

# INDIGENOUS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE PROJECT

YORK UNIVERSITY - OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL - FACULTY OF ENVIRONMENTAL & URBAN CHANGE



## RESPECTING THE CARETAKERS OF THE LAND

Over many centuries, Indigenous nations have co-existed on lands which now contain York University. These relationships, both among nations and the lands and waters that support them, continue to have importance to this day. As such, this project will acknowledge and respect the ancestors and current caretakers of these territories: The Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, the Anishinaabek Nation; the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, the Huron-Wendat and the Metis Nation.

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***The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project  
proudly presents The IEJ Fall 2020 Newsletter***

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# WELCOME

**Welcome to the Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project's Fall 2020 Newsletter!**

**Because of COVID-19, the Project could not run any in-person events this fall, so we have focused on running virtual presentations and workshops, and publishing short papers on Indigenous environmental justice. In this issue, we feature a few of the many presentations and panel discussions Professor Deborah McGregor participated in this term, and we discuss workshops hosted by the IEJ Project this fall. We also feature an Indigenous environmental justice researcher, Sue Chiblow. We highlight our workshops with secondary school students about Indigenous environmental justice, three short articles published by Professor Deborah McGregor, and a podcast interview with Professor McGregor. We also discuss upcoming events. Follow the IEJ Project on social media for more updates:**



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**Any questions?**

**Email: [theIEJproject@gmail.com](mailto:theIEJproject@gmail.com)**

## Presentations

### Indigenous Stories of Nature, Healing & Resilience Presentation

On October 1, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor presented at a speaker series hosted by the University of Minnesota's Interdisciplinary Center for the Study of Global Change (ICGC), alongside Alexis Bunten, hosted by Elizabeth Sumida Huaman. The discussion was part of the ICGC's speaker series entitled "An Alliance Between Humans & Creatures." Professor McGregor shared two stories that she works with, the Anishinabek re-creation story, and the pipe and the eagle story, and discussed how these stories should inform our approach to the current environmental and climate crisis. Both stories highlight kinship relationships between humans and animals, and humans' responsibilities to maintain our relationships with all beings in Creation and Creation itself. These stories contain ethical, moral, and ecological values and knowledge. The stories reveal animals' sacrifices for humans out of love for humans, all life, and future generations, and emphasize that humans need other beings, and their knowledge and intelligence, to survive. Animals and other beings are still fulfilling their responsibilities in the world, even if humans are not. Professor McGregor encouraged listeners to think about our relationships and responsibilities to other beings. She closed her presentation by referencing Robin Kimmerer's reflection that knowing that you love the earth activates you to defend, protect, and celebrate the earth, and knowing that the earth loves you transforms that relationship into a sacred bond.

Watch the full presentation online [here](#)

### Confronting the Climate Crisis: Feminist Approaches to the Climate Crisis

On October 7, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor participated in a panel discussion on Feminist Approaches to the Climate Crisis, as part of a symposium by the Consortium on Gender Security and Human Rights entitled "Confronting the Climate Crisis: Feminist Pathways to Just and Sustainable Futures." Professor McGregor discussed Indigenous feminism and the climate crisis narrative. Indigenous women have distinct contributions to make to the international dialogue on the global environmental/ climate crisis, while providing a powerful critique of colonialism, race and gendered power relations. Professor McGregor's presentation focused on the contributions that Indigenous feminist theory and practice can make to envision a future in the face of the climate crisis. Professor McGregor considered the actions Indigenous women have taken to address their distinct experiences and concerns, and what Indigenous women envisioned as their future. Watch the full panel discussion online [here](#)

[Find more information on the panel, and the whole symposium, online here](#)

## Perspectives on Openness: Honouring Indigenous Ways of Knowing Panel Discussion

On October 20, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor participated in a panel discussion hosted by York University Libraries entitled “Perspectives on Openness: Honouring Indigenous Ways of Knowing,” along with Alan Ojiig Corbiere and Sean Hillier, moderated by Stacy Allison-Cassin. The panel was part of York University Libraries Open Access Week 2020, which focused on taking action to build structural equity and inclusion. The basis of the panel discussion was the following question: In an era of open scholarship and research, how do we as a research community navigate and balance openness while respecting Indigenous knowledge and cultural expression?

