

**Ali Meders-Knight:** This land, this village, is Mechoopda village land. Just by a show of hands, because I see some students in here, do the students know that this was a Mechoopda tribal village? A show of hands if you knew that. So okay, yeah this land, this campus is, was home for the Mechoopda Indians. And the University and the City was able confiscate the land. And I say confiscate because they didn't purchase it. They didn't buy it from the Indians or they didn't get a treaty agreement. It wasn't all pretty. They confiscated the land and now you have this campus.

Now, in your flyer, you have a handout, there's an MOU in there that talks about the memorandum of understanding between the Mechoopda tribe and the University. And part of that MOU has started today.

Just to introduce myself, my name is Ali Meders-Knight. I am a Mechoopda tribal member. I'm also a Nomlaki-Concow and Wintu and a native Californian. Okay, I'm an American. And, so the Indigenous Earth Relations Alliance is something I thought up for long time about three years ago. And I wanted together a nonprofit, but unfortunately putting together a nonprofit for the good of the land is pretty very hellish. So the best way for me to navigate and get off what my ideas were my ideas were, was just to start off with a one-day conference. Just to have a discussion publicly on what we could do as University campus students and tribal members and also community members about what we could do an alliance together in order to have better earth relations on this land. Because this land is Mechoopda land, regardless of whether Chico State is here or whether or not the city of Chico is here or who runs the county or doesn't run the county. I'm standing in front of you, I am a woman, a native woman and I am telling you this is native land. And it will always be Indian land. [Inaudible] So in that, in that sense we share the land and we share responsibility for it. It is a shared responsibility. We come with ancient knowledge. We come with what knowledge we call TEK. What we call Traditional Ecological Knowledge. This traditional ecological knowledge has been passed down. Now was passed down all the way through books and websites? ancient, you know, back then. No, we don't have that... Some of this is word for word this is how we take care of land. Today's panel discussions, today's speaker are all going to be talking about how we are stewards to the land as indigenous people and how we need to have allies help support the process that we have on land management. Land management is probably the key, the key topic here on how we do land management. And letting indigenous leaders tell non-natives how to take care of the land. And be heard respectfully and we become leaders without having to incriminate ourselves as far as someone who's not, not, how do I say this? What we're doing seems primitive and undeveloped technology. We are actually doing technology that is been here for thousands of years and known to be expert and very good for the land. It's complementary for the land. So without further ado, I just want to say thank you for coming tonight. This is something I have worked on for three years, Indigenous Earth Relations Alliance.

Our keynote speaker is Calleen. I thank you so much for coming. She is the Chief of the Winnemem Wintu tribe. And we have run into each other all through the years in different leadership [inaudible]. So I'm really honored that she comes to speak today. And have a good morning. I'll be up here MCing back and forth. Thank you.

### **Audience Applause**

**Dr. Jessie Dizard:** Well I know you were expecting Chief Sisk right away and that ain't me. But I was asked by the conference organizers to say a few remarks and an introduction for Chief Sisk. Not to repeat what Ali Meders-Knight said let me just simply add "thank you" Ali Meders-Knight for thinking of this. Thank you Shannon Johnson for being Ali's factotum and hands and feet on the ground. Thank you to everybody who saw fit to make time in their schedule to join us this morning. This is a very unique occasion. Nothing like this has ever happened here before not atleast not under the auspices of this august institution of higher or what passes for higher education in the early 21st century.

Now many of you probably already know this and so it's redundant but for those of you don't, we are incredibly fortunate this morning and honored to have none other than Calleen Sisk the spiritual and sort of political leader of the Winnemem Wintu. Chief Calleen Sisk is internationally known as an outspoken advocate for human rights with an emphasis on indigenous human rights. But as is perhaps all too uncommon in the Western Cartesian tradition, Chief Sisk and many of her compatriots are very well

aware of the fact that human rights have to be consistent with what we might loosely call environmental rights, environment's awareness what Ali Meders-Knight referred to as the centrality of land management that terribly in felicitous term that we in the Western tradition have become to be forced to rely on. So that she is also an advocate for environmental restoration projects with an emphasis on indigenous salmon restoration project. These are efforts that are integral to helping us create, re-create, resilient social, political, and economic systems. You can't have one without the other and Chief Sisk's life is embodiment of this strong association. So without any further ado, thank you Chief Sisk for joining us.

