

3rd annual Northern Michigan University Center for
Native American Studies'
Indigenous Earth Issues Summit
April 5, 2010
9 am and lasting into the evening
Marquette, MI

The Summit is free and open to all.
No registration is required.

Invited presenters include:

Ward Churchill
Gail Small
Ben Yahola

Bettina Washington
Chuckie Green
Lee Sprague

Damien Lee
Jessica Koski

More info can be found at www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans .

This year's Indigenous Earth Issues Summit, to be held on April 5 in the NMU Great Lakes Rooms, promises to be another exciting event. Indigenous activists from Turtle Island's East and West and many places in between will gather to offer their skills and knowledge on how to effect change for Mother Earth.

The third annual Summit will focus on taking action. As part of this, Summit participants will have the opportunity to learn such skills as how tribes can take action against polluting industries by exercising their sovereign right to regulate air and water quality on and around reservations. Lee Sprague of the Little River Band will conduct a workshop on the topic.

Participants in the Summit will also have the chance to learn from long-time Native activist and lawyer, Gail Small, of the Northern Cheyenne. Small, Ms. Magazine's 1995 Gloria Steinem Women of Vision Award winner, has been fighting coal mining for over 25 years. She will offer her experience in "using organizing, alliances, legal challenges, and the drafting of tribal laws to assert tribal control over resource extraction on and around Indian reservations" to those who attend her workshop.

Our Indigenous brothers from the East Coast have also been invited to join us. Bettina Washington and Chuckie Green of the Mashpee Wampanoag Nation will present on their tribe's opposition to the mega-windfarm proposed for Cape Cod. The Mashpee Wampanoag's opposition is based on protection of sacred sites as the proposed mega-windfarm would interfere with traditional ceremonies.

Other workshop presenters include Ben Yahola (Quasartte/Tokobutchee), Co-director of Mvskoke Food Sovereignty Initiative of Oklahoma, will teach about the Native spiritual connections between food and Mother Earth. Damien Lee, Anishinabe (Ojibwa) from Fort William First Nation, will give a workshop offering his firsthand experience in organizing effective “community decolonization by addressing environmental racism affecting traditional territories.”

The event will wrap up with a keynote address from American Indian Movement activist, scholar, and author, Ward Churchill. In his presentation, “Water is Life: Reflections on an Omnicidal Equation,” he will offer a holistic perspective on Indigenous environmental issues and will discuss how Indigenous concerns over water issues fit into the context of this bigger picture. “[C]olonialism equals genocide,” he writes in his book *Struggle for the Land*. He adds that “colonialism also equals ecocide.” The Native “struggle for the liberation of our homelands” is “a struggle to achieve decolonization.” This is not only a Native issue in Churchill’s eyes. “Like it or not, we are all – Indian and non-Indian alike – finally in the same boat,” he points out. “Either Native North America will be liberated, or liberation will be foreclosed for everyone, once and for all.” According to Churchill, “We must take our stand together.”

And that is exactly what the Summit is all about – taking action together to protect Mother Earth from the excesses of industrialization. The third annual Indigenous Earth Issues Summit is about sharing wisdom and expertise and about uniting to learn, engage and go forth armed with skills and knowledge to effect positive change for Mother Earth.

For more information, including a call for eco-vendors and a draft Summit schedule, please visit www.nmu.edu/nativeamericans. Questions can also be answered by calling 906-227-1397.

The Summit is sponsored by the NMU Center for Native American Studies with the generous support of the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community and the NMU Ethnic and Cultural Diversity Committee.