FORGING A CLIMATE OF JUSTICE: RECONNECTING PEOPLE & PLACE

Alexander Blewett III School of Law
University of Montana

Thursday, September 30, 2021

3:00 – 5:00 pm Registration

5:00 – 5:45 pm Opening Keynote Address

U.S. Department of the Interior Secretary Deb Haaland (invited)

Heather Cahoon, PhD — Opening Poetry Reading
• Award-winning poet and Assistant Professor of Native American Studies & Director of the American Indian Governance & Policy Institute at the University of Montana

5:45 – 7:30 pm Evening Reception

Friday, October 1, 2021

8:00 – 8:30 am Registration, coffee, and pastries

8:30 – 8:45 am Welcome from Dean Paul Kirgis (ABIII Room 201)

Acknowledging Our First Peoples
• Kirsten Gerbatsch, Conference Editor
• Ryan Frank, Editor in Chief

8:45 – 10:00 am Knowledge: Centering Tribes in Resource Management

Tribal natural resource management is central to tribal sovereignty. Since time immemorial, indigenous peoples’ physical and cultural identities have been deeply connected to place. Each tribe holds distinct customs and laws that govern its relationship to the lands and resources under its care. Yet more than a century of federal Indian and natural resource policy has denied tribes a meaningful voice in resource governance in the West. Over the past forty years, tribes are increasingly exercising their rights to
manage these vast lands and resources in ways that better align with tribal
customs and laws—and in so doing, building a more resilient community
and landscape for future generations. This panel of tribal and federal lands
practitioners will focus on strategies and barriers to decolonizing resource
management both within reservation boundaries and beyond into the
public lands realm.

Panelists:
- Jason Baldes, Tribal Buffalo Coordinator at the National Wildlife
  Federation
- Kendall Edmo, Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Deputy
  Officer
- John Murray, Blackfeet Tribal Historic Preservation Office
- Danna Jackson, Counselor to the Director at the Department of
  Interior’s Bureau of Land Management (invited)

Moderator: Professor Monte Mills, University of Montana Alexander
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10:00 – 10:15 am Network Break

10:15 – 11:45 am Life: Defending the Right to Water

While many of us take access to abundant and clean water for granted, for
many, this access—whether for drinking water, subsistence fishing, or
ceremonial or cultural use—is not guaranteed. From contaminated water
supply systems serving marginalized communities in the Deep South, to
oil pipelines that threaten tribal water supplies in the Midwest, to the lack
of running water for many tribal members in the American Southwest, it is
clear more work is needed to address and ensure equity in the law and
practices that secure clean, reliable water. That work demands a
reexamination of the rules and values that undergird our water
management regimes, deepening the legal protections for water as a
source of life and perhaps, as some advocate, endowing water with its own
legal status. This panel features water practitioners who will share the
stories of communities facing water access challenges as well as those
engaged in reimagining water law.

Panelists:
- Bidtah Becker, Associate Attorney at the Navajo Tribal Utility
  Authority
- Jason Anthony Robison, Professor of Law at the University of
  Wyoming College of Law
- Dylan Hedden-Nicely, Associate Professor of Law & Director of
  the Native American Law Program at the University of Idaho
  College of Law (invited)

Moderator: Professor Kekek Stark, University of Montana Alexander
Blewett III School of Law
12:00 – 1:00 pm  **Midday Address**

Dr. Len Necefer, Associate Professor of American Indian Studies at the University of Arizona & Founder of Natives Outdoors

1:00 – 1:15 pm  Networking Break

1:15 – 2:45 pm  **Voices: Amplifying the Next Generation of Environmental Advocacy**

In the eyes of many, our existing leaders and legal systems have struggled to respond to the global climate crisis with appropriate urgency. Our nation today still lacks federal climate legislation, causing legal efforts to spill into the court systems and the state and local policy arenas. Young people have stepped into this space, leading efforts on the streets, in the halls of Congress and state legislatures, in the courts, and in the private sector. Youth advocates bring an energy and urgency previously unseen in the climate movement, asking those in power to listen and fully face this moment. This panel highlights the experiences and strategies of youth activists, policy makers, and the attorneys serving at the forefront of these efforts.

Panelists:
- Nate Bellinger, Senior Attorney at Our Children’s Trust
- Grace Gibson-Snyder, Plaintiff in *Held v. State of Montana*
- Jasilyn Charger, Land Protector, Earth Guardians
- Randall Abate, Professor & Rechnitz Family Endowed Chair in Marine and Environmental Law and Policy at Monmouth University

Moderator: Professor Michelle Bryan, University of Montana Alexander Blewett III School of Law

3:00 – 4:00 pm  **Closing Address & Performance**

Supaman, Chris Takes Gun Parrish, Award-winning Apsáalooke hip hop artist and fancy dancer