Professor McGregor discussed how she has worked to make knowledge more open and accessible through the IEJ Project website, and noted that publishing an article in an open-access journal is not enough to make knowledge accessible. Professor McGregor discussed how universities have way more resources than any Indigenous communities, and universities have to support communities to do the work they want to do on their own terms. For research to be just, equitable, and open, universities and researchers have to let go of things, and give up some power, to allow Indigenous communities to advance their own research agendas on their own terms. Professor McGregor noted that one of the biggest problems with academic research is that it is a very knowledge-extractive process, and rarely considers how knowledge will be shared within communities and external to communities. Further, individual researchers cannot be the only ones responsible for building relationships and trust with communities; universities have to build relationships and trust with communities as well. Watch the full panel discussion [here](#)

[See more about the panel discussion on York’s website here](#)



## Indigenous Peoples, Colonialism and Climate Change Futures: Keynote Speech

On October 23, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor gave a keynote speech on Indigenous Peoples, Colonialism and Climate Change at the EXALT Symposium, at the University of Helsinki. The Symposium focused on deepening the concept of extractivism and the role of alternatives beyond conventional usages of natural resources. Professor McGregor's presentation explored Indigenous pathways to envision a self-determined climate change future. The current climate crisis is not the first time Indigenous peoples have had to face devastating environmental change. Indigenous peoples have been finding ways to adapt and be resilient since time immemorial. Indigenous peoples have distinct formations and contributions to make to the dialogue on the global environmental/ climate crisis as well as critiques of proposed solutions. Drawing on Indigenous governance, legal orders, and knowledge systems, Professor McGregor asked how a self-determined future can be realized.

Watch the full presentation [here](#)

[Watch all session recordings here](#)

## Two-Eyed Seeing & Beyond: Panel Discussion

On October 28, 2020, the Reconciling Ways of Knowing Society hosted a panel discussion on "Two-Eyed Seeing & Beyond," featuring Professor Deborah McGregor, Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall, Dr. Jesse Popp, and Dr. Andrea Reid, and moderated by Jacquie Miller.

The panelists discussed the idea of Etuaptmumk, or Two-Eyed Seeing, and other related frameworks for understanding across ways of knowing. Etuaptmumk Two-Eyed Seeing is a guiding principle developed by Mi'kmaq Elder Albert Marshall that recognizes that better outcomes are more likely if we bring two or more perspectives into collaboration. Etuaptmumk can thus be understood as a gift of multiple perspectives, an insight and framework that could help us do better in many areas of our shared lives, including our relationship with the earth.

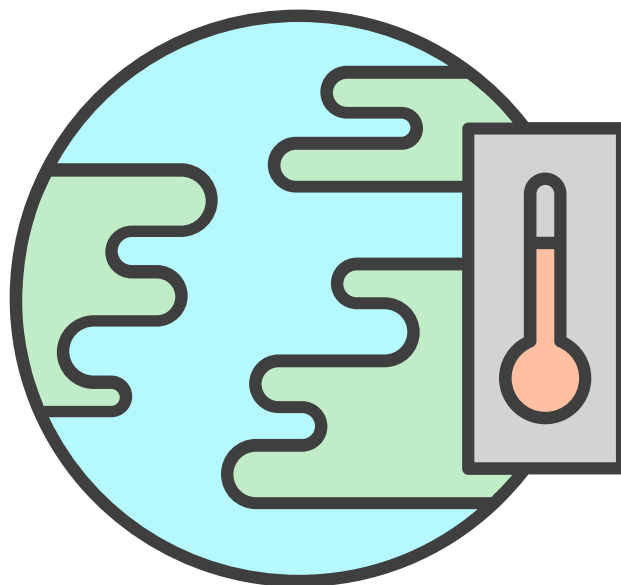
The guests discussed how Two-Eyed Seeing requires learning together and from each other, and discussed other transsystemic ways of knowing and understanding, including how the relationship committed to in the Two-Row Wampum can help guide our understanding and collaboration across ways of knowing. Watch the panel discussion online [here](#)

## Lancet Countdown Canadian Policy Brief 2020: Panel Discussion

On December 8, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor participated in a panel discussion to celebrate the 2020 launch of the Canadian Lancet Policy Brief. Professor McGregor was one of the authors of the brief.

