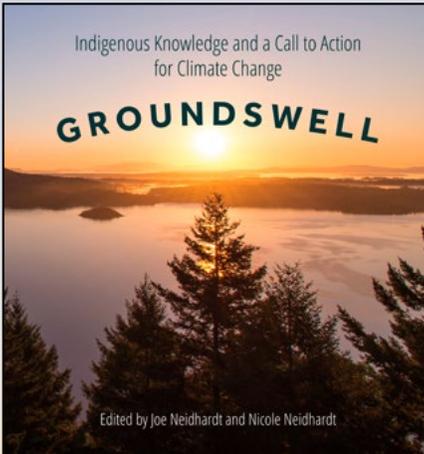




Groundswell: Indigenous Knowledge and a Call to Action for Climate Change



Groundswell is a collection of stirring and passionate essays from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous writers that, together, present a compelling message about how traditional Indigenous knowledge and practices can—and must be—used to address climate change. The chapters eloquently interconnect, taking us from radical thinking to the gentleness of breath, demonstrating that we are all in this together, that we must understand what needs to be accomplished and participate in the care of Mother Earth.

Authors tap into religious and spiritual perspectives, explore the wisdom of youth, and share the insights of a nature-based philosophy. These collective writings give you a chance to contemplate and formulate your own direction. A moral revolution that can produce a groundswell of momentum toward a diverse society based on human rights, Indigenous rights, and the rights of Mother Earth.

Beautifully illustrated with photographs, Groundswell is augmented with video recordings from the authors and a short documentary film, available on the project's website.

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Sample pages from Larry Emerson's chapter: What You Need to Know Is Not in a Book: Indigenous Education

We all have heartbeats, drink water, and breathe air, no matter whether we are Democrat or Republican, Native, white, African, Asian, or Latino. No matter our sexual orientation, gender, religion, age, or generation, all of us have to restore ourselves Indigenously to situate ourselves as balanced and harmonious life beings in relation to other life beings on this Earth. At some point, we are all deeply Indigenous. We have just forgotten and separated ourselves from our true identity.

How can the way we traditional⁷ Diné identify and introduce ourselves to inform readers about what we mean by "Indigenous" education? It may help readers understand ways that we Diné think about and relate to climate change, which may in turn inform how readers think about climate change.

Traditional knowledge is typically contrasted with Westernism, which is synonymous with colonization, capitalism, and modernization. Since these modern ways of knowing are largely responsible for our climate crisis, then would it not be a good idea to understand traditional Indigenous ways of knowing that are more intimately connected to the so-called environment?

Today, Indigenous education conflicts with a denatured and desecralized Western educational system that long ago overrode traditional Indigenous knowledge while assuming total epistemological power over Indigenous peoples. Modern ways of knowing continue to traumatize Indigenous learners.

A prime example is the U.S. government-sponsored "Indian boarding schools" that took

⁷ The word "traditional" in Indigenous societies was coined as a contrast to modern people.

thousands of Indigenous children out of their homes and placed them in a number of schools across the U.S. Between the late 1800s and up to the early 1970s, thousands of Native people were in such schools. In the 1950s some 6000 children were in these schools.

Because of the nature of intergenerational, historic trauma⁸, most Diné today remain impacted by the boarding school era because trauma unresolved is passed down from one generation to the next.

For more than 500 years, Indigenous people have experienced genocide and colonization. Yet we, as traditional people, still insist on certain principles of life that do not mandate armies, technologies of destruction and commodification, or conquest of the natural world in order to survive or sustain ourselves.

Indeed, Native people have always issued calls of action throughout history. During the 1811 Battle of Tippecanoe, Tecumseh warned Choctaws and Chickasaws of the white man's threat of continued removal of Native people to make way for white man's progress. He also foresaw the destruction of land to bring "broad roads that will pass over the grave of their fathers."⁹

Blue Jacket, Little Turtle, Tecumseh, Ten Bears, Crazy Horse, Satanta, Seattle, Luther Standing Bear, Black Elk, Frank Fools Crow, Melvin Thom, Joe de la Cruz, Bob Thomas, Thomas Banyacya,

⁸ A set of theories originated by Lakota scholar Marie Yellow Horse Brave Heart in the mid-1980s postulates that psychological behaviors such as depression, shame, loss, grief, etc. can be passed from generation to generation and can be stopped through awareness of a tribe's history of colonialism, genocide, and racism.

⁹ Daniel R. Wildcat, Red Alert!: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2009.



Vine Deloria, Jr., Henrietta Mann, John Mohawk, Oren Lyons, Billy Frank, Jr., and Winona La Duke have all sounded public warnings of what civilized society has been doing to Native lands and people for centuries.¹⁰

All this has occurred, yet our traditional knowledge and philosophy has continued to assume an egalitarian, nurturing, and interdependent relationship with the natural world or *Diyin Diné* (holy beings) as Diné say.

¹⁰ Daniel R. Wildcat, Red Alert!: Saving the Planet with Indigenous Knowledge. Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2009.

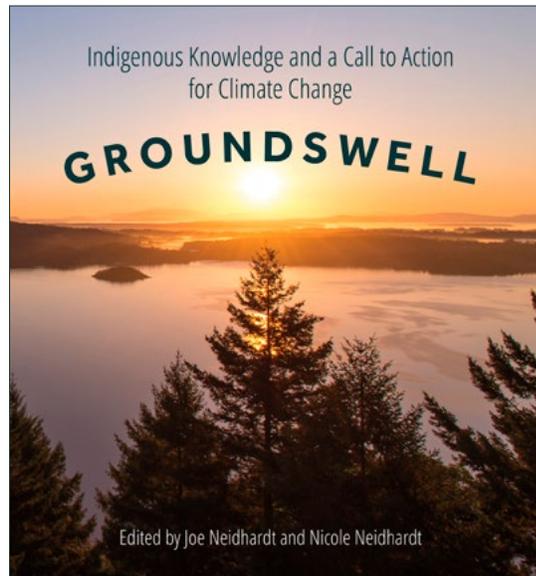
One Diné Elder and *hataalii* (singer) who has long since walked on once told us, "What you need to know is not in a book."¹¹

"Indigenous education" today is both a misnomer and yet a practice seemingly necessitated because of our history of *bilagáana* (white American) colonization. It is a misnomer because the word is English, the assumed practice is in an English-only context, and the typical educational philosophy, epistemology, and pedagogy is settler colonial.

¹¹ My views regarding what "Indigenous education" means to Native people are based on my personal understanding of our experience with the U.S. government and American people.



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