

## Participant Bios

### AUSTIN AYRES

Boozhoo, my name is Theodore Austin Ayres. I was born and raised in my ancestral homeland of Zeba. I have attended Northern Michigan University and Michigan State University.

I am the Treasurer of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) Tribal Council. My duties include preservation and safeguarding all funds in the custody of the Council, whether they be Tribal funds or such funds for which the Council is acting as trustee or custodian, and to preserve a faithful record of such funds.

I also serve my community at the KBIC Natural Resource Department, where I have worked since 2012. In that time, I've been involved with the fisheries, plants, youth, and wildlife programs. Currently I serve as a Wildlife Technician. My main duties are to protect and preserve any and all inhabitants of the land, that includes the flyers, swimmers, four-legged, and crawlers. My other job duties are specific to educating the public, encouraging Anishinaabe philosophy and management practices at local schools, universities, and amongst KBIC professional partners.

Other roles within the KBIC government include, Education Committee, Natural Resources Committee, Mashkiki Board, and Health Board. I am also a firekeeper for my community, a responsibility I hold dear to my heart.

### JENNIFER BALLINGER

Jennifer Ballinger serves as the Tribal Relations Specialist for the Northern Research Station and Forest Products Laboratory. In this role, she works to enhance connections between Tribes, Indigenous communities, and Forest Service researchers to respectfully collaborate on research and applying indigenous knowledge in the co-production of science.

Her previous roles included working as an Environmental Scientist on contract to NOAA's Office for Coastal Management supporting their Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and Coastal Zone Management Programs, and as an Outreach Specialist at the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission working on their GLRI and Mercury Programs. She holds a Master of Public Health the University of Minnesota School of Public Health as well as a BS in Biology and BA in American Indian Studies from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities.

Jen is also a direct descendant of the Grand Portage Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe.

### MEGAN BANG

Megan Bang (Ojibwe and Italian descent) is a Professor of the Learning Sciences and Director of the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research. Dr. Bang studies dynamics of culture, learning, and development broadly with a specific focus on the complexities of

navigating multiple meaning systems in creating and implementing more effective and just learning environments in science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics education. She focuses on reasoning and decision-making about complex socio-ecological systems in ways that intersect with culture, power, and historicity. Central to this work are dimensions of identity, equity and community engagement. She works closely with Indigenous communities. She conducts research in both schools and informal settings across the life course. She has taught in and conducted research in teacher education as well as leadership preparation programs. Dr. Bang currently serves on the Board of Science Education at the National Academy of Sciences and is a member of the National Academy of Education.

**ERIC CLARK**

Eric has worked as the Lead Wildlife Biologist for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians since 2008. Since 2019, Eric has co-led the Center for Cooperative Ecological Resilience and is also a PhD candidate in the Applied Forest and Wildlife Ecology Lab at Michigan State University. His research interests include adaptive management, inter-governmental resource management, and wildlife and forest ecology. Eric resides in Sault Ste. Marie Michigan with his spouse Robin, and two children Miriam and Toren.

**MICHIGIIZHIGOOKWE (ROBIN CLARK)**

Michigiizhigookwe (Robin Clark) is a member of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians, who lives with her partner and two teenagers in their community at Baawiting. She is passionate about Anishinaabe forest relations and supporting community health through our relationships with plants, fish, wildlife, and other relatives. She earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees from Michigan State University related to tribal natural resource management and a doctorate in Forest Science from Michigan Technological University. Robin serves as the Natural Resources Division Director for the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians.

**ROB CROLL**

Rob Croll is a policy analyst in the Division of Intergovernmental Affairs at the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission (GLIFWC) where he coordinates the Climate Change Program. The GLIFWC Climate Change Program was created with the goal of integrating Scientific and Traditional Ecological Knowledges to provide a holistic and culturally appropriate approach to climate adaptation in the Ojibwe Ceded Territories in Michigan, Wisconsin and Minnesota. As Program Coordinator Rob oversees the activities of CCP staff, serves as liaison to tribal, state, federal, academic and NGO partners and works directly with counterparts at the eleven GLIFWC member tribes. Rob is a member of the Tribal Climate Adaptation Menu author team and the Midwest Climate Adaptation Science Center Consortium Leadership Team. Rob is originally from Southeast Pennsylvania and now resides in the 1842 Ojibwe Ceded Territory.

**BRENDA DALE**

I have worked for 4 land management agencies in 8 different states over the course of a 32 year career in natural resource management. I served as the Zone Fire Management Officer on the east side of the Hiawatha National Forest for 12 years and recently became the Fire Planner for the Ottawa & Hiawatha National Forests. I have worked closely with the Sault Ste Marie Tribe of the Chippewa Indians Natural Resource Department in the development of the Inter-agency Ishkode (fire) Stewardship Plan and Betchler Marsh Burn. Since 2015, I have supported the Bay Mills Fire Crew by finding funding, project work on USFS lands and assisted with the development of the Little Plains Tribal Forest Protection Act (TFPA) cultural burn. The best part of my job is working with the tribes to meet shared resource management goals.