### **Audience applause**

**Chief Calleen Sisk:** [First introduces herself in the Winnemem Wintu language] So, I introduce myself. I am from the Winnemem, which is the McCloud River, and I am addressing you as my friends because we're all in this together and we have a lot of work to do. We have a tremendous amount of things that are confronting all of Mother Nature, all of the things. As I was thinking about, you know, what Ali said about managing – I always have these things about, when I listen I'm thinking, "You know, we'd probably do better if we managed ourselves and stopped managing the environment." Because I was thinking before we managed the environment, the environment with much better off. It's like, we started building houses along the riverbank. And then we managed the river so it wouldn't meander – because that's a bad thing because we built our house there. So it can't meander like it's supposed to. Because we're not managing ourselves; we're managing the river now because we built our house there, because I guess we didn't realize that that's a meandering river and there's a purpose for meandering. And that's why there's such fertile soil all along the meandering rivers, right? Because the salmon ran up them and fertilized, and when the river changed again all of that soil was just growing things, right? But we forget, you know, who we are, I guess, and we don't understand our place here on earth. And it's kind of a playground for most people. But we're going through a lot of different changes in different ways of thinking about things.

You know, I'm a first-generation public school educated Indian, California Indian. Made it to graduate, and I was one of three in my class to finally get to the senior level and actually graduate that school system. So in my family, most of the other – my other siblings went through continuation schools, right? Or GED programs or somewhere down the line. So once I graduated from high school at high school, at Shasta High School in Redding, and I met with my counselor, right? And I'm really shy, I don't be very well at any given moment in the public. I'm more of a home kind person and I so I go in my counselor's office, and I am not I'm not really taking charge of my life and my direction. So he calls me and he says – he's giving me these applications and a Chico State recruiter came. It was the beginning of action, right. EOP programs, we want more minorities in our schools. And so I filled out those applications in that session and then went into talk my counselor, and he says, "I think you should just go to Shasta [College] and get a vocation. Because you really don't have the skills here." It's like I missed a lot of days of school. I hated school that didn't reflect my likes. And I, I assume he looked at that and thought that she's probably really stupid. She probably can't handle anything in a college-level because she hasn't performed at this level. And we make choices, right? But the campus – this campus accepted me. And so then, in spite of my counselor. I thought, "You don't know me. You don't know what I've been through. You don't know what I'm capable of doing. You don't know how hard I tried or anything. You don't know how smart I am because I really haven't put out anything."

So I did come to Chico State that first semester – and promptly dropped out the second semester [laughter] and went home to Shasta College. But in that dropping out I realized it was my first time away from home, it was my first time away from my family, my people, my river, my everything that made my life. And I realized at that point that how much that meant to me. And in what we – like my gram says – "You gotta go and make something of yourself. You've gotta make something of yourself or somebody will make something of you". And so I continued on with college and eventually came back and eventually graduated from here.

I taught school for 10 years in different locations. And I found out that all the schools are the same, even from the teacher's perspective. I was always in trouble in my schools because they called me "the aloof teacher." The one who hangs out with the students too much. I opened my classroom up, let them in out

of the rain. You know, all that kind of stuff. And so then I came here, back to Chico, to recruit students. To maybe try to change the system and get an education and change all of our systems. Like have better people at home to make decisions and to correspond.

Because my grams also said, "You have to meet the white man halfway," and she says, "When they make laws you have to be able to read those laws to hold them to it." Because they're not going to uphold their own law unless you know that they're supposed to. And so that made sense, right? So I spent 13 years here recruiting Indian students and working with this campus. And trying to maneuver through the Peace Tree planting, the Peace Tree breaking, the racial incident that happened in the locker room during the pow-wow time, different things that happened to students over the time here -- to the point where I did go home and follow my grams a little closer.

In 2000 there was a transition and responsibilities fell on my side of the table. And she was with me for three more years after that, but it was a big change. One of the things I learned from my grams is that we don't have any weapons left, we don't have any warriors left, we don't have any land left to organize on. We are a tribe that has no salmon in our river anymore. And so we have a lot of things that have hurt us over the years. But the thing that is the most important is that we still go and sing to the river. We sing to the spring. We have that relationship to those sacred places, no matter who owns them. We have that relationship to them and the responsibility to and for our relatives that -- try to take care of our forest the best that they can in ways that, you know, most people don't even realize anymore.

