other.



Photo by Melissa Spence MMIWarriors group shot on FLUMC grounds at sunset

Yavapai-Apache Nation Youth Water Quality Events & Chewing Blackbones Watershed Youth Camp

IV's partnership and connection with the homelands of the Yavapai-Apache Nation (YAN) grew stronger over the summer with the Youth Water Quality Events led by Souta Calling Last and the YAN's Environmental Protection Department. On July 1st and September 12th, young community members of the Yavapai Apache Nation were invited to the Aquatic Macro-Invertebrate Investigation in the Verde River where a hands-on exploration and study was provided and facilitated to share knowledge about keeping the Verde River healthy for future generations.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Souta and YAN Environmental Protection Department staff with interns at office prepping for the days field event.

The Verde River, or Haka'he:la in the Yavapai language, is paramount to the Yavapai Apache Nation peoples identity and history, its health, maintenance and wellbeing stewarded by Tribal members is crucial for the futurity of its lifegiving nature. Sharing the skills of how to monitor and care for the Verde River is education IV is not only passionate about as an Indigenous organization, but has personal reverence to ED Souta Calling Last who gave birth to her son Onan along the river in 2017 while the organization was headquartered in Sedona, Arizona.



Photo by Melissa Spence: small fish inside the Verde River



Photo by Melissa Spence: Souta directing youth participant to good water meter location

IV's commitment to the revitalization and care for Water makes these Youth Water Quality Events with the Yavapai Apache Nation and the Blackfeet Nation a great way to encourage new generations to the importance of water, the quality of it, and the potential impacts of contaminated water to cultural activities. The Arizona water events felt full circle with some of the day's help coming from participants of the Indigenous Vision Arizona LIFESpa held in Pinetop, Arizona in 2018. The girls, Shayla and Angel, now seven years later had participated in a cultural plant walk with grandmothers Reba and Gertie, equine therapy and making a LIFESpa music video, were so proud to share their adventures in harvesting prickly pears to make syrup with the Wellness and Youth Prevention department. They took a moment to pose fabulously for a series of selfies with Souta at the water while prepping for the river assessment activities.



Photo by Melissa Spence: YAN EPD staff and youth investigating microvertebrates at table

The goal of the water events was to provide the hands-on training and experience for YAN EPD staff who are creating an annual event of investigating and identifying aquatic macro-invertebrates in the nymph and larval stages, snails, worms, crayfish, and clams that spend at least part of their lives in water) to involve the community and tell us about the health of the water for the river ecosystem and for safe recreational and cultural uses.



Photo by Melissa Spence: pollen found in riparian area used in ceremony for Apache girls

The youth were split into three Stream Teams; water quality team, kayak riparian team, and the macroinvertebrate team. With the help of staff from the Environmental Protection Department each group got to spend time both in and out of the water learning and having lots of fun at the same time. Each event ended with a BBQ lunch in the shade giving the group time to rest from the day's heat and reflect on what they learned.



Photo by Melissa Spence: Prepping kayaks for riparian team assessments



Photo by Melissa Spence: YAN youth and Souta Calling Last posing by truck

The Verde Valley is the traditional homeland of the Yavapai Apache People and the Verde River continues to give life to all communities in the area as the only Wild and Scenic River, a federal status that protects its natural and recreational values. IV looks forward to more collaborative events for incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into departmental activities.



Photo by Souta Calling Last: Verde River Fabulousness



Photo by Souta Calling Last: Previous IV LIFESpa Participant shares her prickly pear syrup and harvesting experience

The next day, Souta landed back in Missoula and hitched up the Indigenous Vision trailer hauling two kayaks and two paddle boards to join Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife and Indigenous Led on the shores of St. Mary's Lake on the Blackfeet Reservation to lead watershed and lake shore ecosystem assessment activities with a group of Blackfeet teenagers from August 13th-15th, 2025.

Souta had originally prepared for two three hour activities on day one and three of the camp. However, real world agenda disruptions happened and Souta did one full day of camp, fitting both the macroinvertebrate and kayak stream assessment investigation with a BBQ cheddar brat and mac and cheese lunch for everyone influenced by Onan (8), Souta's son, who joined her for camping during the event. She also ensured that St. Marys lake water was protected from her activities at different waters across the country by sewing the lake its own sampling kick net from reusable produce and game bags sewn around an extendable fish net for macro-invertebrate sampling