**VICENTE DIAZ**

**Vicente M. Diaz** (Pohnpeian) is Chair of the Department of American Indian Studies and Director of the Native Canoe Program at the University of Minnesota Twin Cities. Diaz is a leader in global and comparative Indigenous studies, with long-standing research, teaching, and kinship building with Native communities in the US Great Lakes and Micronesian and Pacific regions, often bringing them together, especially around traditional canoe revitalization and water TEK systems of Oceania, the Great Lakes, and the Upper Mississippi River. His work also extends this "trans-indigenous" (Native to Native) collaboration to cross disciplinary research projects between Native critical studies and STEM researchers, particularly around virtual, augmented, and mixed reality technologies.

**MICHAEL DOCKRY**

Mike Dockry is a member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, with traditional homelands around the southern portion of Lake Michigan and contemporary homelands in Central Oklahoma. He works at the University of Minnesota as an Assistant Professor of tribal natural resource management in the Department of Forest Resources and as an Affiliate Faculty member in the American Indian Studies Department. His interdisciplinary research and teaching focus on incorporating Indigenous knowledge and tribal perspectives into forestry, natural resource management, and sustainability. He earned a B.S. in Forest Science from the University of Wisconsin, an M.S. in Forest Resources from Penn State University, and a Ph.D. in Forestry from the University of Wisconsin

**DOROTHY FIRECLOUD**

Dorothy FireCloud is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe. She has a Juris Doctorate from the New Mexico School of Law and has been a member of the New Mexico State Bar since 1991. She currently serves as the superintendent at Montezuma Castle National Monument and Tuzigoot National Monument in Arizona. Prior to joining the NPS in 2006, FireCloud worked on water rights with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and held several positions with the U.S. Forest Service, including acting district ranger at Tongass National Forest, acting deputy forest supervisor at Black Hills National Forest, and acting director for the tribal relations program in

Washington D.C. She served as the USFS Southwest tribal program manager, and as the team leader of the National Implementation Team on tribal relations that developed an extensive report on programs and policies to fulfill USFS trust responsibilities, many of which were enacted through Farm Bill legislation.

**VALOREE GAGNON**

Valoree S. Gagnon (she/her/kith/kin; Korean, British/Irish/Scottish) serves as an Assistant Professor in the College of Forest Resources and Environmental Science, and the Director for University-Indigenous Community Partnerships at the Great Lakes Research Center, Michigan Technological University. Gagnon's interdisciplinary expertise in environmental policy, food sovereignty and community-engaged research focuses on human dimensions of natural resources and the socio-cultural impacts of legacy toxic compounds, particularly on fishing communities. Her research, teaching, and service center on elevating Indigenous peoples and knowledge, facilitating equitable research practice and design, and guiding partnerships that prioritize the protection and restoration of land and life in the Great Lakes region.

**ERIC HEMENWAY**

Eric Hemenway, an Anishinaabe/Odawa, is Director of Repatriation, Archives, and Records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians of Waganakising—The Land of the Crooked Tree—located in the northwest portion of the lower peninsula of Michigan. He has a lifelong involvement in researching Odawa history. He has collaborated widely with museums, universities, the National Park Service, schools and various governments in conducting and presenting research to a wide range of audiences, including to students, staff, faculty, and the general public. He has wide range of speaking experiences, writing accomplishments and media projects.

**SUSAN JOHNSON****PHILOMENA KEBEC**

Philomena Kebec, J.D., belongs to the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa and currently serves as the Economic Development Coordinator for the Band, where she is focused on community empowerment through harm reduction and overdose prevention, tribal healthcare optimization, entrepreneurialism, access to capital and improving access to local & traditional foods. Philomena is an attorney and judge licensed to practice law in tribal and state courts and has over 15 years of experience providing legal and policy expertise to tribal nations and tribal citizens. Prior to joining the Band's Planning Department, Philomena and co-founder Aurora Conley spent years building a start-up syringe services and harm reduction program to reduce drug-related morbidity and mortality on the Bad River Reservation. Today, the nationally-recognized program provides home-delivery of harm reduction supplies to individuals in 4 rural counties in northern Wisconsin and mail-order harm reduction statewide. Philomena is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Minnesota Duluth Masters in Tribal Government and

Administration Program and a DrPH Student and Bloomberg Fellow at Johns Hopkins School of Public Health focused on Addiction and Overdose.

The Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa is an Indian Nation of Turtle Island (North America) that has been exercising self-government, practicing and evolving distinct language and cultural traditions, systems of knowledge and science, engaging in economic development, diplomacy and international trade, and implementing indigenous systems to strengthen and maintain our people, continuously, and prior to the formation of the United States and the State of Wisconsin. The Band's mission statement is an expression of its forward-thinking alignment: The Bad River Tribe aims to work toward a more progressive, financially stable government, to maintain tribal sovereignty; and enable members to progress individually, towards a more fulfilling life culturally, spiritually, and economically.

In the last four decades, the Bad River Band has evidenced extraordinary internal capacity to reconstitute a democratically-elected government following state, federal and privately-funded efforts to eviscerate tribal sovereignty. Today, the Band provides housing, social services, healthcare, economic opportunities, youth programming, road maintenance, water and sewer and many other essential services to its membership, with significant benefits accruing to non-tribal neighbors.