And I say that because I think that most people, especially here in California, they don't even know what real, live water tastes like. We don't know that anymore, so we've disassociated ourselves with our environment. And you know all of the rivers in California are contaminated, right? And nobody gets upset about that -- it's like, how come? How come we're so okay with it? Because that's where our drinking water comes from mainly, right? It comes in the rivers. And if all of our rivers are like that and we're not doing anything about that -- we don't even see jobs doing that -- now there's something wrong with us, we're detached. So now we have to pull it back together. Nothing will live without water. This is the very life source of everything. We're not talking about oil, we're not talking about gas, we're not talking about trees. We're talking about water. And how many days can you live without water? Three or four, sometimes. It depends on the thing, but you know you can't live without water. You're going to all shut down. So it's a very important thing.

What I want to do with you now is show a clip of our struggles about keeping our relationship and keeping our commitment and teaching our young people to carry them. So I wanted to show you this event with the Forest Service -- some of my best friends work for the Forest Service. [laughter] The other ones work for Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife -- we all get along really well. [laughter] They're trying to manage everything and we're trying to manage them. [laughter] So this was a couple years ago and we had struggled to have a ceremony in peace and dignity because the future leader of our tribe was coming across in her womanhood. And so we worked very hard to make this go like really smooth, we wanted it to really be strong. We wanted everything to be just focused on ceremony and prayers and songs. And the Forest Service was going to work with us. Of course, we had to urge them, the whole country had to urge them in and letters from out of country. Mexico and New Zealand and Australia and Canada had to urge them because you know, we're not really Indians, so we don't really have any right to hold these ceremonies. We are in a category with 90% of the Californian Indian people. So that means that we're not on this list that the BIA created -- like, their Indians. So we have less -- well, don't even have any rights that are spelled out. We have no definition of who we are or what happens to us. There's no mechanism to find out what goes on with "those" people, those Indian tribes who are not on this list. There's nothing that helps identify or helps our rights to continue. You want to go ahead and play it? I was just jabbering there.

**18:28**

**Beginning of Video**

**38:17**

**End of Video**

Pretty interesting, huh? These are the issues that indigenous peoples around the world face all the time. And the general public -- the citizens of the state or of the countries -- don't really know what the federal government is doing or what corporations are doing to prevent that relationship with Mother Earth from taking place in establishing our connections, the way that it was put down for us to do. We don't expect anybody else to do those things, but we expect to be allowed that time that we need to carry out these ceremonies that help us.

You know, there's many water issues right here in California right now. I know the groundwater in the Butte County area is a real question of concern. The Sacramento River and the version of those twin tunnels is a major attack on water systems throughout the state. It'll be the death of the largest estuary on the Pacific Coast, which is what we have here. Most people don't know that we have the largest estuary, the largest delta, on the Pacific Coast on the Western Hemisphere. We have the two largest, the longest running rivers that cater to wild salmon, wild Chinook Salmon. We should be a salmon state. We're one of four on the Pacific Coast that can be a salmon state. But in the 40s when they put in these dams, they started diverting the water to the desert to grow, right? Agriculture. Now we all believe that the jobs are in the desert and that the desert still needs the water to grow because "we feed the world." We feed the world watermelon and pistachios and cotton -- these are the eight crops that mega farms -- let's not even call them farms -- mega business does in in the desert, right?

And so Gov. Brown declares this state of emergency for drought this year, right? He should be saying we're in a state of emergency for radiation coming from Fukushima. We should be intervening and we should be doing something about that floating mass of radiation, in addition to all of the air that's coming in and contaminating California from Japan.

But instead we're in a state of emergency for drought. While he's making that statement, they're draining Folsom Lake, they're draining Shasta Dam, they're draining Oroville dam, they're draining all of the dams in the North to -- Shasta Dam, is it 34%? Folsom, is that like 16 or 15%? And they fill up all the reservoirs in the South so they're all at 98 and 100 and 89% full.

And so then Obama comes to California, and we send our little representative, you know, to go in and meet with the Obama people. And the Save the Delta people are on a big bus to go to this big event. The event changes venues several times. The bus can't find them. Eventually when they get to the point of where they say they're going to be, they're two miles from where Obama is actually speaking, and that's where they're supposed to be. And so the common people cannot even be in the area of these decision-makers like Westlands Water District, Metropolitan Water District, Kern Water Bank -- they're all there, talking about how this fish, the Delta smelt, is really in the way of exporting water and that fish should not prevent farming. It's like --- but did you know that the Delta smelt has been here like 6,000 years. It's the only place, it's the only estuary where it grows. That it's is not found anywhere else in the world and that we've already killed 99% of them. We're talking about 1% left of this species that salmon depend upon, that the estuary depends upon. Do you what an estuary is? It's like a nursery. It's that place of change. It's a delicate, sensitive area that provides those changes for all the water birds the fish, everything in it. The Delta was also lined by numerous Indian villages, right?

