



Dear Friends and Allies:

December 15, 2010

It has been an exciting and productive year at The Cultural Conservancy (TCC) and we are very pleased to give you this important update and seek your ongoing collaboration and support. We are four Native American activists and educators representing our organization in its twenty-fifth year of serving indigenous peoples and protecting ancestral lands. These are challenging times for people and the planet and it is even more critical for like-minded allies to work together, support each other, and continue the important work of restoring the diversity and resilience of native peoples and the living Earth.

The Cultural Conservancy (TCC) is an indigenous-rights native non-profit organization based in San Francisco, California. Founded in 1985, we are a small, grassroots group funded by your donations and foundation grants. Our mission is to protect and restore indigenous cultures, empowering them in the direct application of their traditional knowledge and practices on their ancestral lands.

The Cultural Conservancy seeks your support to continue our work to record endangered languages and stories, protect native seeds and traditional ecological knowledge, train native communities in media production and eco-cultural restoration, and develop strategies and build coalitions to protect indigenous peoples from climate change and promote food and water sovereignty. With a small, dedicated staff, we've been very successful in developing projects and models that serve as a guide for the survival of us all including future generations. Won't you please join us by investing in this sacred work?

Our Current Projects include:

- *"Guardians of the Waters" Tribal Canoe Revitalization Project*
With leadership from board member L. Frank, Melissa Nelson, and Maori cultural educators and artists Wikuki Kingi and Tania Wolfgramm from *Aotearoa* (New Zealand), we are in the first phase of our multi-year "Guardians of the Waters" Tribal Canoe Revitalization Project. We are pleased to announce we've received a grant from the Christensen Fund for a one-year planning process. We are starting with research and assessment of Tribal Canoe work being done in California, the Pacific Northwest, and Hawaii. Our long-term goals include restoring indigenous watercraft from around the Pacific as a way to raise awareness and prepare communities for global climate disruption. We also plan to develop an Inter-tribal World Canoe with wood, techniques, and stories from around the world. Your support will help us implement the first phase of this project and continue to raise funds for our five-year global plan.
- *Re-launched Web Site www.nativeland.org*
This past year we focused on developing a new 45-page web site with a comprehensive overview of our Programs, a Media Gallery, Store, and Resources section. Our website premieres our project "Traditional Foodways of Native America – Oral Histories of Native Food Revitalization" which features interviews, transcripts and photos with a dozen native leaders involved in Native Foods Revitalization from the US and Canada. This is an important resource to other indigenous communities, food justice

movements, and the general public. With your support we will continue to add and update our website with critical resources and information for protecting indigenous lands and cultural heritage.

- *Cultural Media Workshops: Media Trainings in Digital Storytelling, Oral History and Community Based Ethnography*

In July TCC completed a Tribal Media workshop at the Round Valley Indian Reservation in Mendocino County. Led by TCC Media trainers China Ching, Nicola Wagenberg, Melissa Nelson, and L. Frank we conducted a three and a half day training focused on digital storytelling, oral history, audio recording, photography, and basic editing. Ten tribal members participated and completed a powerful five-minute film about the importance of documenting the rich history and dynamic culture of Round Valley. With your support we would be able to offer more of these innovative trainings and continue advanced trainings with the Round Valley community.

- *Indigenous Tent at Bioneers Conference 2010*

We have continued and expanded our exciting partnership with the Bioneers Conference and the Indigenous Environmental Network with a very successful 2010 program. Once again we produced the Indigenous Forum at Bioneers with an opening blessing ceremony and six educational workshop presentations by renowned indigenous leaders, artists, and activists. This year we also offered a one-day pre-conference workshop on Traditional Environmental Knowledge at the Romberg Tiburon Center for Environmental Studies. This workshop was highly regarded, as one participant shared, *"this was the best, most interactive, inspiring, informative Bioneers session yet."* We also held a Sunrise Water Ceremony and launched a Yurok redwood dugout canoe in the lagoon with local California Indian and national Native American leaders to honor sacred waters and feed the lake with prayer. We also helped to support Maori artists Wikuki Kingi and Tania Wolfgramm in creating beautiful stage art, sponsored Mayan farmers to the conference to share their concerns over the protection of corn, and promoted a special Native Foods dinner prepared by Kiowa chef Lois Ellen Frank. Your donations will help us continue our important indigenous presence at the Bioneers Conference.

