A photograph of a lush green forest with tall trees and dense foliage. A semi-transparent blue rectangular overlay is positioned in the upper half of the image, containing the main title and event information.

LIFEways: Learning In and From the Environment through Multiple Ways of Knowing

National Science Foundation AISL Awardee Meeting

February 25th, 2026

Jill Stein, Shelly Valdez, and Martin Storksdieck

A photograph of a lush green forest with tall trees and dense foliage. A semi-transparent grey rectangular overlay is positioned in the lower half of the image, containing the affiliations of the speakers.

Native Pathways, Indigenous Education Institute, Reimagine Research
Group, and Oregon State University STEM Research Center

A photograph of the Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights) in a snowy landscape. The aurora is a vibrant green, shimmering light that flows across the dark night sky. Below, a snow-covered field is illuminated by a warm, orange glow, likely from a fire or lights in the distance. The background shows a line of dark evergreen trees under a starry sky.

Intros and Icebreaker

Name, Organization, Role

***What is one way you have connected to
land/water/sky/place recently?***

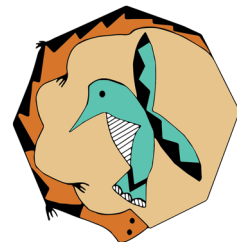
Goals of LIFEways

- Center Indigenous Ways of Knowing
- Capacity Building for Indigenous and non-Indigenous led organizations
- Support Indigenous Community-based initiatives
- Centering and nurturing relationships

Use a collaborative research approach that is grounded in Indigenous research frameworks and methods (i.e. Research is Ceremony by Shawn Wilson and Cosmic Serpent: Collaboration with Integrity by Indigenous Education Institute).

Partners in LIFEways

Indigenous Education Institute | Native Pathways | Reimagine Research Group | Oregon State University STEM Research Center | Oregon Museum of Science and Industry | World Forestry Center | Swinomish Indian Tribal Community



NAPS

Native Pathways

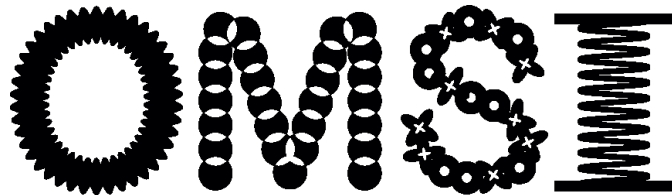


Reimagine

Research Group



Oregon State University
STEM Research Center



Oregon Museum of Science and Industry



WORLD
FORESTRY
CENTER



SWINOMISH INDIAN
TRIBAL COMMUNITY

Overview of LIFEways

Collaborative Research Process

Three levels to the research:

1. **Landscape survey** and follow-up interviews on how Tribal and non-Tribal educators are including or centering IWoK in outdoor learning.
2. **Wise Practices** “mini” stories with Indigenous and Western led organizations across the country to gather wise practices from well-established, long-term efforts.
3. **Collaborative case stories** following 3 organizations through their journey of centering IWoK and building relationships with Indigenous and Tribal communities in the PNW.



Sharing stories, findings, insights

Through:

- Presentations back to the partner orgs
- Indigenous Education Institute Speaker Series
- The project’s Circle of Relations (broad network or relationships)
- Writings (accessible documents, traditional peer-reviewed articles, non-peer review)
- Presentations and workshops.

Landscape Survey (special Thanks to Lauren Holdorf)

- Sent to
 - North American Association for Environmental Education
 - National Association for Interpretation
 - BEETLES network
 - Indigenous Education Institute
 - National Park Service
 - Personal Contacts
- 259 responses, 11 follow up interviews

0% ————— 100%



Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey.

This survey is a part of work that aims to promote the centering of Indigenous Ways of Knowing in informal learning spaces, and foster culturally respectful education. Your survey responses will significantly contribute to this effort, shaping partnerships and inspiring peer-to-peer learning in informal educational settings.

The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of numerous small, light purple flowers with green foliage, creating a soft, natural texture. In the top-left corner, there is a small yellow icon of a speech bubble with three horizontal lines inside, indicating a list or notes.

Conclusions so far from the landscape study

- 1) Interest → Self-efficacy → Agency → Resources/Support → Work.
- 2) Type of organization, role, or tenure do not influence confidence and ability to do this work.
- 3) Self-efficacy and agency correlate with familiarity with Indigenous communities, history, and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) as well as experience working with Indigenous communities.

