

PLENARY SESSION
**“SAFEGUARDING BIODIVERSITY: INDIGENOUS PEOPLES AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES’ WISDOM,
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND ECOSYSTEM DEFENSE”**

Special Guests



Paulette M. Fox - MSc. Environmental Science; President, Harmony Walkers Inc. (CAN Guest Speaker & Panelist)

Ms. Paulette Fox is an environmental practitioner, consultant and researcher. She is Blackfoot from the Blood Tribe in southern Alberta (Canada). Anchored in her Blackfoot heritage, she is a bundle keeper and spiritual leader. As co-founder of the linnii Initiative in 2009 and the Buffalo Treaty in 2014 Paulette continues to drive dialogue and diplomacy through Indigenous rights-based approaches. Through her consulting business, Harmony Walkers Inc. she joint ventures to support Indigenous and Tribal-led sustainability initiatives with communities, organizations as well as local, provincial and national agencies and institutions in both US and Canada. Paulette’s work on species at risk includes over twenty years of experience from fieldwork to the development of tribal GIS to monitor migratory species, to the reintroduction of sacred/endangered species, and most recently, advising on national policy to transform species at risk in Canada.

Currently her doctoral research is situated at the crux of our twin climate and biodiversity crises and considers the cumulative and accelerated impacts of development to the on-going practice of Indigenous rights. Reconciling the rights of Indigenous Peoples remains complex and there is a need for a comprehensive approach that does not water down the vital importance of Indigenous Norms and Narratives. Through Biocultural Systems DesignSM, Paulette’s model incorporates Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Justice, but does not stop there. She shares in her presentation: “Just Us” is about *us*, by *us*, and for *us* as Indigenous Peoples. Upon completion of her research, she hopes to train-trainers, to incorporate the framework approach, so that this work can continue to drive conversations and collaboration among practitioners and rights-holders to work collectively.

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Mtro. Marcos Shilón Gómez (MX Guest Speaker & Panelist)

He is originally from San Juan Chamula, Chiapas, a speaker of the Tsotsil Maya language, and holds a Bachelor's degree in Law from the Universidad Iberoamericana with a Master's degree in Oral Trials, currently pursuing a Master's degree in Human Rights and a Doctorate in Research on Oral Trials from the Instituto Profesional Educativo del Sureste.

He is currently the Director of Dialogue and Concertation at the Commission for Dialogue with Indigenous Peoples of Mexico of the Sub-Secretariat for Human Rights, Population, and Migration of the Ministry of the Interior.

In his academic and professional experience, he has been a member of the Civil Association "Grupo Académico Indígena A.C."; a member of the Working Group on Indigenous Justice in Chiapas; Advisor on Rights, Justice, and Culture of Indigenous Peoples of Mexico and Latin America UNESCO, WFUCA; Member of the Teaching Staff of the Instituto Profesional Educativo del Sureste Chiapas (IPES); Director of Concertation, Training, and Legal Services at the Secretariat for Sustainable Development of Indigenous Peoples of Chiapas; Deputy Secretary of Government Region V Altos Tsotsil-Tseltal of the General Secretariat of the Government of the State of Chiapas; Director of Indigenous Rights at the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI); Specialized Prosecutor in Indigenous Justice of the Attorney General's Office of the State; Secretary of Indigenous Peoples, Government of the State of Chiapas; Legal Liaison of the Coordinating Center for Indigenous Development of Ocozocoautla (CCDI) of the National Commission for the Development of Indigenous Peoples (CDI); Bilingual Legal Researcher at the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner with the project: "Implementation of Recommendations Derived from the Diagnosis on the Situation of Human Rights in Mexico," in Oaxaca de Juárez; President of the Parents' Committee of the Community of Jolnajojtic, San Juan Chamula, Chiapas; indigenous writer; promoter of teaching the Tsotsil Maya language and human rights of indigenous peoples and communities; academic and lecturer in indigenous rights, human rights, and social rights.

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Will Madrigal, Jr. – Tribal Capacities and Partnerships Program Manager (US Guest Speaker & Panelist)

As the Tribal Capacities and Partnerships Program Manager, Will works closely with Southern California Tribal Nations to build relationships between Tribal representatives, scientists, managers, and community partners to support advancement of Tribally-visioned, led, and implemented climate resilience projects within the Climate Science Alliance’s portfolio. Will is a California Indian Professor of American Indian Studies/History/Language, and an enrolled member of the Cahuilla Band of Indians located here in Riverside County. He grew up on the reservation learning and practicing his traditional ways. He is a Native Educator, Language Teacher, and Cultural Resource Manager, having worked for numerous tribal governments in Riverside/ San Bernardino counties as a professional for many years. As an undergrad at UCR, he was fortunate to collaborate with his professors on a joint project, *Keeping the Songs Alive: California Indian Historical Perspectives* (2010). This project actively sought to provide the forgotten voices and perspectives of the California native peoples regarding California indigenous: epistemologies, conversations on race, notions about the colonization of traditional native gender roles, ethno-musicology, local historiography and origin narratives, and the root of indigenous Traditional Ecological Knowledge. Will’s doctorate work includes de-constructing native studies through an interdisciplinary, indigenous lens. Archival study of his Cahuilla ancestry and interactions with early colonizers in Riverside County, with regards to impacts on the economic and socio-political identity of the region. Emphasis is also given to epistemic and ontological knowledge transfer. Since 2008, Will has conducted the Learning Landscapes intertribal programs for the non-profit Native American Land Conservancy LLC. The program sought to educate native youth and families by hosting a camping module located in the remote Old Woman Mtn. Preserve near Desert Center, CA. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) learning was the key curriculum for the program, where local elders taught the group traditional: plant use, stories and animals, songs and dances.

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**Ana Gloria (Martha) Rodriguez – Cross Border Partnerships Advisor (US -
Welcome Blessing & Guest Panelist)**

Ana Gloria is the National Advisor for the Kumiai Nation in Mexico, and Board of Directors of ALCU San Diego and Imperial County. She is continuing a family tradition of passing on the knowledge and expertise of the Kumeyaay people to the next generation. Following the wishes of the Elders to keep our Language and Culture alive and vibrant. Ana Gloria is also an Instructor at Kumeyaay Community College presenting classes in Basketry, Pottery, and Kumeyaay Foods. She is also assisting with the Kumeyaay Language classes and the Kumeyaay Tools class. She is the Founder and CEO of the Tipey

JoaNative Warriors, Jakunil and Kosay Kumeyaay Market.