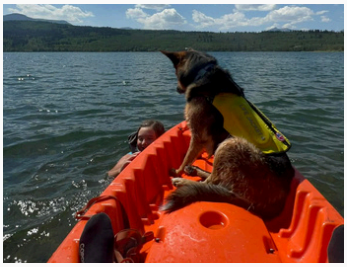




Photo by Souta Calling Last: Kiinii, on Water Guard duty; two girls falling in love with paddleboarding



Photo by Souta Calling Last: Preventing Contamination with a Homemade Macro-invertebrate Kick Net

Generally, a sampling and monitoring equipment company would take $200-$400 and over 30 days to arrive in Montana. Without enough time to order from a water sampling equipment company, and in the effort to not risk cross contamination with equipment used between the Verde River and the Blackfeet Stewarded Reservation Headwaters (near Glacier National Park in Montana) Souta resorted to testing her sewing skills.



Photo by Onan Calling Last-Walls: Making friends and having fun while learning freshwater ecology and the riparian health culture connection



Self Defense & Girls Empowerment

MMIWarriors Program Director, Melissa Spence (Anishinaabe/Ojibway) has been busy within the Las Vegas Indigenous community co-facilitating events for young women and girls like the recent Red Flags Workshop where the free Self Defense LV events were promoted. Since July of 2023, IV has partnered with Free Self Defense LV who are a small group of impassioned mixed martial arts trainers devoted to sharing self-defense across the Las Vegas valley. In the short time since our very first class the training program has grown to a weekly, multi-day and multi-location training to ensure participants from various regions of the city can take part in learning self-defense.



Photo by Melissa Spence: MMIWarriors Well-being and Self Defense Goodiebags

These classes continue to be offered for free to Indigenous community members and have expanded to include women and girls from non-Indigenous backgrounds. Its success is due in part by the modesty of the trainers who are volunteering their time, equipment, and expertise to the movement of self-preservation and the donations by attendees and supporters alike. Nevada's gun laws also make the region a safe space for women to join the Annie Oakie Women's Shooting Club that holds a free firearms training at the Clark Country Gun Range every Tuesday evening where women who are interested from the Self Defense LV Program carpool each week to the range. The event is a lovely gathering and is attended by Melissa Spence every few weeks as she harnesses her skill as a responsible firearm owner.

This past October in honor of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, IV teamed up with Her 38 Roses to facilitate a Red Flags Workshop with young women and girls to promote self care, awareness, and provide the women with knowledge of recognizing harmful behaviors and patterns of mistreatment to avoid any relationship escalating into a domestic violence (DV) situation. The Red Flags workshop, designed by Melissa Spence, is presented in a slideshow format to get the participants thinking and talking about red flag warnings they've experienced in real-life whether it be in a working professional relationship, familial, friendship, or romantic. After the first event, it was decided that a monthly gathering to support Indigenous women who are currently in DV situations to gather and have a safe, welcoming place to strategize, get educated, and share ways of recovering and moving on.



Photo by Amanda: women practicing self defense at Nevada Climbing Center

Support for IV's Self Defense Sponsorship Program is always welcome no matter the time of year. Your monetary donation is tax deductible and helps an Indigenous woman enter a free, six week, self defense training program at any facility of her choosing in her city. Thank you to everyone who has supported this program and is working to decrease violence and increase peace for Indigenous women and girls.



Boarding School Remembrance

September 30th is recognized as Orange Shirt Day in Canada and Boarding School Remembrance in the U.S. and is a day to honor the Indigenous children who were forced into residential or boarding schools and to acknowledge the ongoing intergenerational effects this era has caused. Throughout the day Indigenous communities and those committed to allyship, promote awareness of what happened at these schools and share how we can reconcile by telling the truth about the systems and entities that implemented the policies that kept the operation of these schools going for over 100 years. The devastating impacts of the boarding school era among our many Nations and communities are still being felt today as the research and data shows Indigenous people have the lowest life expectancy (65 years old) with our leading causes of death being heart disease, cancer, diabetes, accidents, and liver disease making our mortality rate much higher than the US average.



Every Child Matters logo with orange background

The Las Vegas Indian Center held a Boarding School Remembrance event on September 28th to educate attendees on regional boarding schools like the Stewart Indian Boarding School near Carson City, and the Phoenix Indian Boarding School. Melissa Spence was one of the speakers who shared historical information along with some of the efforts made by Canada's Truth & Reconciliation Commission to document stories by survivors, their families, communities and anyone affected by the schools. Community Elders spoke candidly about their personal experiences with the schools, with the event concluding with a small feast and beading circle.