And so now they want to put in these twin tunnels. You know what size they are? They're like 40 feet -- two of them. So it's like a four-lane highway. They're going to dig it down under the Delta, so you can't see it, for 40 miles. And at a meeting with the tribes, which was the day after the EIR was released, meaning that the tribes then had their first meeting with DWR about the Delta and that they would have 119 days to respond. That's fair treatment, I guess, for Indian tribes. They were asked, "Can those tunnels divert the entire Sacramento River? And they said, "Oh, no, we're not going to do that." It's like, maybe you're not going to do that but can they? Are they big enough to divert the entire Sacramento River? "Well, technically yes, but we're not going to do that because we don't have a permit." So why would you build tunnels to divert the entire Sacramento River if one day you're not going to? Because isn't that more expensive to build bigger than you need? And so you can project that, down the road, this is going to happen. Because the growers in the desert which you know, basically, they're done growing in the desert -- selenium is coming up, it's land that needs to be retired. And Westlands is getting water

contracts, all of those guys get water contracts, pay for water contracts, which are for more than there is water. Eight times more than there is wet water.

So they need to build Shasta Dam higher, which is going to flood this place that we dance that's left. We've already been flooded one time, 26 miles of that river has been flooded. But on a bigger scale I'd like to put that in perspective with the Belo Monte Dam in Brazil, and 20,000 warriors that are fighting that fight over there. That – every time they have a project there is a minimum standard – a minimum amount of fish that are going to survive, a minimum amount of birds that's going to be able to utilize the area, the minimum amount of water that will be for fracking, right? But in those areas is also -- that you have to realize is that they have a number of the minimum amount of warriors who will make it after they put the dam in. They're not projecting that all 20,000 warriors are going to make it. Some of them are going to die from the changes in diet; they're not going to eat the way they eat now. They're not going to be providing the same, they're not going to be in the same mental status as taking care of their families. They're going to change. And in that change there's going to be hopelessness and destitution and loneliness and heartbreak of losing everything that they are and do and wish for their future families. They'll be reduced to pushing shopping carts into the mall and trying to figure out how to exchange the money. They'll be reduced to paying for the water they fish in now.

This is the same change that happened to California Indians who lived on the rivers like we did, and nobody spoke up for us. And so now -- and at that time, you know, our river has no salmon. It was one of the heaviest run salmon rivers in the state. It had the fishery on this river, so they're willing to give up that.

But as the people of the state and young people, you need to show up at meetings, you need to go to the water boards, you need to be there because there are – one, if I show at the meeting I meet the quota for a woman there, an ethnic person of color there, and there are rarely any others. And then the other thing that I can't represent is that of young people. There are no young people at these meetings. No one is sitting there saying, "Hey, wait a minute," you know, how does this affect my life and the lives of my children in these decisions? We're always outnumbered by old, white, bald-head guys who are 60 or better. And they're all mainly farmers, some sort of farm is their stance. But they're also engaged in the water issues in the State Legislature, right? And I know this because we sit at the head of the water projects for California on the McCloud River, the river you saw here that we do these ceremonies.

And they don't know what to do with us. We're not federally recognized but we certainly are an icon for Indian people and rights that go back beyond federal recognition issues. And the shortcomings of federal recognition – You know, they have a process. But here in California, in 30 years who's made it through it? Who does that? Who asks the people who apply for 30 years, and then denies every tribe that finishes the work?

But anyway, those issues of raising the dams – you've got to think beyond the box. That is the old regime of thinking. We have new technologies about water, we have new ways to look at things that were done haphazard. They flooded over the top of mines so in the bottoms of these lakes all of this toxic waste from the mining that they did -- you know when they couldn't let go of mining and they came with the hydro mining. They were sure there was more gold in those hills. And they just bled these mountains. And so those mountains are still bleeding, only they're under the lake now. So in Lake Shasta alone there's 80 foot of toxic waste. And so their answer is let's raise it higher for 20 feet and I guess the future generations who are going to these fine institutions will discover how to either extract that poisons and neutralize them.

