Introduction

Shane Pointe
Musqueam Indian Band

[Song...]

Good morning, leaders in general and all of my friends who are going to see this. In the chant this morning, I am asking my ancestors to come and be with me so that the work I'm going to do this morning is good. I'm also asking my ancestors as well as everyone's to please [hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ word]. [hən̓q̓əmin̓əm̓ word] means to lift up, lift up your spirits as well. And I'm also saying that I am truly grateful to to be here with all of you today. It's an important moment for all of us. Thank you.

Janna Wale
Gitxsan and Cree-Métis

My name is Janna Wale. I'm Gitxsan from Gitanmaax First Nation on my dad's side. And I'm also Cree-Métis from near Spiritwood and Meadowlake on my mom's side with my Métis last names being Charette and Arcand. Growing up, we would go out and harvest salmon every year. And then when we moved, that was kind of a connection back to my Gitxsan identity is going out, you know, every August and harvesting fish. Towards the end of high school, it was really obvious the impacts of climate change on our fish. You know, we went from being able to harvest, you know, everything we would need for over the winter months in just a couple of days. And I think it was in grade 11 that, you know, it took almost a week to be able to get the fish that we needed.

So just even in my short lifetime at that point, there was so many impacts to how, you know, even my own family was able to participate in our culture and also be able to feed ourselves for the winter. And kind of noticing those things and understanding, you know, this thing that people had been talking about, climate change was so much more real for me at that moment. It kind of led me to go to school. I got a natural resource degree from Thompson Rivers University and then kind of wondering more about, you know, what can I do as a Gitxsan and Cree-Métis person? How can I be involved in, you know, this big thing called climate change? What does that mean for me in my own life?

And that led me to go into a Masters in sustainability where, you know, my research really looked at climate resilience in Indigenous communities and how we can start to build that resilience that has really been demonstrated since time immemorial by our ancestors and many of our other community members and our families. So kind of this long, roundabout process that started when I was really young, that kind of led me to the place that I am now, which is really focused on climate change and climate adaptation in my everyday work and life.

Melissa Cahoose
Ulkatcho First Nation

I'm Melissa Cahoose, the Climate Action Coordinator for Ulkatcho First Nation. I was born and raised in Ulkatcho. I come from a very large cultural and traditional family, grew up out on the

land. I work for the Ulkatcho Energy Corp. It was formerly Yun Ka Whu'ten Forestry. But with the forestry industry declining in our region, they started looking at different ways to diversify the company and they started looking into clean energy. There was a climate action coordinator before me but once he left, they were out searching for another climate action coordinator. And at the time, I was working as the weigh scale attendant for the mill.

So I was working at the weigh scale, doing admin work. I was a caretaker, doing a little bit of everything for the company. And I was really looking for something fulfilling. I've worked in so many different industries prior to that. Started off as the climate action coordinator and with the clean energy industry, our company was so new to it as well. And my boss and the previous Chief and Council were already doing the feasibility studies for the solar farm and he was willing to work with me and give me as much training as possible. And so for the first year, I worked part time and I was also still doing the weigh scale and caretaker and admin positions.

And after a year, I realized how many duties there are with the position. So I talked with him and made the decision to go full time and I wanted to get as much training as possible, as much education. I reached out to many different companies and everyone was offering training. So I just took on anything and everything that I could possibly take on and it's just been a snowball effect. Still to this day, I'm still doing training and getting more education.

Brett Huson
Gitxsan Nation

My name is Hetxw'ms Gyetxw. I'm also known as Brett Huson and I'm the President and CEO of Aluu'taa, which is an Indigenous knowledges institute that supports Indigenous researchers and Indigenous-led initiatives. Originally, I got into film and television production primarily because I saw it as a way to tell our stories. And I just was in the industry for a long time and I kind of was getting jaded by just, it's tough, it's tough being in television.

I still do a little bit of the work in filmmaking, but I left the industry and I started writing a series of books for children called Mothers of Xsan series. And I realized that this was kind of the path that I was going to take. So this tells a story about life cycles of different species on our territory. And it's really an introduction to kids, something that they don't get in public schools, but our kids get on our territory. So it's really sharing the knowledge that we have from our systems and putting it into a space that is accessible to everybody.

I mean, for us, climate change and adaptation are just inherently part of who we are because we are adapting people, always. We've always been that way and we still are adapting to this world that was forced upon us. And so part of that adaptation is telling stories. It's sharing the knowledge through storytelling. And the really important part of that is the storytelling is key to accessing everybody. Not to say that Western forms of research aren't important and that we don't need them, but it's more, we have to understand that there's a pluriverse of perspectives in this world and you only hinder yourself if you try to stick to one pathway of learning and education. So really my work is focused on trying to bring people together and share knowledge in a way that can only bring us more solutions.

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We as human beings have the capacity, the intellectual and creative capacity to bring into creation safe ways to engage geography and ecosystem. We can do that. We can do that. We need to do that. So it's my encouragement that we come into oneness and in that oneness begin to reverse, and begin to heal ourselves and our thinking.