Photo by Avril Cordova: six Powwow dancers in full regalia

This November two more Boarding School Remembrance events took place in collaboration with Nevada Public Libraries for Native American Heritage Month. IV's Melissa Spence was invited as Master of Ceremonies for the events held on November 15th at the West Charleston Library, and on November 16th at the Summerlin Library in Las Vegas. Together with the Eaglestaff Artist Intertribal team led by Melissa Gonzalez (Southern Cheyenne) and Reyna Salezar (Southern Paiute), attendees were presented with an Indigenous Fashion Show, live Powwow Dancing demonstrations, and stories from boarding school survivors from the Paiute communities and from the Omaha and Arikara Nations. Each event was free for the public to attend and was hosted by the wonderful audio and theater teams at each library making each presentation professional and impactful.



Photo by Avril Cordova: Audience view at Charleston Library Theater, Paiute Speakers in front of Board School Remembrance slide show



The Truth and Reconciliation recommendations from work done in Canada are a collection of 94 Actions recommended for individuals, Institutions, and Governments that Indigenous Vision supports in the effort to make services and care given to people the care they need and to make the world a kinder place for everyone and everything included in the Indigenous world view.

The Recommendations include:

- Education: Reforming education systems to include Indigenous history and knowledge.
- Language and Culture: Supporting revitalization and preservation of Indigenous languages.
- Justice: Improving access to justice for Indigenous peoples and reforming the justice system.
- Child Welfare: Addressing the disproportionately high rates of Indigenous children in the child welfare system.
- Government and Institutions: Requiring governments to enact specific policies and institutions to take accountability and make changes
- Corporations: Directing the corporate sector to adopt the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for their policies and operations.

Individuals:

- Exercise Cultural Humility in your Work and daily life.
- Read and learn about the 94 Calls to Action.
- Learn the history of your family, and the place you live. Learn the original language.
- If there is a community left; Listen to and learn from local Indigenous voices.
- Teach others what you've learned to help build a kinder, culturally safe community.

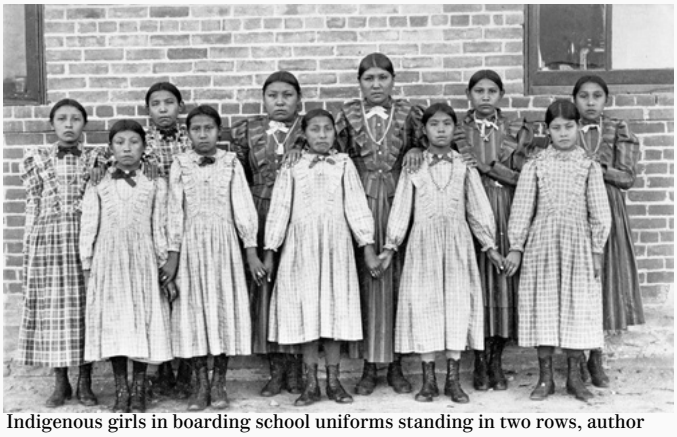


Seven Indigenous children standing in a row in the grass, author unknown



Pupils at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Pennsylvania, c. 1900, author unknown

In the United States, Native American Heritage Month was established in 1990 to celebrate and honor the culture, languages, traditions, history, and contributions from Indigenous people. Our rich and vibrant presence on this continent is celebrated throughout the month in numerous ways and IV encourages you to seek events in your area to support not just during the month of November but throughout the entire year.



Indigenous girls in boarding school uniforms standing in two rows, author unknown

Learn more from the Truth & Reconciliation Reports



Cultural Humility in 2026



Graphic by Melissa Spence showing dates of cultural humility trainings

IV would like to acknowledge our most recent Cultural Humility cohort; our October training was another successful session where several change making champions gathered virtually over four days to complete the Cultural Humility curriculum designed by our mentors, Dr. Melanie Tervalon and Dr. Jann Murray-Garcia. Each of our cohorts are delightfully diverse and bring their cultural experiences from around the world creating an ideal environment to practice the skills of dialogue needed to bring cultural humility from concept to practice in the workplace.

LEARN MORE

This January, IV will be making our official Canadian debut by facilitating the first in-person training of 2026 at the Blackfoot Confederacy in Treaty 7, Calgary, Alberta. Registration is officially open for the two-day event happening on Thursday, January 22nd and Friday, January 23rd with limited seating. Sign-up with a colleague to attend both days where you'll be guided through the principles and real-time practices of Cultural Humility by Souta Calling Last and Melissa Spence. This will be a training of trainer course where upon completion you'll be provided with all materials from the training to continue the teachings of Cultural Humility within your current or future workplace.