You have to realize that the technologies that we have nowadays didn't really help them that that dam is sitting on an earthquake fault line, right? There's tremors all the time. They say a 10.0 could not take that dam out. What I always imagine is – you know I've seen these earthquake fault lines that just split open the land, right? Okay if they're so sure, you know, about that dam, it's a gravity dam, one of a kind. So I'm thinking right on the edges it'll split and that whole dam will go down the river and they'll be right -- it did not break the dam! [laughter]. Because they're always right, you know.

But we here in California have a lot of water issues right now. There are major decisions being made about water and transport of water and is detrimental to the entire state. Because right now the Trinity River is at risk of being drained as well because of the piping. And guess who did the piping? Westlands Water District. In the 60s they build that pipeline over the Trinity – from the Trinity – so that we can ship water from the Trinity into the Sacramento River, which is a big no-no, right? You don't take a watershed area and dump it into another watershed area, especially when you have migrating salmon. So they don't ever count how many salmon get confused and come up the Sacramento River looking for their spawning ground. There is no count on that. And all of the processes that they've done with the salmon have been going downhill since they've been doing it. Right now they've just gave the hitchhiking little fry, four million of them, a little ride down to San Pablo, which is like too short a distance for them to swim to the river to know how to come back. And that's "success." You know, their success level needs to be certainly questioned. But in looking at salmon, we should be feeding the salmon to the world. It's the best food, it's the best brain food, it's the best health food, and we have it. We should have it here, right? But from our river we send it to New Zealand -- which there will be a movie at 1:30, about that documentary about the salmon going to New Zealand.

But New Zealand now exports \$84 million worth of salmon, and they never had before. It's a new thing since the 1900s. And what is our export here for salmon? We barely have enough for our own restaurants and fishery. We don't have the salmon that we should have. We're too busy sending the water to the desert.

So Obama comes out, he stands in the desert and says, "Yep, by gosh, there is a drought here." Like, no doubt about it. [laughter] He might as well go to Death Valley and say, "Yeah, we're in a drought." And people don't know how to look at a drought. A drought is a normal occurrence. It happens all the time, all the time. And it's our management of ourselves that give us the water to survive. When people look around -- you should not look at Lake Orville or Folsom Lake and say, "Yep, we didn't get no rain; we've got a drought here." That is empty because of the southern reservoirs. But a drought's signals are in the high mountains. When you look Mount Shasta and you can see the ridges of the rock exposed at this time of year, we're in drought. If you look up at the Sierras and they don't have the pack, that's a drought. That's where the drought is. That's what they should have pointed out to Obama. Our drought is up here – the water goes that way.

Unless we take care of our high mountain meadows -- that's where the jobs are. You know, we've taken out the wolves, we've taken out the beavers, we've taken out the trees. All of these are water managers of the high mountain areas. The people don't know that the wolves are an active part in keeping the meadows lush. Because now there are no wolves in California, right? So the deer and the rabbit, they go right out into the middle of the meadow and they eat it and they dry it up. With the wolves here, all the deer and rabbits and all of those critters would be eating on the edges, keeping that meadow nice. They don't want to go out there because they would be bait for a wolf; so they want to stay in the tree line and so they keep that meadow open like a sponge. But, you know, we've changed things and we don't – it's like "we don't want a nuisance beaver back up there now" And without the beaver, these mountain streams are cutting into the ground because they never change. They run the same stream every year. What happens when the beavers are there is that the beaver blocks those little stream and they build this dam, and the dam breaks different places when the winters come every year. So the stream runs a different location every year. It doesn't run and cut down into the ground like it is now. So our water is shooting off the high mountains like a fire hydrant; we're not retaining the water in the high mountain meadows so that it trickles down all throughout the summer months when there isn't enough water.

It's like we don't need scientists to tell us these things. You know, the Indian people in all of these different areas and indigenous peoples around the world -- we've been here long enough to know the relationships. We called the beaver *beesis-cope* [phonetic spelling], which means "the sacred center." And the sacred center is that which brings life. Wherever the beaver is he brings life, because he backs up the water. All of the birds come in, all of the fish are spawning, everything is there. But for the newcomers the beaver is a nuisance. We're just gonna kill them all. Just like the porcupine, we're gonna kill them all. They don't know the relationship to Mother Earth. They don't know that the relationship of wolves. We try to say we were here when this country was run thick with wolves, right? Packs all over the

mountains. And we don't have one story are of a big bad wolf. [laughter] Not one story of "be careful, the wolves will drag your children out into the forest and eat their heads off." None of that. And, in fact, even in your stories you only have one suspected wolf kill in the last hundred years. Yet at these meetings everyone's saying, "Oh yeh, they're gonna kill our lambs and they're gonna kill our goats and they're gonna kill our cows. And nobody says that they also get subsidies for those. But also some of those kills are necessary in that they're weeding out the weak. And there was one farmer -- one rancher -- who actually did testify at the meeting, saying that the wolves had taken two of her cows in the mountains there. But after examining the cows she found that they had hoof rot, and that that would have spread to the rest of her cows, and so that was a good thing that the wolves took those two cows. And that saved her other herd. So there's reasons that we don't really want to accept.

