



**Native Lands and Wilderness Council  
2012 North American Regional Gathering  
Brief by Julie Cajune**

This year, 2012, marks the 30-year anniversary of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes' (CSKT) designation of the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness area by CSKT Tribal Ordinance. In celebration of this important environmental accomplishment, CSKT, the Center for American Indian Policy and Applied Research at Salish Kootenai College, and the WILD Foundation hosted indigenous land managers from North America – members of the international Native Lands and Wilderness Council (NLWC) – at Salish Kootenai College. The gathering took place over September 5-7, 2012 with two days of plenary sessions and one day hiking in the Mission Mountain Tribal Wilderness. The NLWC is a partnership between WILD & the CSKT with our many friends and partners in native communities.

Participants shared intimate stories of challenge and accomplishment from their home communities. Hawk Rosales shared the story of land recovery and restoration – the InterTribal Sinkyone Wilderness in California. Taos Pueblo War Chief Bernito Sandoval related the historic events chronicling the loss and recovery of the Blue Lake area in New Mexico. Joe Martin, Council Member of the Tla-o-qui-aht First Nation in Canada documented the powerful story of his people as active forces throughout their history and the road to a Tribal Park. Deh Cho First Nation member Samuel Gargan provided a portrait of the proactive efforts of the Deh Cho in identifying and designating large areas of land for conservation and protection. Also participating was Francois Depey, representing the [Indigenous People's and Community Conserved Territories and Areas \(ICCA\)](#) specialist group.

When the NLWC convened at WILD9 in Mexico, participants expressed a desire to “identify a strategy to support and facilitate a gathering of indigenous land managers mid-way of the next Congress” which will be held in Spain in 2013. This gathering honored that request and supported regional networking to build a strong coalition of NLWC members.

The origin of the NLWC itself demonstrates the importance of this initiative to developing global partnerships with the capacity to address our common human concerns. It demonstrates what can evolve from respectful and authentic dialogue across cultural borders. The outcome of this effort is significant as it brings volumes of traditional ecological knowledge to the global environmental challenges that face us all. This project helps to create a strong foundation for what we believe is a creative model for transnational solutions to critical environmental and sustainable development issues across the planet.

*A Voice for Wilderness*

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