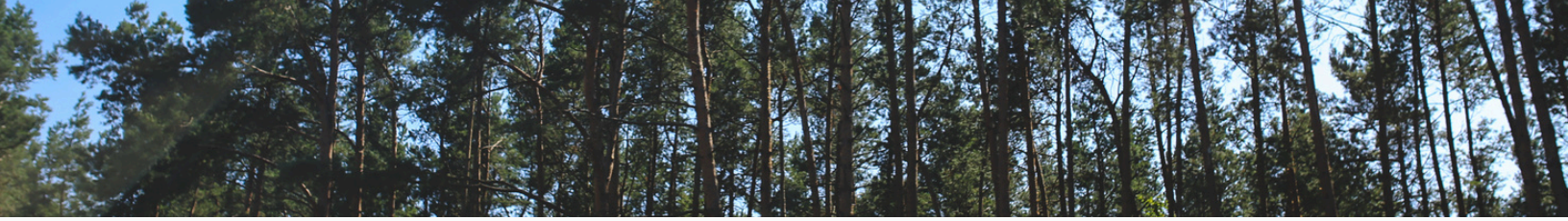
The next virtual Cultural Humility Training of Trainer presented by Indigenous Vision gets underway Tuesday, February 17th live on Zoom and concludes on Wednesday February 25th. As with all the virtual trainings, this curriculum will be spread over four days as 2.5 sessions for a total of 10 full training hours. Each cohort meets every Tuesday and Wednesday from 9:00 am to 11:30 am with each day building into the next requiring a commitment to all four days. Registration is now open for anyone willing to learn the practices and principles of cultural humility to transform their working environments into places of mutual respect, continuous learning, where trust building and the creation of equitable systems is top of mind.

Be sure to follow IV on social media and visit our site regularly to be in the know about our next training in the Spring and Fall of 2026.

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@indigenousvision



Food Forest Donations

Greetings, from the Beaver Lodge Food Forest. A twenty Four acre property located in woodridge NY. We are excited to announce our 501C3 NY status and are beginning to prepare for welcoming guests to the location.



Photo by Kenneth Cook: toddler walking on path in food forest, fall foliage, plants, and leaves

Are you an Indigenous person or organization looking for a space to utilize for hosting events or workshops? We are happy to help in any way possible. Our twenty four acre property is open to provide a safe educational space.

As we welcome fall, we begin composting and preparing garden spaces for next year's planting. Gathering seeds, processing this year's harvest, preparing for hide tanning workshops and hunting season.

Currently we are seeking donations to cover the cost of

- Caretaker Salary and building housing or bunks on location
- Permits
- Tractor to utilize for maintaining and developing the property further
- Bath and shower facilities
- Sourcing a portable saw mill to be able to process our own lumber
- Building a greenhouse with a climate battery for year-round food production and nursery
- Pavilion for maple syrup evaporator and seating areas for visitors





Photos by Kenneth Cook: yellow fungi (left) and black fungi (right) on tree trunks

The property is mainly a heavily wooded area, without plumbing or electrical access. We welcome volunteers to help with creating trails, clearing garden spaces, building compost toilets, and helping with future events.

A special thank you to our donors and friends that have helped so far!

Phyllis Rodriguez, Maryanne Mattson- Red Empress Foundation, Elyse Arnow, Linde Ostro, Flowering Sun Ecology, Dions Tree Service, Diana Wege, Timothy Kowalski-The Root Community, Ryan Mitro-Fairview Gardens, Anne and Edward Hall- Mushrooms NYC, Raymond Elozua- Fallsburg Future



2026 Dream Tipi Fundraiser Raffle

The 2nd Annual Dream Tipi Package Fundraiser is now open! IV sends a big thank you to all who entered last year and a congratulations again to the 2025 winner Wendy! This year's lodge has similar furnishings to the 2025 Dream tipi and the package still includes a record player and Jackery V2 Solar generator set. On top of that, this year's winner will receive a rug from Willow Cahill who is a Blackfeet, Shoshone and Bannock Artist and Designer whose work will help set the tone of this year's lodge with her gorgeous peak-to-peak rug in blue.



Photo by Souta Calling Last: 2025 Dream Tipi winner, Wendy, standing with Souta and family inside Bear Gulch Visitor Center

Purchase your entry to win from now until July 3rd, 2026 which is when we'll officially announce the winner. Get your summer started right with a new 17 ft Tipi from Indigenous Vision, all funds raised go towards the package itself and back into our programs. Good luck!

get YOUR TICKETS



Photo by Souta Calling Last: Inside the 2025 Dream Tipi, furnishings, buffalo hide, generator, bed, chair, record player, and tea station.