Professor McGregor discussed one of the tensions that she and other authors tried to capture in the Brief. Indigenous peoples are particularly impacted by climate change, while contributing very little to the problem of climate change. The negative impacts of climate change affect Indigenous peoples' entire way of life, from their health to their political and legal systems. At the same time, those same Indigenous knowledge and governance systems that have been made vulnerable by climate change are helping Indigenous people build resilience to the changes. Thus, Indigenous communities are made vulnerable by climate change, but are also building resilience in the face of climate change.

Professor McGregor also highlighted that for a lot of Indigenous communities, the climate crisis is one crisis among many that they are experiencing. Many communities experience water crises, which are exacerbated by the climate crisis. Further, climate change is an extension of the massive environmental change that Indigenous peoples have experienced since the colonization of Canada began, and Indigenous peoples have developed important solutions to dramatic environmental change. Professor McGregor encouraged audience members to think about climate change experiences and responses in a more holistic way, noting that when Indigenous peoples are out on the land, they're experiencing, monitoring, adapting, and building resilience to climate change at the same time. Watch the full panel discussion [here](#). For more information on the Lancet Canadian Policy Brief, see below.



## Workshops

### There Is Something in the Water: Water Allies & IEJ Project Event

On October 13, 2020, the IEJ Project and The Great Lakes Water Works/Water Allies Project (University of Toronto) presented "There is Something in the Water," an event discussing ongoing environmental injustice and environmental racism in Nova Scotia. Guest speakers included Dr. Ingrid Waldron, author of *There Is Something in the Water*, and water protectors Doreen Bernard and Ducie Howe.

Dr. Waldron, an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Health at Dalhousie University, discussed her book's central arguments, exposing environmental injustices practiced by the government of Nova Scotia against African Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq communities. Dr. Waldron also discussed case studies from Aamjiwnaang First Nation and Wet'suwet'en to highlight environmental racism and environmental health inequities. She provided insight into grassroots mobilizing and highlighted the impact Indigenous and Black women have had on anti-capitalist and anti-colonial activism.

Doreen Bernard is a Mi'kmaq grassroots Grandmother and residential school survivor from Nova Scotia. Doreen shared her stories of grassroots movements to protect water in Mi'kmaq territories, such as the Alton Gas protest, saving Lake Ainslie, and water walks with late Grandmother Josephine Mandamin.

Ducie Howe is a Sipekne'katik band member and grassroots Elder who shared her reflections on the environmental rights discourse, the responsibility of the collective, and colonial versus Indigenous perspectives. Ducie also discussed the Nova Scotia Department of Fisheries and Oceans' lack of intervention in the conflict between Nova Scotia fisherman and Indigenous communities.

The event was a powerful and thought-provoking discussion of past, current, and future environmental justice issues in Nova Scotia. The documentary "There's Something in the Water," based on Dr. Ingrid Waldron's book, is now available on Netflix. For information on future Water Allies and IEJ events, please visit the [IEJ Project website](#) or the [Water Allies website](#)



## Protecting Our Water: Water-Based Learning and Indigenous Perspectives Model Workshop for Educators

On November 25, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor and Sue Chiblow presented a webinar on "Protecting Our Water: Water-based learning and Indigenous perspectives." The webinar was delivered by Ecosource and York University, as a professional development teacher training session for educators. This webinar improved participant understanding of water relationships, and provided them with activities to teach students about Indigenous principles and values in relation to water.

