

The title of my presentation is "Water is the First Medicine and Everything is Connected". I choose this name because Newe or Shoshone-Bannock philosophy recognizes water as the "The First Medicine". We are all connected to the water and related to all forms of life, including each other. So, water is of utmost importance to me because it is life. However, I do not believe we as a society are taking care of the water. I care deeply for water and Salmon and am honored to say a few words in favor of better water management and Salmon recovery throughout its historic range in Idaho and beyond. I also want to say that some Native peoples may agree with what I say and others may not. That is okay, because I am not here representing anyone other than my own self.

How did I get invited to be on the panel?

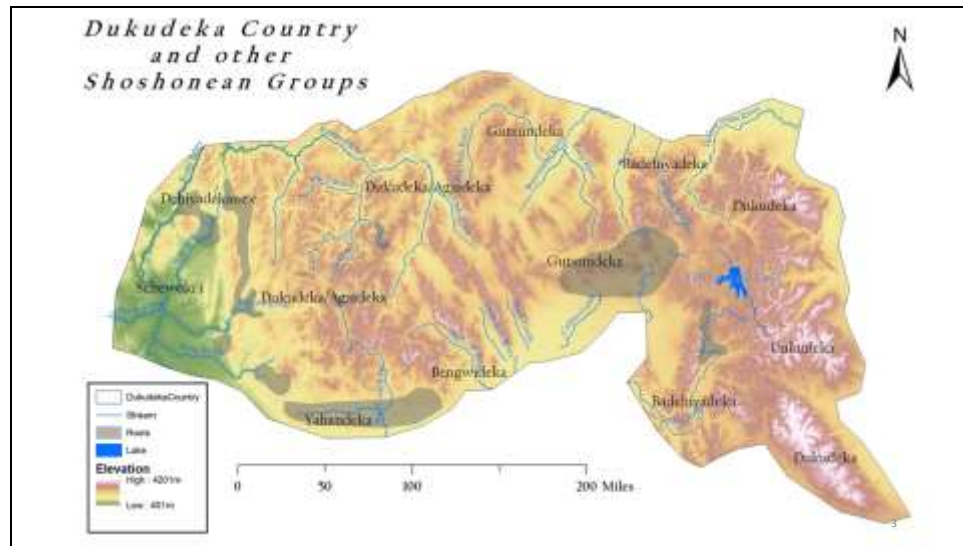
- Presented historical student research on the "*Dukudeka* (The Sheepeaters)"
- *Newe* tribal citizen, enrolled with the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes and resident of the Fort Hall Indian Reservation
- Native Scientist/Researcher
 - PhD Environmental Science
 - MS Anthropology
 - BS Botany
- Consultant, Big Tree Environmental LLC
- Editor, Journal of Native Sciences



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So, how did I get invited to be on this important panel. A couple years ago I worked as an Adjunct Professor at Idaho State University and as a class project we developed a poster entitled the "*Dukudeka* (The Sheepeaters)". I presented this poster here this past spring, and the organizers and people in attendance enjoy the talk so much that they decided to invite me back to be on this panel. I also brought a copy of the poster as a gift to the historic society and community of Salmon. However, some of you may not know who I am. Well I am first a father and I am also a husband, brother and son. I grew on the Fort Hall Indian Reservation and am resident there. I am also *Newe*, and there are ~6,000 *Newe* within my Tribe, the Shoshone-Bannock Tribes, but there are also other *Newe* peoples out there. *Newe* simply means "The People". I am also a Native Scientist & Research, having earned a PhD in Environmental Science at the University of Idaho. Currently, I am a consult and co-owner of Big Tree Environmental LLC and an editor with the Journal of Native Sciences. To begin my presentation, I will talk about the past and will conclude my presentation by talking about the future – a future I hope to see.

DISCUSS THE PHOTOGRAPH!