"Melissa Nelson and The Cultural Conservancy have made unspeakably important and genuinely needed contributions to conserving traditional indigenous wisdom and educating the larger society about its critical importance. Their contributions in creating and directing the Indigenous Forum at the Bioneers Conference has been invaluable. In fact, our surveys show that the 2010 Indigenous Forum got the highest audience ratings of any sessions at the conference! It's an enormous honor to work with Melissa and TCC, including her role rejoining the Bioneers Board and helping provide vision and direction to our shared efforts to put indigenous wisdom and issues front and center."

——Kenny Ausubel, Bioneers Co-Founder and Co-CEO

- *TCC Productions*

Books: TCC board member Enrique Salmon will publish his first book, tentatively entitled, *Eating the Landscape – American Indians Stewards of Foods and Resilience*, with the University of Arizona Press. This book project was sponsored by the Cultural Conservancy and funded by the Christensen Fund. It will be the first official book publication of TCC! The book focuses on traditional farming, foodways, resilience, and traditional ecological knowledge. We are seeking funds to help promote and distribute this exciting new book.

TCC founder Claire Cummings, executive director Melissa Nelson, and advisor Lois Ellen Frank are all featured in the new book, *Farmer Jane: Women Changing The Way We Eat*, edited by Temra Costa (2010).

Films: With Philomath Films, we have just completed production of a new educational DVD, "Circle of Stories," that premiered in San Francisco with "An Ecology of Mind," as part of the Bioneers Moving Image Festival in October. "Circle of Stories" is an innovative and visually rich DVD about the Native American storytelling tradition featuring contemporary Native storytellers from the Four Directions, including the late Western Shoshone Spiritual and environmental leader Corbin Harney.

Melissa Nelson was also interviewed for the just released award-winning documentary film, "Call of Life," about the global extinction crisis and the need for ecological and psychological transformation. She was also interviewed by Mary Evelyn Tucker about TCC and native peoples for the upcoming film series, "Journey of the Universe."

- *Executive Transition*

After seventeen years as TCC's executive director, Melissa Nelson is ready to transition into serving primarily as a board member of TCC where she will continue to strengthen the board and focus on long-term strategic planning for the organization. Currently, while Melissa is away on sabbatical writing a book in Santa Fe, Nicola Wagenberg (Colombian) is serving as Interim executive director. We have just had an extraordinary opportunity come up—TCC consultant and media trainer China Ching (Hawaiian) is available and interested in serving TCC in a leadership position. China has worked with TCC as a consultant for over five years and is a national expert in indigenous media studies having served as a lead digital storytelling teacher at the Center for Digital Storytelling. In 2009 she completed her Master's degree in Oral History from Columbia University. China has also worked with the National Native American AIDS Prevention Center and is experienced in community outreach, curriculum development, technical assistance, and grant-writing. TCC would love the opportunity to hire China for this executive transition period and to begin training her for the executive director position. Please contribute to this effort and help support the leadership of this very gifted and motivated Hawaiian woman. In her own words, China shares:

"I think that the process of opening history can be complex. The honor of listening, the thrill of discovery, the awe of understanding but also the sadness and the pain that often comes with knowing. It is a risk to take that leap to remember. My own work has focused on creating frameworks, techniques, and skills to help support these great leaps. I have worked on adapting storytelling, oral history, and participatory media methodologies to assist communities with the telling, sharing, and preserving of their own histories and cultures. For communities who have historically had little control over the telling of their own history, this act of self-definition is a crucial first step in self-determination. By remembering, recording, and preserving these stories, we are actually helping to make the world anew. As the great Hawaiian carver, Sam Kaai once reminded me, "we look back to go forward." My goal, my kuleana, in taking a leadership position with the Cultural Conservancy is to help remember this, the truth of who we are today. To help create opportunities and structures and environments that will enable us to view our histories and our futures from this perspective: from the abundance and fullness of life."

The essential work to assist tribes and indigenous cultures continues. Native communities are continuously challenged with protecting their heritage, knowledge, practices, and resources with constant attacks by mining and other "development" on their ancestral lands; and sadly, elders, the living cultural treasures of many diverse Indian nations, pass on and their rich languages, stories, songs, and knowledge go with them. Native communities are working hard to safeguard their cultural treasures and sacred lands but they need support and assistance. The Cultural Conservancy receives regular requests to support native groups in their efforts. Your support will help us respond to these vital requests for assistance.

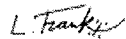
We invite you to consider becoming a major donor of TCC by sending us a check, scheduling a phone conversation or meeting with us. For donations over \$1,000, we will send you our complete media package (DVDs, CDs, Maps, books) and provide exclusive offers on events and new media. Our goal is to raise \$60,000 in general support. Please use the enclosed envelope to send us your donation.

Your contribution will enable us to help protect indigenous cultures and native places.

In Mutual Reverence for Life,



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