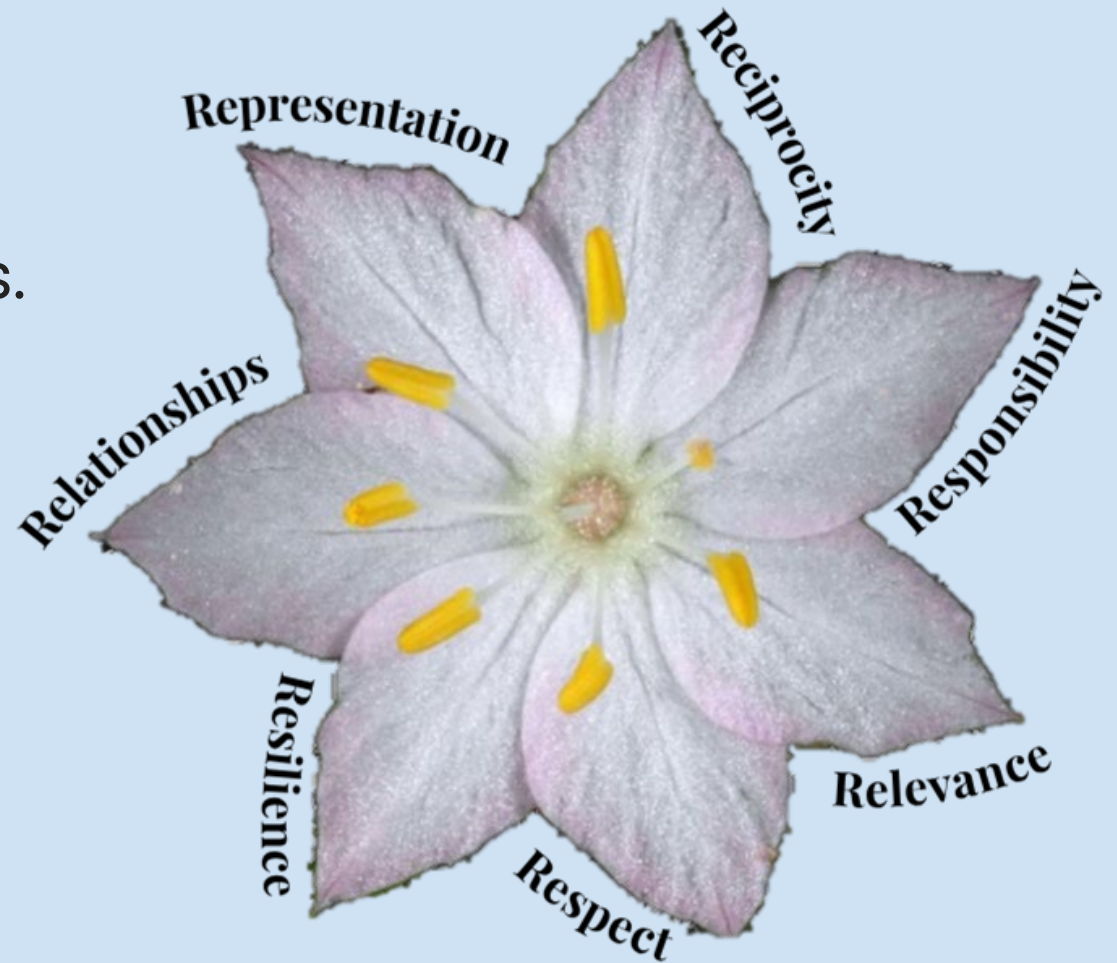
The background of the slide is a close-up photograph of numerous small, light purple flowers with five petals each, growing on green stems. The flowers are in various stages of bloom, and the background is softly blurred, creating a bokeh effect. In the top-left corner, there is a small, yellow speech bubble icon.

Conclusions so far from the landscape study 2

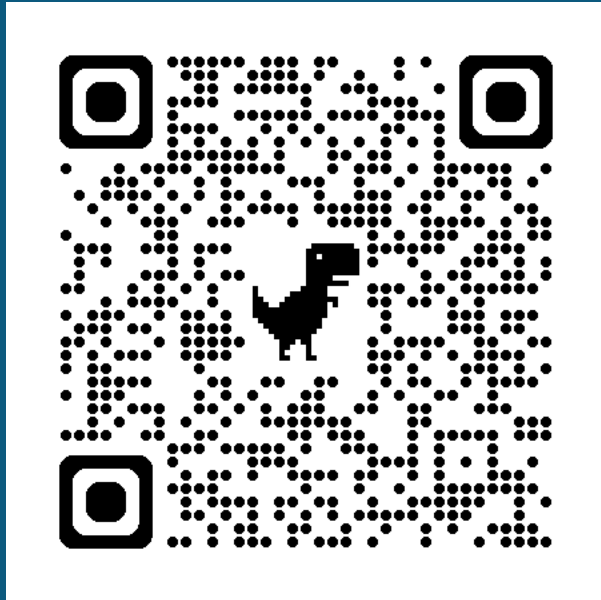
- 4) Existing and developing relationships influence a sense of ability and confidence through feedback loops in a dynamic system.
- 5) Driving force: Relationships based on respect, reciprocity, and relevance to a Native community.
- 6) Diverse personal experiences in people's backgrounds create interest and desire.

Continuing the journey

- Analyze and interpret findings.
- Engage Indigenous research paradigms.
- Share findings with partners, communities, and practitioners .
- Generate best ways to share and activate the learning.



You can make your
voice heard and
take the survey!



Survey Link:

<https://bit.ly/4I3Y7AE>

Thoughts and Questions





**Da'waa'eh
Nay'tra
Ahéhee
Wado
Herkem
Toda
Muchas gracias
Thank you**