Deborah and Sue shared stories of water-related activities and explained the connection between First Nation governance, treaties, and our rights and responsibilities to water. The audience appreciated their explanation of water in relation to the other elements and how water interacts with everything in the environment, including our bodies. An important takeaway from this event was the idea that all water must be protected, not just drinking water, because all life depends on water to live. Deb and Sue highlighted this message by explaining the responsibility that the Anishinabek have to Turtle Island. The educators in attendance were happy to share their relationships with essential waterways. They were eager to learn about activities, such as water storying or water mapping, that support Indigenous values concerning water.

For more information on water-based learning and Indigenous perspectives, please visit <https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/> or email Ecosource at [teachered@ecosource.ca](mailto:teachered@ecosource.ca).

Professor Deborah McGregor is Anishinaabe from Whitefish River First Nation, and an Associate Professor cross-appointed with Osgoode Hall Law School and the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change. She is also the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Environmental Justice and the Principal Investigator for the Indigenous Environmental Justice (IEJ) Project.

Sue Chiblow is Anishinaabe from Garden River First Nation, a Ph.D. candidate in Environmental Science at York University, and a Pre-Doctoral Fellow in the American Indian and Indigenous Studies Program at Michigan State University. Learn more about Sue in our IEJ Research Profile below.

## SECONDARY SCHOOL WORKSHOPS

This fall, the IEJ Project has hosted workshops at secondary schools, focusing on 'Environmental Justice and Reconciliation: Storytelling and Relationships to Environment.' Through storytelling, brainstorming, and free association exercises, the workshops assist students and participants with self-discovery and encourage everyone to reflect upon environmental relationships. The IEJ team begins with a land acknowledgement and shares the intended purpose of the IEJ Project with the audience. Stories, such as the Anishinabek Re-Creation story, are used to inform students about ecological and environmental values and the relationship between humans and nature. Brainstorming and free association word exercises give students a chance to engage with the group and share key messages and thoughts on wildlife, water, animals, and justice. The IEJ workshops insight free-flowing discussions between teachers, students, and team members about environmental justice and relationships between humans and the natural world.

We hosted the following workshops this fall:

- IEJ Listening to the Land Workshop. East York Collegiate Institute. Toronto, ON. Virtual. September 24, 2020. (Professor Deborah McGregor, Dali Carmichael, Kim Tran, Emilia Khalil, Ethan Persaud-Quiroz)
- Indigenous Environmental Justice. School of Life Experience (SOLE). Virtual. October 26, 2020. (Professor Deborah McGregor, Dali Carmichael, Kim Tran, Emilia Khalil, Ethan Persaud-Quiroz)
- Indigenous Environmental Justice. Holy Name of Mary College School November 13, 2020. Virtual. (Professor Deborah McGregor, Dali Carmichael, Kim Tran, Emilia Khalil, Ethan Persaud-Quiroz)
- Listening to the Land: Spiritual Ecology. Holy Name of Mary College School. (2X). Virtual November 26, 2020. (Professor Deborah McGregor, Dali Carmichael, Will Dandie)



# IEJ

## Research

## Profile

### Sue Chiblow



Sue Chiblow is an Anishinaabe kwe born and raised in Garden River First Nation, and a researcher in the area of environmental justice and Anishinaabek law. She has worked extensively with First Nation communities for the last 30 years in environmental related fields. She is currently pursuing her PhD in Environmental Studies with a focus on N'bi G'gikendaaswinmin (water knowledge) at York University and is a pre-doctoral fellow in the American Indian and Indigenous Studies department at the University of Michigan. Sue also has a Bachelor of Science degree with a major in biology and a minor in chemistry, and a Master's degree in Environment and Management. In July 2018, Sue was awarded a prestigious Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship of \$50,000 annually for up to three years, to support her research. In her free time, Sue volunteers with the Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) Elders group who are fighting environmental issues in the Robinson-Huron Treaty territory.

