SPEAKER BIOGRAPHIES
FOR 2026 INDIGENOUS-LED TRANSBOUNDARY MINING CONFERENCE

Monday, September 14th, 2026

Prayer and Welcome Remarks

COUNCILMAN LEN TWOTEETH
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Councilmember Len TwoTeeth is the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Tribal Council representative for the Elmo District.

Knowledge Exchange and Grounding Discussion Moderators

RICH JANSSEN JR.
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Rich Janssen Jr. is an enrolled Qlispe (upper Kalispel') Tribal Member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He has spent his entire 35-year career with his Tribes, the last fifteen as the Department Head of Natural Resources, which includes over 258 employees within the Divisions of Environmental Protection, Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation, and Engineering and Water Resources. Rich has an undergraduate degree from the University of Montana and a Master of Business Administration from Gonzaga University. Rich is married with a grown daughter and son, Jake, whom had Autism and passed away suddenly in April of 2023. He also has an English Bulldog named Dennis and is a strong advocate for all people with Autism.

ERIN SEXTON
University of Montana, Flathead Lake Biological Station

Erin Sexton is a Senior Scientist at the University of Montana, Flathead Lake Biological Station, where she has been focusing on our transboundary rivers since 2007. All of Erin's work focuses on partnerships, collaboration and allyship with Tribes and First Nations. Erin has been working in transboundary lands and waters since 2000, where she initiated her master's work focused on the terrestrial, and aquatic impacts of coalbed gas development in the Transboundary Flathead and Elk/Kootenai Rivers, and has since continued to work on the impacts of mining in transboundary waters.

JILL WEITZ

Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida)

Position / Location: Government Affairs, Office of the President, Tlingit & Haida; Juneau, Alaska

EPA Project Focus: *Leveraging the Tlingit & Haida AK-B.C. Transboundary Watersheds Program to Advance Shared Knowledge Sources and Multinational Coordination;* integration of TEK / governance

Favorite Thing About Rivers: Salmon!

Welcome Dinner

Stipn Ḵʷimsmɬi / STEPHEN SMALLSALMON

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Stephen Smallsalmon is a respected Pend d'Oreille elder from the Flathead Indian Reservation. He is a fluent speaker of the Pend d'Oreille language and works at Nḵʷusm – Salish Language School as a Language Specialist teaching both children and adults the language and culture. He has worked at the school since 2003, and this is not just a job for Stephen but an opportunity to pass on what he knows to the future generations.

Stephen is the War Dance Chief and is well-known in Indian country as a champion Men's Traditional dancer and drummer. He was introduced to dancing by his grandfather, Alexander Beaverhead, when he was a young boy. Stephen is an accomplished artist, beading and putting together all his own dance outfits and other projects that he sells or gives away.

Stephen sits on the Séliš-Qlispé Elders Advisory Council. He was awarded an Honorary Bachelor of Arts Degree in Native Studies from SKC in 2012 for his work teaching language at Nḵʷusm. And is well known for acting in plays, tv commercials, tv series and movies. Some recent appearances are in 1923, Yellowstone and the movie The Last Beyond.

CHAIRMAN MICHAEL DOLSON

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Michael Dolson is the Chairman of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and the Council representative for the Hot Springs District.

Tuesday, September 15th, 2026

Introduction to the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

RICH JANSSEN JR.
Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Rich Janssen Jr. is an enrolled Qlispe (upper Kalispel') Tribal Member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He has spent his entire 35-year career with his Tribes, the last fifteen as the Department Head of Natural Resources, which includes over 258 employees within the Divisions of Environmental Protection, Fish, Wildlife, Recreation, and Conservation, and Engineering and Water Resources. Rich has an undergraduate degree from the University of Montana and a Master of Business Administration from Gonzaga University. Rich is married with a grown daughter and son, Jake, whom had Autism and passed away suddenly in April of 2023. He also has an English Bulldog named Dennis and is a strong advocate for all people with Autism.