Rug by Willow Cahill, 'Peak to Peak' in blue from Willow's website



Photo by Melissa Spence: 2025 Dream Tipi on Montana landscape on a sunny day

IVMedia, Podcasts & Tiktok

IV has officially joined the TikTok platform! Join the IV team as they present and share upcoming events, podcast clips, music shows, cultural humility trainings, educational infographics, and collaborative events with the world. The very first post on the feed was dedicated to Native American Heritage Month and the importance of its acknowledgment. Thanks to everyone who has followed us thus far on TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook.





Graphic by Melissa Spence featuring Souta Calling Last (left) and Melissa Spence (right) for IVPodcast Episode 151



Graphic by Melissa Spence featuring Dream Tipi for IVMusic episode 268, listen at soundcloud.com/indigenousvision

The Indigenous Vision Podcast continues to grow with over 85K downloads as of November 2025. The following on Spotify alone has grown past 1,000, that platform is one of the smallest which says the majority of listeners are listening through Apple Podcasts. Current stats show the majority of our listeners are 67% women ranging from ages 25 to 59. Check out our stats and if you haven't yet, follow the IVPodcast on major platforms like Spotify and Apple.

The latest installment of IVMusic was a tribute to past and current Indigenous music makers and was released on Indigenous People Day. Have a listen to this special one hour episode that goes well with any day.

Subscribe to the IV Youtube channel, follow us on all of our platforms, and engage with our content to help us grow and become more visible online.

Thank you for supporting us through your likes, shares, and comments!

YouTube @indigenousvision

BECOME A DONOR

INDIGENOUS VISION

Donate to support Indigenous Culture, People, and Land

DONATION TIERS

SAGE DONOR
$5 - $500



Sage donors provide the essence of community power from the ground up.

BEAR ROOT DONOR
$600 - $5,000



Bear Root donors are the members of our community providing good medicine to these efforts.

SWEET GRASS DONOR
$6,000 - $10,000



Sweet Grass donors assist in soothing the aches and bring energy and healing to the community.

SWEET PINE DONOR
$11,000 - $20,000



Sweet Pine donors help protect and clarify efforts.

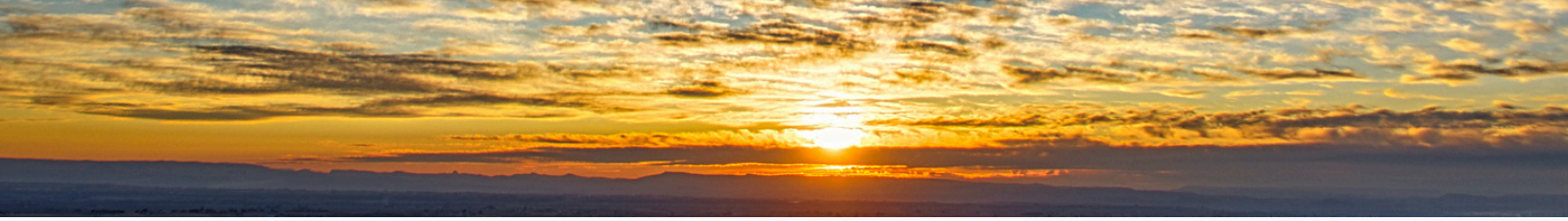
MORNING STAR DONOR
$20,000 +



Morning Star donors help us bring a new and different day to the community.

https://www.indigenousvision.org/donate

Graphic by Melissa Spence featuring donation tiers and QR code to support IV with a monetary donation



Upcoming Events & Important Dates

Cultural Humility, January & February 2026



Graphics by Melissa Spence showing dates for the next two cultural humility trainings

Las Vegas Support Circle for DV with Her 38 Roses
Dec 16, 2026 - 6:00 pm to 7:00 pm



Graphics of MMIWarriors Logo by Souta Calling Last, and Her 38 Roses Logo by Deanna Blackcrow

Sign-up for Free Self Defense Classes

Featured Partner



Email:
elaine.hale.wilson@gmail.com

Founder/Principal Consultant at
Elaine H. Wilson Consulting LLC

Photo of Elaine Wilson Consulting LLC.

Meet us at RES 2026!



Graphic flyer announcing RES dates in Las Vegas

Field Notes from the ED, Souta Calling Last

Thank you everyone for all of the support in every way. I hope everyone shares a similar hope and inspiration to gather with people at our events who are committed to bringing the change needed in our community by starting with our own self. I met so many good friends over the summer and had the privilege of facilitating lake and river investigations in Montana and Arizona, where I was able to spend time with youth from the Blackfeet and Yavapai and Apache Nations.