### **NEIL PATTERSON**

Neil Patterson Jr. is Executive Director of the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment at the State University of New York's College of Environmental Science and Forestry. His current work focuses on the advancing treaty responsibilities through biocultural restoration, land justice outreach, and native youth education. He founded the Tuscarora Nation Environment Program as a delegate to the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force in 1997 and serves as the Tribal Co-Chair of the USEPA Tribal Science Council. Neil was born into the White Bear Clan as a citizen of the Tuscarora Nation and raises traditional foods with his family on the currently recognized territory of the Onondaga Nation.

### **EMILY PROCTOR**

Emily Proctor, MSW, BASW, earned her degrees from Michigan State University - School of Social Work. She is a citizen of the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians (LTBB) Harbor Springs, Michigan, and serves as a Tribal Extension Educator, Community, Food & Environment Institute for Michigan Tribal Nations, Tribal Communities, schools, community partners and various level government with her home office located in LTBB's homelands, Emmet County, Michigan State University Extension. As the Tribal Extension Educator her projects include the development, delivery, and evaluation of educational programs in the areas of Tribal Governance, Diversity, facilitation and youth leadership. She also is the Project Manager for the Michigan Inter-Tribal Land Grant System (MILES). The MILES is the next step in building the foundation for a seamless, integrated, and intentional Land Grant System in

Michigan serving all Michigan Tribal Nations Tribal Colleges, and communities. She currently sits on Tribal Council for LTBB . She has also worked as an Child Protective Services Worker, as an associate Child Welfare Commissioner and was elected three times as LTBB's Speaker of the Annual Community Meeting. She enjoys making quilts as a way to contribute to her community.

## **ERIC REBITZKE**

### **BIIDAABAN M. REINHARDT**

Biidaaban M. Reinhardt is an Anishinaabe Ojibwe woman from the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, and a citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians. She completed her Bachelors degree in Physics and Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University and graduated with her Masters degree in Sustainable Construction at SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry in August 2020. Her thesis research focused on traditional ecological knowledge and cross-cultural methodologies in contemporary building materials in the Great Lakes Region to contribute to the decolonizing movement.

Currently, Biidaaban is the Federally Recognized Tribal Extension Program (FRTEP) Educator with Michigan State University Extension. While her work primarily focuses on multigenerational food sovereignty programming with four Michigan tribes within the FRTEP grant, her work on connecting communities, providing guidance on respectful consultation practices, and "bridging the gap between two worlds" is all part of her long-term goals of helping make a better world for future generations. Alongside this, Biidaaban has been a graphic designer and artist for eight years, leading creative concepts for various tribal organizations, conferences, and environmental justice events across the country.

### **MARTIN REINHARDT**

Dr. Martin Reinhardt is an Anishinaabe Ojibway citizen of the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians from Michigan. He is a tenured professor of Native American Studies at Northern Michigan University. He is the president of the Michigan Indian Education Council, and the lead singer and songwriter for the band Waawiyeyaa (The Circle). His current research focuses on revitalizing relationships between humans and Indigenous plants and animals of the Great Lakes Region. He has taught courses in American Indian education, tribal law and government, and sociology. He has a Ph.D. in Educational Leadership from the Pennsylvania State University, where his doctoral research focused on Indian education and the law with a special focus on treaty educational provisions. Martin serves as a panelist for the National Indian Education Study Technical Review Panel and as the primary investigator for the Decolonizing Diet Project. He has also served as Chair of the American Association for Higher Education American Indian/Alaska Native Caucus, and as an external advisor for the National Indian School Board Association. He also holds both a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in Sociology.

**PAUL THOMPSON**

As the Forest Terrestrial Ecologist on the Hiawatha National Forest, I oversee the land management of long-term projects at the scale of one million acres. My roles include program manager for the conservation of federally endangered and threatened species, climate vulnerable ecosystems. I engage directly with the Tribes to ensure ecosystem management supports Tribal treaty rights and shared decision-making.

I am passionate about the Hiawatha National Forest's northern boreal ecosystems, which provide habitat for special species like black bear, moose, and migratory songbirds, and are so deeply embedded in our cultural history. I believe the combined threats of non-native invasive species and climate change create a precarious future for these ecosystems. Sharing costewardship with Sault Tribe to mediate these threats and promote resiliency in boreal systems has been the highlight of my career.

**KATHLEEN TORSO**

I am an interdisciplinary socio-ecological scientist within the field of Water Resources. I pursue transdisciplinary research in collaboration with Native Nations to support their water resources goals through the integration of environmental knowledge systems. As a newly hired Social Scientist at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, I am embarking on a multi-year pilot study with the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa to support their objective of assessing cumulative environmental factors on health outcomes at the watershed scale and community-level. For this study, we seek to co-produce our findings through shared roles and responsibilities, guided by the Rs of Indigenous research, and blend our knowledge systems through Two-Eyed Seeing informed by Bi-Directional Learning.