



# Turtle Lodge Declaration

GATHERING OF INDIGENOUS KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS AND SCIENTISTS  
SEPTEMBER 2017

*"Human beings and the natural world are on a collision course. Human activities inflict harsh and often irreversible damage on the environment... A great change in our stewardship of the earth and life on it is required, if vast human misery is to be avoided and our global home on this planet is not to be irretrievably mutilated."*

- World Scientists' Warning to Humanity 1992 (Signed by more than half of all Nobel prizewinners)

*"Natural laws are teachings of the Earth. Nature operates on the principle of balance. For the First People, following Natural Laws has always helped us to live in balance and harmony."*

- Dave Courchene Jr., Anishnabe Knowledge Keeper

Planet Earth is home to all known life forms in the universe, enveloped within the thin layer of air, water and land that cloaks the globe.

We are embedded in our surroundings, inflated by air and water, energized by the Sun's rays and sculpted by the animals and plants we feed upon.

Our green relatives, plants, capture bountiful sunlight, transform it into molecules whose energy we liberate by burning them in our bodies or fuels.

The biosphere is finite so there are limits and nothing can grow within it indefinitely.

Humanity's global footprint has grown explosively through the confluence of a rapid rise in population, technology, consumption and the global economy.

This is the Anthropocene Epoch, when human beings have become the dominant force altering the physical, chemical and biological properties of the planet on a geological scale.

For all of human existence, we have survived through our wits and Nature's abundance.

Spreading across the world, our observations, trial-and-error, mistakes, insights, failures and successes became the accumulated experience and knowledge that are the core of Indigenous perspectives.

Around the globe, traditional knowledge and wisdom embedded in place has enabled people and cultures to flourish for millennia.

In ceremony, songs, dances, stories and prayers, Indigenous People celebrate and thank Mother Earth for her abundance and generosity and promise in return, to care for her and respect her needs and limits.

And always, suffused throughout the rituals and teachings, is acknowledgement that there are spirits and forces beyond human understanding and control.

Today, our technologies are powerful but our knowledge too limited to avoid unintended degradation of the support systems for all life – air, water, soil and diverse species. Now, our Mother cries out in pain and warns that human greed, ignorance and thoughtlessness are tearing at her ability to support life.

Distracted by electronic gadgets and estranged from nature in our cities, we forget to give thanks and acknowledge our responsibilities as self-indulgence blinds us to Nature's gifts on which we depend.

Modern science's great strength, its ability to focus on a part of nature and apply analytical tools and techniques, is also its fatal weakness.

By being focused, science routinely shatters and fragments, thereby obliterating context, connections and interactions that make a piece of nature interesting in the first place.

And the recognition that "emergent properties" of the whole cannot be anticipated by the sum of the properties of its parts, makes it imperative to guide scientific application within a broader perspective of Indigenous knowledge.

Knowledge without spirit is soulless, lacking in love, humility and responsibility that must guide and constrain its application.

Knowledge embedded in Indigenous languages and cultures, will never be duplicated by science, so like endangered plants and animals, must be protected and encouraged to flourish.



## ***We, the undersigned, hereby pledge:***

- *To honour the legacy of our ancestors,*
- *To acknowledge our responsibility to generations yet to come,*
- *To care for all our fellow human beings,*
- *To love and respect the other species with which we share this planet - our nonhuman relatives*
- *To support all our youth in learning natural laws and becoming stewards of the Earth*

## **SCIENTISTS**

### **Dr. David Suzuki - Scientist Chair**

Dr. Nancy Turner, University of Victoria

Dr. Gleb Raygorodetsky, Government of Alberta

Dr. Megan Bailey, Dalhousie University

Dr. Ian Mauro, University of Winnipeg

Pauline Gerrard, International Institute for Sustainable Development

Dr. Vince Palace, International Institute for Sustainable Development

Dr. Heidi Swanson, University of Waterloo

Hanne Strong, Manitou Institute

Dr. Vivian Delgado, Bemidji State University

## **TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS**

### **Dave Courchene, Sagkeeng First Nation (Anishinabe Nation) - Knowledge Keeper Chair**

### **Miles Richardson, Haida Gwaii (Haida Nation) - Scientia Chair**

Florence Paynter, Sandy Bay First Nation (Anishinabe Nation)

Stephen Kakfwi, Former President of the Dene Nation and Premier of NWT

Morris Little Wolf, Blackfoot (Piikani) Nation

Betty Ann Little Wolf, Blackfoot (Piikani) Nation

Ovide Mercredi, Former National Chief, Assembly of First Nations

Harry Bone, Keeseekoowenin First Nation (Anishinabe Nation)

Chief Jack Caesar, Ross River Dene Nation

AJ Felix, Sturgeon Lake First Nation (Cree Nation)

Chief Darrell Bob, Xaxli'p Community (St'at'imc Nation)

Inka Antaurko, Amauta of the Tawantinsuyo (Peru)