I am so impressed with the level of empathy and kindness I've witnessed from the youth taking care of and teaching each other around the water. In Arizona, with the Yavapai Apache Nation, the youth graciously extended appropriate protocols and vocabulary for entering and playing by the water, which matched the day's effort of investigating the banks and water for life and the quality of it. This search is complemented by identifying where culturally used plants are and the risks from various human activities.

This conversation was highlighted and interrupted by a tractor that bales hay, which needed the kids to clear the way so it could cross the river. This was a great opportunity to talk with the kids about the impacts to the river that crossing without a bridge does, like contamination, increased flooding and erosion, changes in water flow, and increased sedimentation and temperatures that fragment and damage habitat. This was also a great chance to talk about the chemicals that could come off the equipment such as petroleum products, heavy metals, nutrients, pesticides, pathogens and bacteria if manure was being applied to fields.

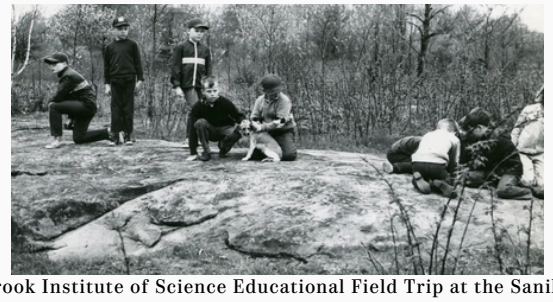


Tractor with baler crossing the Verde River as kids move to the side to let it safely cross

During the first Arizona event, everyone forgot a lighter or matches to get a fire going for lunch. We didn't stay hungry for long because we used the macroinvertebrate magnifying glasses to start a fire with the sun. I was also able to take a 5:30AM hike in Papago park before meeting the accountant for coffee and flying out to the Blackfeet water job and heard echoes of the many wise words of a Salt River Pima Elder Royce Manuel (53-21) from Ft. McDowell, who said, "if you can get to a high point in the Phoenix valley, you'll be able to see some still existing trail and canal marks left by the ancient ones. There are still some left but they're disappearing without tribal advocacy and without presence at the planning and development meetings they are now under the city."

I looked out over towards the sun, still sleepy to rise in the valley, and thought about the sacred places like Papago, the river, the superstitions and my own, ninnastako, or chief mountain being entered without reverence and remembrance of the ancestral knowings, the stories, the proper way to conduct oneself so that safe passage and luck is given in return...how in the future when the water can't be siphoned from the Navajo aquifer hundreds of miles away, they'll wish they had kept the original canals in working order. Royce also took me for a hike to S-wegĭ Do'ag (O'odham) or Wi:kawatha (Yavapai), or Red Mountain, and he told me some of the creation stories of his people. A very significant piece of that history, the mountain, has been closed since the early 80s due to vandalism. Keeping people off the mountain; where only cultural practitioners are allowed to enter, showed me an intact cultural use site, and protected plants and animals, surrounded by 6 million people and still safe. The feeling present at Red Mountain was one of joy and calm... whereas places that have been vandalized carry a feeling of grief, neglect and chaos.

Mid October, I was ecstatic to be contacted by a couple west of Whitefish, MT in their effort to get some petroglyphs protected and for my effort to continue marking our extended territory and trails and cultural use areas.



Cranbrook Institute of Science Educational Field Trip at the Sanilac Petroglyphs in Cass City, MI, circa 1968. Cranbrook Archives.

The petroglyphs consisted of hundreds, maybe once thousands of pecked petroglyphs that included prints of all kinds of animals, including bear, elk, moose, rabbit, beaver, raccoon, birds, bison, and a rider on a horse with no tail. The couple who guided me to the spot said that the condition of the site has deteriorated significantly in the past few decades. The site was also partially dynamited, which reduced the area of the site by almost half. Like the Sanilac site in Michigan, it is also pecked into the rock while the artist sat over or lounged by it instead of standing like many other pictograph sites. I was told it was a popular spot for kids to have bonfires, and that the doubt of their authenticity leads to vandalism and destruction. The site also has a bear with a circle image in the stomach area which they pointed out the closest art they could find similar to it belonged to Blackfeet artist David Dragonfly. Coincidentally, I sold prints for David and sat for him at his booth while I had my massage therapy chair at the Missoula Farmers Market. It was a great chance to learn about his art style enough to sell it, and he jokingly said I could sell it better. In particular, he had an image he sold as postcards and small prints of a bear called "The Seeker." This image is almost exact in likeness to this new petroglyph image of a bear with a circular stomach image. The couple comes back often to clean up after parties and have tried to put dirt over the rock where the fires are quickly heat damaging, cracking, and eroding the images away. The couple helped locate, sweep away dirt, and help bring petroglyphs out with water to highlight them for me. Sweeping away a bit of the dirt they added, I confirmed the bear wore a head dress and the head dress was in exact likeness to the pictographs that were at the Billings Pictograph Cave State Park. Other images, a bison, wore a T-symbol that when found on the ground in rocks marks the spot of an important transfer.



