

Wildland Firefighters and Native Youth Voice Support for '*Juliana v. US*'

Press statement by: Ryan Reed, Inaamvan (Karuk Spring Salmon Priest) and Hoopa Valley Tribal Member. June 4, 2019

Fire is sacred. It is the giver and taker of life. As a primary forest management tool it encourages the proliferation of our traditional foods (i.e salmon, acorns) for life by creating suitable habitat. Smoke from the low intensity burns deter disease and bug infestations. Used in ceremony it is often viewed as the most important part of ritual reproduction. The spirit of the prayer, thru fire, translates thought to prayer from one dimension to the next.

Fire is inevitable, it's a natural product of Mother Earth. Place-based World-Renewal religions of the Klamath River Basin uses fire as its primary forest management tool. Culturally prescribed fire provides optimal levels of management for water, terrestrial and aquatic resources whom we call "our relations." Fire increases summer base flows, stable inputs of sediment and wood into the streams, and decreases water temperatures. This leads to less opportunity for fire suppressed related impacts to our fishery. American Indians shaped the ecological landscape "park like existence" since time immemorial. Abundance of salmon, deer, elk, acorns, mushrooms and medicinal plants provided some of the best food in the world. It is the Indigenous population of the Klamath River who are the original stewards of the forest. What isn't inevitable is the catastrophic ecological destruction wildfires can have on our planet. World Renewal landscape management principles have helped sustain this planet for thousands of generations. Place-based Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) not only played a role in the planet's past management history, but in a World Renewal perspective must also have a place in the future management of Mother Earth. American Indians enhanced and maintained the ecosystem that was based on diversity, harmony and balance.

The mismanagement of our natural resources such as water, food, religion, management practices was a form of state institutionalized cultural genocide that resulted in forced assimilation by the U.S government. What was not physically beat out of us was psychologically disconnected in these schools. Stripped of humanity, American Indians continue to be at the lowest in the class across the board in health and economic well being. That was then and this is now. It is time for reconciliation with our Mother Earth. It is time to be able to ceremoniously pray in ritualistic manner to the "Creator of all things." It is time to listen to the people who practice this wisdom. Women, minorities and the youth are not being heard and are woefully underserved. It is time for an Ecological Revolution in the name of humanity.

We have Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) of our homelands that has been developed since the beginning of time. TEK provides optimal levels of management of our natural resources using traditional burns. Fire is the tool provided to the Native people by the Creator to provide for All living things. It is used to create more water, help better manage our basketry materials, foods, medicines, and reduce the amount of fuel within the sensitive cultural landscapes. The systematic genocide of the Native People had a direct impact to all aspects of the environment: the river, salmon, trees, animals, the climate, and my family. The TEK that is needed to properly manage this planet has been stripped from us. I am the future and I need this knowledge for spiritual survival. I was the Spring Salmon Ceremony Inaamvan (priest) at the

Karuk World Renewal Ceremonies last year. My brother was the Fatawaanan (World Renewal Priest). I have been learning fragments of my culture my whole life. The physical land management processes that were stripped from us I am now going to school to relearn to implement on the landscape and revitalize the traditional cultures of the Klamath River Basin. Our ability to tend to our homelands was outlawed by the federal government which affected our culture, matriarchal values, diet, health, and lifestyle. But nobody within this white society noticed this disconnection, or if they have, it was ignored. Until now. Until catastrophic wildfire has destroyed cities, killing many people and firefighters, and has been costing states and federal governments billions of dollars, and the evidence of impactful effects of climate change.

The planet is in trouble. Climate change has provided an unfortunate platform for Indigenous Knowledge (IK) to provide vital information and management actions in the form of place-based World Renewal religious concepts. Fire suppression and catastrophic wildfire are bankrupting the federal government. This form of forest management is not sustainable. Utilizing Indigenous Knowledge Prescribed fire must be elevated to unprecedented levels to be effective. Place-based TEK from the Karuk Tribe is being utilized in the national prescribed fire pilot project called the Western Klamath Restoration Partnership (WGRP). It is these types of actions that will be needed to slow global warming and natural resource extraction. This newly forming narrative needs to not only include knowledge of the original stewards but also knowledge of the oppressed women, minorities, and youth of the world. The Juliana v. US case is a product of protection for future generations. This case holds weight to relieve society of the oppression of youth, women, and minority voice in society. Younger generations are the upcoming leaders of maintaining and sustaining the health of our Earth, and everything and everyone within it. It is time for them[us] to carry the narrative and make good out of it.