

MOTHER EARTH

NATIONAL MUSEUM OF THE AMERICAN INDIAN 7.7.07

TRANSCRIPTS

JOSÉ BARREIRO

Introductions [12:15 PM]

Good afternoon from the National Mall, Washington, D.C.

The National Museum of the American Indian joins the vision of this day—Live Earth!—because we ourselves are charged with a call to consciousness.

The elders of our many cultures have consistently instructed us to remember the plight of Mother Earth. From long-term observation and traditional knowledge obtained over hundreds and even thousands of years, Native people know a lot about the world.

As a cultural and scientific institution, we note the overwhelming consensus by western science on the issue of global warming and climate change, and how it coincides with the perception of Native elders and scientists. This is not so rare these days. More and more, science proves true major pieces of indigenous knowledge.

Thus, on global warming, our many voices speak one thought today: consciousness.

It is my great honor to introduce three important Native voices—in representation of the many peoples of the American Indian world—who care deeply about their ancient instructions and traditions.

They are:

Dr. Dan Wildcat, Yuchi member from the Muscogee Nation of Oklahoma. A professor at Haskell Indian Nations University, Dr. Wildcat has played a key role in organizing the American Indian and Alaska Native Climate Change Working Group. He writes and lectures on indigenous knowledge, what it could yet teach the world.

Dr. Henrietta Mann, Cheyenne, member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes of Oklahoma and professor of many years at Montana State University, where she is currently Special Assistant to the President. An esteemed woman of knowledge, Dr. Mann is a major voice among defenders of American Indian culture and the right to a quality education.

Midwife Katsi Cook, woman leader from the Mohawk people at Akwesasne, beloved midwife who became an avid defender against environmental degradation, after finding industrial waste in mothers' milk. Midwife Katsi Cook, founding director of the First Environment Program. A major voice in the work of preserving women's reproductive ways and knowledge, Katsi Cook carries the message of her elder generations.

Introductions [5:15 PM]

For years, Native elders and researchers have worked alongside scientists in the effort to decipher just what is going on in the natural world. Native hunters, fishing people and herders, Arctic villagers and low-land islanders, are reporting drastic and rapid effects of climate change. Scientists also report trends.

We note an overwhelming consensus among scientists dealing with the issue of global warming. We note also that Native knowledge and the scientific evidence coincide on global warming.

Dr. Anthony Socci is Senior Science and Communications Fellow with the American Meteorological Society, formerly Senior Climate Science Advisor with the Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Atmospheric Programs. Dr. Socci was a manager of the U.S. government's extensive, multi-billion dollar scientific research programs on environment and climate-related changes. He hosts monthly Washington briefings on environmental sciences that feature a wide range of scientists and researchers. Dr. Socci is a major voice among those who pay attention to scientific consensus-building, a main approach to determining scientific reality.

Dr. Nancy Maynard is among the scientists calling for attention to the impacts of global warming on Native lands. Biological oceanographer with a great range of scientific experience, research in the field, science policy in the White House, Dr. Maynard is at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Goddard Space Flight Center. Dr. Maynard has deeply studied with Native elders and researchers. She introduced Native peoples into the U.S. National Assessment of Climate Change Impacts. Dr. Maynard is director of NASA's tribal colleges and universities program.

Katsi Cook's song, in Lakota with English translations

Morning Star Song

Anpo ina ji ki
Waien ki io io hey
Wama kashka si tom nia
Una uya keyo zelo hey

The Morning is standing
All over the Earth
The morning is standing

Look at it
Hold this moment close