Photos by Souta Calling Last and Billings Pictograph Cave State Park



Photos by Souta Calling Last: Bison with Blackfeet

Many images had the classic U shape hooves that help to identify various things including Thunder and Spirit beings. The Billings cave pictographs have been determined to be Blackfeet in origin. I'm in agreement because they are the images that carry the symbols of a Blackfeet Bear Brave Society and the images maintain societal characteristics as they seem to progress through time from the heavy shield era to the present day. The head dress, leg and arm wraps, necklaces, and feet depiction all let me know that I'm on the trail of one of my grandpas...or a ninnawaki like Running Eagle. Although, I don't think Running Eagle was a member of this particular society.

David's similar image called Seeker of Visions also has a large circle design on the stomach, which in general, among various Blackfoot styles is sometimes included on the end of the heart-line of animal images, is stand alone, and sometimes found in napi rock effigies, where they're known as heart-stones. Sometimes, the heart line has a circle in the design on the end as described by another Blackfeet artist Terrance Guardipee who explains that these keyholes symbolize a personal protection, and sometimes a bison corral.

This image at the new site and David Dragonflies image show a personal power of a person. In this case, it's the personal power of a Bear Brave originating from the Blackfeet or Blood tribes. This helps me get closer to identifying the specific individual, the Blackfoot person who sat in that spot to peck the image into the spot helping us know more about where we stand, where they were going, and what they were doing. Most importantly, it tells me something of the land use to add to the Blackfoot Place Map as a layer that helps us know where ancient bison jumps, corrals, drives, hunting, harvesting, camps, and sabotage points are, which helps us know ancient migration routes, season and site-specific TEK.



Seeker of Visions by David Dragonfly

Due to the amount of animal images, keyhole like symbols and even a couple napi with phallus images, I decided that there must be the connected infrastructure to these images that seem power and hunting related so infrastructure should include a cairn, fasting shelter, and support camp, warlodge remnants, or permanent use lodge area. The mountain above the site consisted of three ridges. On the first ridge I found nothing, but above on the second ridge there was what I was looking for and it looked like it hadn't been used in a very long time. Most of it was buried, with the tops of large rocks peaking above recent forest debris in the classic oval shape. The wood was nearly broken down to chips from the sticks they used to be. The shape was similar to old ones found east of the mountains in what would be proper central Blackfoot territory and it had a great view that I would consider lucky to have while suffering through some fasting vows.



Dragonfly created this linocut as a depiction of spiritual life among the Blackfeet. Spirituality was a significant and important part of the everyday life of the Blackfeet Indian people. The bear was often looked to for guidance in times of concern or hardship. Animals play a very important role in the lives of Native American people and the bear is often sought in prayers and visions. This piece shows the Blackfeet with the ceremonial pipe and pipe bag, which is a main item used in spiritual ceremonies. Mr. Dragonfly is portraying the Grizzly Bear as the protector and guide to the spirit world in this linocut. Source: https://iacbmuseums-viewingroom.exhibit-e.art/viewing-room/david-dragonfly#tab:slideshow;tab-1:thumbnails



Photo by Souta Calling Last: Cairn and fasting shelter almost gone

For the rest of the fall, I hope to finish the detailed reports and correspondence with Blackfoot culture keepers. This information is used to educate community members of the extent of the territory knowledge that our ancestors held. It's to help educators show place-based examples, to reconnect our stories to the land, and for future generations to feel at home far beyond reservation boundaries. I also hope to finish the disease monitoring reports with Blackfeet Fish and Wildlife and put some dates on the calendar in the spring for community update meetings that I hope to co-facilitate with the Environment or Fish and Wildlife Departments. We also have a lot of planning for next year's MMIW efforts led by MMIW/Media Director, Melissa Spence. Next year's camp at Flathead Lake for 2026 is reserved and will be in October, so save the date!