Treaty with the Eastern Band Shoshoni and Bannock, 1868

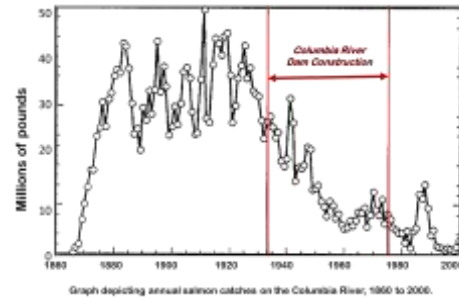
Article 4. The Indians herein named agree, . . . , they will make said reservations their permanent home, and they will make no permanent settlement elsewhere; *but they shall have the right to hunt on the unoccupied lands of the United States so long as game may be found thereon, and so long as peace subsists among the whites and Indians on the borders of the hunting districts.*



More about the Past. READ STATEMENT. I believe the Tribes can offer very strong social, economic and political support in any effort to recover Salmon. There are even organizations such as the Upper Snake River Tribes and Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission, that are composed of individual tribes, deeply engaged in Salmon recovery. These organizations too can be strong allies taking care of the water. So my message here is Indigenous Peoples must be included and involved in any actions, discussions, and policy development for Salmon Recovery. It is my believe that exclusion of Indigenous people has created many of the serious environmental problems we face today, such as climate change, species extinction, and ecocide. I also want say that the Nez Perce also have Treaties with the federal government, and they have been very vocal and clear that they support Salmon recovery.

Personal Connection with Salmon

- **Earliest and happiest memories were of fishing Salmon with family**
- **Fish returns highly variable, up and down**
- **Heard Newer men talk about being shot at while fishing**
- **Hassled by Idaho Fish & Game**
- **School teacher presented information about the impact of lower 4 Snake River dams on Salmon at Fort Hall**
- **Shoshone-Bannock Tribes supported dam breaching!**




Discuss the graph and variable returns.



Point out how Salmon became extinct. By the 1930s Salmon were eliminated from Shoshone Falls, Boise River, Payette, Owyhee, and Malheur Rivers directly impacting many Newe peoples of the Upper Snake River Basin. A Newe philosophy maintains that: “rivers are like veins and blood in your body.” In this spirit, we need surgically install stents on these rivers to clean out and restore health. Some of my ancestors and relatives on the Upper Snake were called Bia’agai’ideka or “Big Salmon Eaters” who were the Shoshone from the Camas Prairie near Fairfield, or Daza’agaideka’a the “Summer Salmon Eaters” who roamed around Glen’s Ferry, or the Sohoagaideka or “Cottonwood Salmon Eaters” of the Boise area. Dams have eliminated the Salmon runs in which these people were actually named after and may even eliminate them from the Agaiba or what is known as the Salmon Water. This is a great tragedy and not only leads to species extinction but the actual identity of Newe people. A report I read estimated that not less than 65% of migrating fish spawned above the lower Snake River Dams, which clearly shows the importance of the Salmon and Snake River Watersheds.

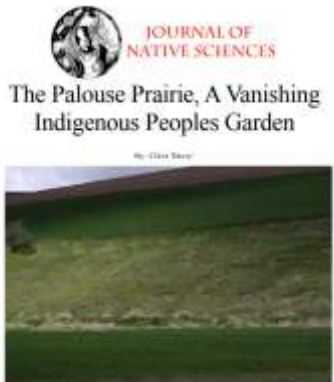
The Middle Fork is sacred...

- **Botany interpreter for Middle Fork river guides, Idaho BLM** (2002-2003)
 - First times down the Middle Fork
- **Native American Interpretation Specialist, Indian Creek Guard Station** (2008)
 - Spoke out against Salmon Accords to FHBC Council and Tribal F&W
 - Shoshone-Bannock Tribes favored habitat restoration over dam breaching (2008-2018)
- **Environmental Coordinator, Shoshone-Bannock Tribes** (2013-2016)
 - Middle Fork Historic Preservation Plan



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You do not even have to be Indigenous person to know that the Middle Fork is sacred. In addition to being a long-time fisher of Salmon in Bear Valley Creek and Dagger Falls, I first got to float the Middle Fork River in 2002 and 2003 with river guides and outfitters to teach them botany interpretation. This was when I first felt the power of the Middle Fork. Later, in 2008 I worked for a summer at Indian Creek Guard Station, as Native American Interpretation Specialist. It was here when I first heard of the Salmon Accords. I heard that my Tribes was going to step away from the long-standing dam breaching policy, and now favored habitat restoration and hatchery development. I approached several councilmen at the time as well as staff at the F&W department to let the know that I felt the Tribes position was short-sighted and that we are running out of time. More recently, I worked for the Tribes as an Environmental Coordinator and again got involved with issues in Salmon country. This time I worked with the Forest Service Archaeologist and Regional Forester on the Middle Fork Historic Preservation Plan, as high recreation use has been greatly destroying the sacred and rich cultural resources of the Middle Fork.