Sue's PhD work is directly related to environmental justice for Anishinaabek peoples and the revitalization of Anishinaabek law. Her research project, N'be Kendaaswin (Water Knowledge), focuses on four key themes. First, water governance and gender, considering how Anishinaabek law constructs the role of women in decision making about water. Second, water memory, considering how Anishinaabek law understands the relationship between water and memory. Third, Indigenous laws, considering what responsibilities humans have under Naaknigewin (law/ Anishinaabek traditions). Fourth, reconciliation and relationships with water, considering how the broader discourse in Canada about reconciliation can assist with improving relationships to water.

In 2019, Sue Chiblow published an article in the journal *Water*, entitled "Anishinabek Women's Nibi Giikendaaswin (Water Knowledge)," which discusses how Anishinabek understand and construct giikendaaswin (knowledge, information, and the synthesis of our personal teachings) based on Anishinabek ontology and epistemology, which includes nibi (water) giikendaaswin. Read the article here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/w11020209>

In 2020, Sue published a second article in *Water*, entitled "An Indigenous Research Methodology That Employs Anishinaabek Elders, Language Speakers and Women's Knowledge for Sustainable Water Governance," which proposes an Indigenous research methodology that is specific to the Anishinaabe territory of the Great Lakes region and includes Anishinaabek Elders, Anishinaabemowin (Ojibway language) speakers, and Anishinaabek women. Sue emphasizes the importance of engaging Anishinaabek Elders, Anishinaabemowin speakers, and Anishinaabek women in sustainable water governance. Read the article here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/w12113058>

## Short Papers

### Policy Brief for Canada: The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change, The Lancet

In December 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor, Dr. Claudel P-Desrosiers, Dr. Finola Hackett, and Dr. Krista Basiak published the Policy Brief for Canada as part of The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change. This brief makes recommendations to address climate change, focusing on turning down the heat, cleaning our air, and ensuring a healthy recovery from the climate and COVID-19 dual crises. The authors note that climate change disproportionately impacts Indigenous peoples' wellbeing. Colonialism has altered the ecological systems that support Indigenous peoples' health, economies, cultural practices and self-determination. For First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities, the current climate crisis is understood and experienced as an intensification of the environmental changes imposed on Indigenous people by historic and ongoing colonial processes. Their remarkable and demonstrable resilience through these changes, however, reinforce the opportunity for learning and collaborating on solutions that draw on the ecological traditional knowledge, social and environmental adaptability of Indigenous peoples in Canada. Read the full policy brief online here:

<https://policybase.cma.ca/documents/PolicyPDF/PD21-01.pdf>

### 20 Essential Reads to Enable Two-Eyed Seeing in Aquatic Research and Management, IAGLR Lakes Letter

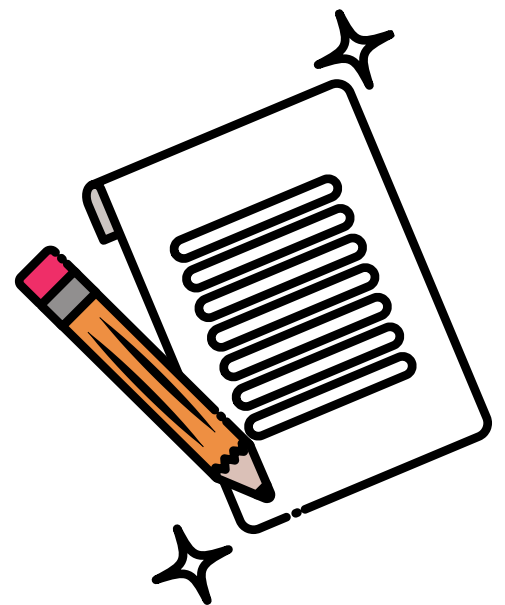
In Fall 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor, Andrea Reid, Jesse Popp, Jacquie Miller, and Albert Marshall published a short article in the International Association for Great Lakes Research (IAGLR) Lakes Letter. The article profiled 20 essential articles on two-eyed seeing in aquatic research and management. Two-eyed seeing is defined by Mi'kmaw Elder Dr. Albert Marshall as "learning to see from one eye with the strengths of Indigenous Knowledges and ways of knowing, and from the other eye with the strengths of Western knowledges and ways of knowing ... and learning to use both these eyes together, for the benefit of all." The profiled articles apply Two-Eyed Seeing in a good way to research and management in the aquatic realm and beyond. Read the article here (pages 9-10 of the newsletter): [http://iaglr.org/II/2020-4-Fall\\_LL7.pdf](http://iaglr.org/II/2020-4-Fall_LL7.pdf).