There are also some exciting projects on the horizon that I'm excited to jump into. I look forward to continued dialogue with Women in Ranching on Climate related impacts and mitigation efforts. I also will be developing some materials and a presentation on the soon to be published PFAS Detection in Mink Using Conservation Working Dogs. This project makes me feel very prouud Nitsitapi using dogs in my work to protect the land and water because I've read multiple settler accounts in journals during archive research where the journaler remarked on the number of dogs that accompanied the Blackfoot, sometimes ranging between six to twelve dogs. Tidbits like that always give me joy and little chuckles and I think about all the places we keep dogs from now and finding Kiinii a doggy sitter when hiking my homeland, which is now Glacier National Park and dog-free. And then I think about how many bad dog owners there are now...

There is also finally a new app development partner based out of Phoenix, AZ, they specialize in app development and coding. We currently have grant proposals submitted throughout the southwest to work with Hopi, Navajo, Yavapai and Apache Mapping partners in their efforts to get their sacred sites documents for private and public education efforts.

The project is titled the NativeAI Project, where AI stands for Ancestral Intelligence and Antonio Romero, Director of Red Road Journey is helping to bring the years long dream of getting the place map in a user friend, no wifi needed app. Most importantly we are going to be working to get navigational abilities included in the app. This will help people in the field know where they are in proximity to human activities, past and present, big and small.

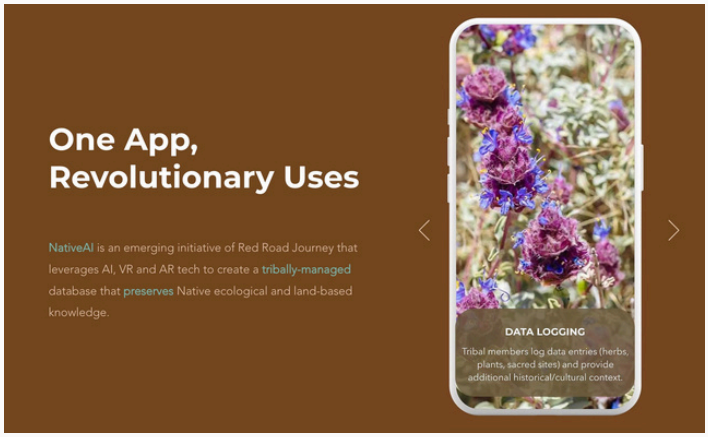


Photo source: Red Road Journey Native Ancestral Intelligence Project Website

This will help people harvest animals and plants for cultural uses from areas that are likely to have low contamination and the resulting low uptake into plants, and low human exposure when that plant is consumed, or used on the body with the intentions of healing.

Finally, but not least I hope to continue working on the financial health and growth of the organization. For the last few months I've been working with TJ Hansell, LLC, an Accountant and Financial Strategist. His assistance in making decisions has been invaluable, and I wish we had a financial strategist years ago! I am looking for money to pay him for his great work; he goes above and beyond by submitting letters of interest on the organization's behalf. With my mind always on sustaining what I've started, his help has been a huge blessing that I'm sure will guide the organization well as we continue to navigate the complex socio-political fabric we exist in.

Ultimately, for real this time, I am honestly still completely overwhelmed by the breadth and beauty of the experiences of this summer. Thank you to Nick Sierra for donating $50, on the spot, in passing, to be included towards the fund to get site protections for a jurisdictionally complex, very damaged, publicly abused site. I hope to continue to build on the great community effort and can't thank everyone enough for all the help when I was in the midst of an event, maybe without food for too long, and pulling up my forever untying emotional support hightop moccasins...I'm sure only do that to remind me to slow down, walk a little softer, and take it all in. Through the summer's celebrations and the grief of losing more elders and culture keepers, the falls urge to quiet and re-center is bigger this year than in years past, and I am all for honoring it. I, like others, can not lead effectively when stuck in a state of fight or flight and the world seems to have an urge to keep us in at all times. But taking a rest is also cultivating a joy that ancestors prayed for but few Indigenous people truly get to experience esp. while working to right the historical traumas. Have a restful and recuperating fall season. Talk more on the IV Podcast and in the Winter Issue of the Indigenous Vision Newsletter, thank you for reading the reporting and short stories of all the amazing things we were able to lead and be apart of this summer.

Defiantly joyful, sootahkii.



Souta Calling Last, BA-Water Resource/Mining Contamination Clean up/MA-Change Management, Founder & Executive Director, Cultural Humility Trainer, Blackfeet & Blood, standing by the 2025 Dream Tipi Raffle Package in her newly gifted Anishinaabe Water Star Quilt, a special Organizational Anniversary gift from Melissa Spence.