**JOURNAL OF
NATIVE SCIENCES**

**The Palouse Prairie, A Vanishing
Indigenous Peoples Garden**

By: Clara Weaver



(Photograph of a small section of Palouse prairie in 1900. Due to greatly being reduced by non-native plants, the photograph is a special example of the remaining loss of natural vegetation in the Palouse region of northern Idaho and southeastern Washington. (Photograph by the author)

* By: Clara Weaver is a horticulturalist and landscape architect at the Fairchild Tropical Botanic Garden in Miami.
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PhD Experience

- **Studied the impact of non-native plants upon the biodiversity of the Palouse Prairie**
- **Authored: "The Palouse Prairie, A Vanishing Indigenous Peoples Garden"**
 - **Determined 1.7% of the prairie remains and highly threatened by non-native plants**
 - **Loss contributes to ethnocide of Indigenous peoples**
 - **Frequency of food, medicinal, and other beneficial native plants low**
 - **Demonstrated the importance and value of native plants to Indigenous peoples of the region**

Although it may not be obvious, my PhD experience was related to Salmon. When I first got to Moscow, Idaho the was shocked to see how little natural habitat remains on the Palouse Prairie. So, I studied the loss of the Prairie and invasion of non-native plants as part of my dissertation. Although some of you may not know, the Palouse Prairie is the most productive dryland agriculture region in the United States, but this has come at a great loss. Based upon my research, only 1.7% of the natural prairie remains. Combined, the loss of native plants and private ownership, has greatly reduced opportunities for Indigenous peoples to practice traditional culture and interact with the native biodiversity. So, how does this relate to Salmon? Nearly all the agricultural products produced on the Palouse Prairie are shipped out on the Columbia River system to International Markets. My take home message here is that yhe great loss Salmon is interrelated and connected to great losses of native plants and wildlife habitat on the Palouse. This results directly in the ethnocide of Indigenous Peoples not to mention ecocide and climate change. It is as if non-Indigenous peoples are at war with the natural world. If you get a chance read my paper! It is online.



Closing Remarks & Future

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- You can make the argument that on a purely monetary basis, Salmon Recovery in the Salmon River and Upper Snake River Basin, would stimulate economic development in cities like Salmon, Challis, Riggins, Lewiston, Boise, Twin Falls, Weiser, McCall, etc. But we cannot lose sight of the main reason why we need to have Salmon Recovery, which is to take care of the Water. The Water must be cared for first for our own good and we need to invest in water. When it is taken care of many benefits will come. For example, taking care of the water would result in planet cooling, reversing species extinctions, development of new technologies, business, and industries. I would like to be part of that future, where we can say “we recognized the vision of Dams and hatcheries was short-sighted and a costly mistake, but we fixed it before it was too late” Remember, water is the first medicine and cold clean water creates life.
- So, how do we recover Salmon? I do not know. But I do know but support must be fostered and minds must be changed. This is done by raising awareness and having a plan that is inclusive of the needs of the Native and other Indigenous peoples who care about water and the natural world. We need to have enough support to go up against governmental policy makers, organizations, corporations, and powerful individuals stubbornly resistant to change and driven almost predictably by monetary and material wealth. You need people to speak up, stand up, and take action. Our society is out of balance and we need to give back to natural world, start appreciating these gifts from the Great Spirit, and begin to value the important role they play in the circle of life or what Western Science refers to as the ecosystem.
- If we take care of the water, we will take care of the Salmon and this would be a major step toward reestablishing peoples sacred connection with the natural world.