But there's a lot of things that need to be in our world and our country. And I'm hoping that the young people of the campuses start thinking on a bigger scale, are more inclusive. Because we -- you know, there's 125 of us -- Wintun who still believe, still sing the songs to the river. I feel like we are an endangered species. We're a threatened species according to the Forest Service. They're threatening us all the time to keep us from continuing that which we were put down here to do. And Indian people up and down the state -- you know, the sad thing is that were not the only ones, it's happening everywhere. Right now in Washington DC, Spotted Eagle and many other Indian leaders are there to block the black snake which is the XL Pipeline -- for all of us, not just for them but for the world, for all of the land, all of the waters. And there's people fighting the tar sands. These are the issues that the common person must engage in because it's when the goodhearted stand up that the government should listen.

However, you know, Tom Birmingham -- I don't know if you know who he is, the CEO of Westlands Water District -- who bought seven miles of our river. So we've been engaged with them earlier. He called me to tell me that Sen. Feinstein and him were having a meeting in that they decided that because the Shasta Dam was going to be raised that they should meet with me. And he was setting this meeting up, right? So then he called to say Feinstein's agenda is too full, and we're not going to meet with you at this time, but we're going to reset it. When did he become her Chief of Staff for the public? Now when did that happen? Because her Chief of Staff never did call me. That's who I'd been working with before. So there is some problems happening, you know, that we have to be aware of. That these megacorporations can put up to \$5.9 million into a campaign fund now. It's just passed, you know, they're just buying the government officials. You can't even tell them apart anymore. And that's why all of the public people have to stand up. Everybody has to take a charge of doing something and questioning what's happening in our own local communities. Show up at the board meetings. Go to the City Council meetings. Show up with the water boards. Cause water right now is the goal. And it is being confiscated. Just like I said Westlands bought seven miles of our river. It's not the only river they bought. And now they're trying to work the government to say, "We have seven miles of river". They have gauges that measure how much water flows by their land and their proposing that they own that they own that much water that is put into the lake. So that that water should be shipped to them regardless of who else needs water. These are the massaging of politics in this State right now that is happening. But all over the world they are buying water. Nestlé, you know, Crystal Geyser is up on Mount Shasta threatening to put in another water bottling company. Tapping into lava tube with unlimited amount of water they can take. But for the general public it is like that's not just a Mount Shasta City issue. The issue is do we have enough water in the world, 2% or less right? Do we have enough water in the world right now that we can afford Nestlé to take this pristine, all drinkable water bottle part of it, and poison the rest of it? We know how many gallons that they are going to poison, right? They have this much they are going to bottle and this much they are going to poison. Because they are building a sewer plant take all the poison water deposit in. The water system is going down south we know that two of the pipelines will go off to fracking. Can we afford two more fracking mines? Do we know that? Much water are we contaminating every day? Every year? How much water...because we are in drought, right? We are worried about people's drinking water yet we're going to do two fracking mines and we're doing more water bottle companies.

We are doing stuff that poisons the very drinking water that we have. So those are the issues I think that, you know, we have to open up our our minds in and take some time and really do something with. So I can when I leave you with that kind of the really low point. [laughs] But if there are any questions or comments.

**Audience member:** The situation that took place in the video, took place back in 2012?

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** [nods]

**Audience member continues:** And I realize that since then [inaudible]. I don't know if your people went back up there in 2013.

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** [nods]

**Audience member continues:** but I'm curious how that went. Whether there were lessons learned on the part of the Forest Service on how to maybe differently deal or manage the situation with the tribe. And let me just first say that I work for the Forced Service in that area.

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** [laughs]

**Audience member continues:** [inaudible] National Forest [inaudible] tribes. So it is disappointing to hear this story, even though I remember about it, I didn't know the details of it. And, but I'm kind of curious I always like the big picture of our relationships with Indian people out there and work to make it better. I know there are stories of success and stories of challenges and where we need to do a better job. I'm kind of curious if things are better today.