### The Day After: Water, Canadian Dimensions

In September 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor published a brief article in Canadian Dimension's seventh installment of an ongoing series analyzing the possibilities of our collective response to COVID-19.

In the article, Professor Deborah McGregor discussed how the federal government's public health hand washing advisory at the beginning of COVID failed to address the overarching problem of water insecurity in Indigenous communities, including access to even bottled water. Government responses to the pandemic, while perhaps effective for most people living in urban and many rural communities, do not address the broader, deeper and long-standing inequities that historical and ongoing colonialism have created in Indigenous communities. Read the article here (at the bottom of the page):

<https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/the-day-after-water>



## AKI-NAAGADENDAMOWIN

The Indigenous Environmental Justice Project's Aki-naagadendamowin engaged youth from high school to University. Aki-naagadendamowin aims to engage youth to keep in touch with their Indigenous roots and teachings, and to learn to care for Mother Earth/Turtle Island and our elders. This was documented by way of photography, short videos, essays, and other creative forms. Aki-naagadendamowin, which translates to “caregivers of the land,” is an initiative that allows participants to work independently at their own pace. Through the IEJ Project, youth are engaged by storytelling, events, and various outreach initiatives hosted by the IEJ Project and partners. The participants are provided the necessary training such as interview skills, research methods, proper use of equipment, as well as equipment and a space on the IEJ Project website to present their work.

### Aki-naagadendamowin Translation

“Aki-naagadendamowin”, translated to Anishinaabemowin by Leona Nahwegahbow is “Anishinaabek Naagdowendjigewak Maanpii Shagmigaang”, which specifically means “Anishinaabek are the caregivers of Mother Earth

## AKI-NAAGADENDAMOWIN



### Re-connecting with the Land during COVID-19 by Emma Daybutch, Mississauga First Nation

To manage stress during COVID 19, Emma decided to take care of the natural surroundings—the trees, plants and flowers. She wanted to learn how to connect to the land through gardening, especially tending to plants that in turn help pollinators and other insects as well as birds. You can read more about Emma's project at

<https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/emma-daybutch/>. "The most important lesson I learned was, "If we take care of the Earth, the Earth will take care of us." - Emma Daybutch, Mississauga First Nation, Aki-naagadendamowin project participant

### Mnaabmaadziwin, To Live is A Good Life by Duncan Stewart, Whitefish River First Nation

Duncan shares teaching received by his grandmother, Leona Nahwegahbow (Whitefish River First Nation) about Mnaabmaadziwin (to live a good life) which is one of the many gifts given to us by Creator. Duncan's project also explores the 7 Grandfather teachings and stories about the eagle. You can read more about Duncan's project and download additional resources at <https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/duncan-stewart/>.



### Teachings from the Sugarbush by Sterling McGregor, Whitefish River First Nation

Sterling's project explores her family's sugarbush, where they have made maple syrup for countless generations. Sterling explains how the sugarbush are all about tradition and family, with many members of her immediate and extended family spending long hours in the bush, tending the fire, collecting sap, telling stories and how the pandemic has impacted this tradition. You can read more about Sterling's project at

<https://iejproject.info.yorku.ca/sterling-mcgregor/>.