**Audience:** [laughter]

**Audience member continues:** [inaudible]

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** We have not asked Forest Service for anything that we haven't asked them from the very beginning. This is what we need for the ceremony. You know, this is what needs to be done. So we went through this is probably the worst response that the Forest Service put upon us of all of the times that we have tried work with them. Last year Sharon Haywood retired. Ahrstie Catinni [phonetic spelling] the district ranger retired. And so we have interim people. And interim people went ahead and wrote up everything we wanted from the year before including the boat, right? And so and we said we don't want any LEOs, you know, the Law Enforcement Agents up in the ceremonial grounds. And before they would say we don't have control of the LEOs they can go where they want to, you know, you can't stop them. They are a different agency. You know, we have no control. And so this year we said the same thing. No LEOs showed up. It was so... It went uninterrupted. So like it was spooky. [Laughing] It was like are they just going to come in and just shoot us all down or what?

**Audience:** [laughter]

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** It was what is happening here? And this year we are going to go again. We still don't have a permit. They want to read retract some of the things that we had agreed with before. Saying now the OJC doesn't agree with those regulation changes.

And so it's like, you know what, we still need that because if you change that you will probably going to arrest me again. I'm probably going to break the law again because I'm a born lawbreaker.

**Audience:** [laughter]

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** I have to because I have to carry on my religion. I have to carry on my ceremony. And even in holding the ceremony we found that we have no American Indian religious freedoms, even though Grams was one of the first people to utilize that to get access to our sacred sites. Nowadays because that was before Federal recognition. That's the magic that created Indians. You know, if you are not... There were no Indians before Federal recognition. And so we expect that we're going to have some problems. But I was thinking that they're going to make our ceremonies go very smooth because they want to drop us out of the public view and until the dam gets raised so the public will forget about us

being on those places and not realize that those are the only places that are left and that there is nowhere else in the world that we can go to Winnemem. And you know that we are indigenous to that river, we are indigenous to California, we're indigenous to America, but mainly to that river. Without that river you can't send us the Navajo and, you know, we don't have a country to go back to to discover and learn our ways. We don't have another tribe we can go to to discover and learn our ways. We have to be in those places ourselves, all right? The Forest Service should acknowledge that, the way that they acknowledge the bald eagles, you know, like oh yeah, we'll close off that whole area for the bald eagles, you know they are mating but for the Indian tribes doing their ceremony for Bathratronius [phonetic spelling] the coming of age of a woman, nope, that's public land there. So I don't expect that it's going to get better and mainly because we do have a lawsuit against the Forest Service for the destruction of our sacred sites. And we don't have that great of relations. And it's pretty much a military exchange right now between the Forest Service and us. They always call in, that one guy, what is his name? No the Indian guy. They always call ... Mitch! They always call in the Indian guy for us. "Bring in the Indian Forest Service guy." Oh that's our Uncle Tom. You know, he has no power, he has no nothing, he has no right, he can't explain anything. In fact that first day, we let him, I let him, stay in the camp with us just in case we had trouble because he was going to have the radio to call for help, right? So when the boater is without there with a 357, right Mitch, Mitch went out there to talk to him. It was like, call in the LEOs. Well his radio didn't work. It's like why did I let you in here if your radio...? The only reason I you here because you had the magic radio. And so they then show up that afternoon. Well you really have to report the things a little earlier. [Laughs] So I don't know we have a long way to go but we have a right and I think that the government in taking all of our land and everything for the public must have a place for us. That is separate and unique from the public because what we do there is not a public activity. We're not doing a family reunion, we're not doing an outing, and we're not going up there to go skiing. We have a specific reason that we have to be at that place, at that time, 'cause during that ceremony was July and we ended on the third. Oh, you know, it's like you guys can't be up there. July 4 is independence, you know. And so they give me the ticket on Independence Day. Like I don't have any independence. That we can do that because they're doing all these other things. But somewhere along the line, you know, we have to gain the status of the baskets that are in the museum. Right? They take care of them. You know, they do all for them because they're so rare. So are we. We are rare and we should be treated in the status that would help us continue on into the future.

**Audience member:** So what kind of contribution can people here in Chico make students and folks here?

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** We do have a website. Yeah we have a website <http://www.winnememwintu.us/>. We also have a Facebook page you can "like" and find out the events that are coming up. We also have PayPal. All of these things, you know, we...

All of that kind of stuff, can you image how much that costs the Forest Service? I don't even know, I don't know, it's like, I asked them. You know, here you are we're doing a ceremony. It's not like we are a terrorist group with our machine guns out here. And they had a camp across the river. They came in everyday two cars into the camp every day with canines. And then they had all those boats that came up and down the river all the day. It's like, how much did that cost? They brought seven units from Hayfork. They brought personnel from Mariposa to come in. They had plain clothes men up the river. We found out because one of our guys had a BB gun and he went up to shoot birds. And the guy goes what kind of gun you got? He is fishing, pretending to fish. "Well who are you?" Oh, I'm an undercover cop.

Oh and the helicopters when we did the war dance. Prior to that they had the helicopters and Coast Guard boat come in. They had the sheriff's boat they came in. The sheriff backed off during the ceremony, saying we are not getting involved anymore. It's like you got to come save us from the [laughing] Forest Service. [laughing]

Yeah all of these things cost money, you know. We shouldn't have to be in that situation where we are holding ceremony. We shouldn't have to be threatened like that we're holding... We shouldn't have to spend our money on issues like that. You know, when the Forest Service should and has an obligation to assist us to carry-on our traditions and our culture. But in the North State, you know, we haven't got there.

And we have a few Indian people who are trying to make their way up the ladder. You know, Merv George is making his way up the ladder but he was the tribal liaison out of Vallejo and he couldn't help us. It's like Merv. And I know him. I've known him all my life. It's like come on do something. Isn't there anything? And there is nothing. There is nothing they can do. Legally the OJC, that's their God and they know the best of whatever it is. And OJC right now doesn't like this permit but they approved it. They approved it two years in a row now.

**Audience Member:** [inaudible] they provide legal counsel but they don't provide direction of course.

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** Right. Well in one of the films we say, "Well who called this on? Who is in charge of this?" And they said John Heil. John Heil was a famous name on the river at that time. Well he's the press release guy, right? PR guy? Media coverage for the Vallejo Office. And then finally it was Harris was in charge of that boat coming in and what they're doing. So we have a long way to go but I think that up-and-down the State...

**Audience Member:** [inaudible] I think. My name is Amy. [Inaudible] until the forest service actually serves the [inaudible] people not serving corporations and profits nothing is ever going to change. In my eyes and in my heart the forest service should form an alliance with the Native American people who have a [inaudible] manifest destiny, care for this Earth. It seems like the last 50 or 60 years, ever since the genocide that happened, we aren't critical mass right now. And until you guys [inaudible]. I'm very passionate, I know that you have a job and you have a family to support but until you guys stand up for the people and for the forest, our humanity is not going to survive more than 30 or 40 years. And if it weren't for the fracturing... I'm very involved in the water and fracturing and I have to tell you I'm volunteering on getting petitions, and what I'm finding, I didn't sleep at all last night, because, you like, half of the people divided. Like half the people are pro-fracturing. They are not informed.

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** Uhum, they are not informed.

**Audience Member:** [inaudible] it's like oh my God. Where can I sign? This is so freaking critical. So that's like education.

**Chief Caleen Sisk:** Yeah. Well it has to be real, real discussions like when the government proposes a thing they need both sides. They need to bring in the Bill Jennings and the experts that are against these things, as well as, instead of selling the public their little dog and pony show that goes on the road and sells the Shasta Dam, sells the tunnels, and sells all of that. It doesn't talk about fracking in this whole thing. But when we look at those things, we are in extreme times. We're doing extreme mining. We're doing extreme digging in tar sands. It is an extreme process. Fracking is an extreme process. These are processes that they've known about it, they didn't just discover them. But they thought that they were too dangerous to do before. So now we're an extreme extracting of water as well. And so that's, that's the part, you know, that we have to come together and educate people and reach out, the best that we can. And to the younger generations to become more involved. You know, the campuses should provide credits or something within these majors that says, I'm going to give you so much time to go to all of these water meetings and you report back to the class or somewhere where the class does an EIS response so that they're preserving their rights in the future to object to the projects happening. Because if you missed the comment periods then you don't really have that right. So there's a lot of issues.

But I wanted to also thank Ali because first we have to think of things like this. And then we have to believe that it is going to happen. And then we have to project what good will it do. And that is kind of like a prayer. When we take these prayers down from the mountain and we're told, we feel it, we believe it and so I wanted to say thank you for, for that insight. And that I hope that everybody here today gets that. And will walk away with a little piece that is going to drive you on to do bigger and better things and preserve Mother Earth.

**Audience applause.**