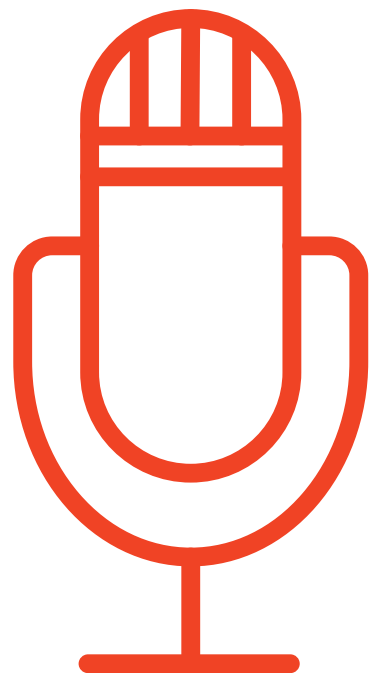
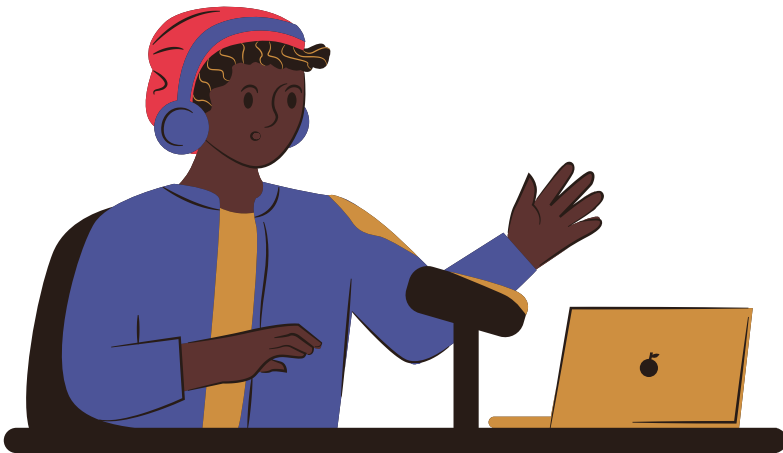
## PODCASTS

### In This Climate: Spiritual Ecology Podcast

On December 11, 2020, Professor Deborah McGregor was featured on the podcast In This Climate, which is a podcast from Indiana University's Environmental Resilience Institute and The Media School. This podcast series considers how spiritual connection with our environment can help us enter into right and restorative relationship with the earth, including human and more-than-human beings.

Professor Deborah McGregor discussed how Indigenous spirituality and ecology are intertwined, and the spiritual ecology contained in Indigenous stories. Indigenous societies have survived genocidal policies and faced annihilation, including ecological and climatic change, either through forced removal or relocation. Professor McGregor noted that Indigenous stories can provide insights into how to approach the current global climate crisis, and how to envision pathways to a better world. Indigenous stories, such as the Anishinabek recreation story, are embedded with ecological and biological knowledge, as well as spiritual knowledge and traditions. Professor McGregor noted that we need complete transformation to deal with the global climate crisis, we need to transform how we think, behave, and conduct ourselves in the world. Indigenous stories contain environmental principles that can inform our approach to climate justice and how to respond to the climate crisis, but people need to be ready to listen to them.

Listen to the full podcast here, entitled "Spiritual Ecology: Deborah McGregor" (dated December 11, 2020): <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/in-this-climate/id1478935628>



## UPCOMING EVENTS



### Learning to live well with the earth: A Dialogue Series

The IEJ Project will be launching a new web series in the winter semester titled, Learning to live well with the earth: A Dialogue Series. This interdisciplinary series will focus on climate justice in all its forms, from the ways humans connect with the earth and the more than human, to activism, to changes pursued through the court system and more. Each dialogue contributor will share lessons from their own experiences and research.

### International Mother Language Day Event

The IEJ Project is collaborating with the History of Indigenous Peoples Network (HIPN) for an International Mother Language Day event on February 17, 2021 at 2:00 p.m. You can learn more about HIPN at <https://robarts.info.yorku.ca/research-clusters/hip/>. Follow our social media for more information on this event and others in Spring 2021.

### Other Upcoming Events

The IEJ Project will also be releasing a climate justice annotated bibliography shortly, featuring brief descriptions of recently-published articles about climate justice. We will be hosting more secondary school workshops, and we are organizing another speaker series, on the topic of “Indigenous research, theory, and practice,” this spring.

Stay tuned for more information about our upcoming events through our social media!