Waters Impacted: Indigenous-Led Science and Knowledge, with Partners, in the Kootenai/y Watershed

CURTIS LUKE
ʔa·knusti (Guardian), Ktunaxa Nation Council Society

Curtis Luke grew on the Yaqan Nuʔkiy reserve located south of the town of Creston, BC. Worked 8 years in construction mainly as a Carpenter and laborer in heavy duty construction, until a opportunity to work for Ktunaxa Nation Council as a ʔAknusti. Curtis has been a ʔAknusti for 3.5 years at KNC knowing and understanding the importance of being a ʔAknusti and that is to Provide, Protect and Preserve ʔa·kxaṁis ḳapi qapsin (all living things) within ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa territory). Curtis Luke is a proud Ktunaxa citizen growing up with the teachings and learnings of cultural traditions mainly from his grandpa Chris Luke Sr., his dad Chad Luke and various Ktunaxa elders and citizens in his journey taking on the responsibility to pass on the teachings to others and the next generation beyond himself. Curtis implements this working in the fields of archeology, forestry, Patrols, monitoring with: inferred trail counters, motorized vehicle counters, trail cams and Ktunaxa voice and presents with the mining oversight team.

EMMA THOMPSON, B.S.c., R.P.Bio
Water Quality Biologist, Ktunaxa Nation Council

Born and raised in Cranbrook, BC, Emma has a very strong love for ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa (Ktunaxa Territory). For the past two years, they have worked on the Mining Oversight team at the Ktunaxa Nation Council Society (KNCS) and has over 7 years of aquatics experience in Qukin

ʔamakʔis (Raven's land) and ƛaṁna ʔamakʔis (Land of the Wood tick) districts (together, portions of these districts are commonly known as the Elk Valley). Working primarily with Ktunaxa communities, provincial and federal governments, and industry, Emma supports and reviews water stewardship practices, water quality models, water treatment, fish habitat and health, drinking water, permitting, water monitoring plans, and water management plans on various mining projects across ʔamakʔis Ktunaxa. Their primary work is within the Elk Valley Water Quality Plan (EVWQP) and its components. Emma is very passionate about aquatic benthic invertebrates (as stream health indicators or as fish food), their favourite taxa are caddisflies.

DANIE FREVOLA

Flathead Lake Biological Station, University of Montana

Danie is a Research Scientist at Flathead Lake Biological Station (FLBS). Her passions have always centered on understanding how human activities can shape the natural world, and working to protect our collective home. Recognizing that the natural environment does not abide by political borders, Danie began exploring conservation challenges in transboundary watersheds in 2022. Since then, she has collaboratively launched a monitoring program with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes and Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƚi'it to better understand the state of two headwater systems with contrasting land use histories—the Elk and Flathead watersheds. This work continues today with the support of the US EPA Transboundary Watershed Grant, which enables continued monitoring and collaboration across these shared waters.

LAINE TWIGG

Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƚi'it First Nation

Laine Twigg works at Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqƚi'it as an Aknusti (Land Guardian). He has been in the position for 3 years. His main monitoring projects are Mining, Water sampling, Burbot, Wildlife, Wetlands and Vegetation

JOHN STEVENSON

Wyoming-Montana Water Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS)

John Stevenson is a Physical Scientist with the USGS Wyoming–Montana Water Science Center. He currently serves as Acting Chief of the Water Quality and Ecohydrology Support Section and as project manager for studies evaluating mining impacts on the transboundary Koocanusa Reservoir. John's background is in stream ecology, and he has worked across a wide range of multidisciplinary projects examining how land use and stream restoration influence instream

habitat and water quality conditions. He holds a Ph.D. in Fisheries Science from Oregon State University.

GENNY HOYLE
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Genny is an aquatic biologist with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho's Fish and Wildlife Program and has been navigating the Kootenai River across Idaho, Montana, and British Columbia for over 15 years. In addition to her work in environmental conservation, she is deeply involved in emergency response and rescue operations.

As an Advanced EMT and Wilderness EMT, Genny volunteers with the Boundary Volunteer Ambulance and serves as a boat operator for the Boundary County Sheriff's Office Search and Rescue team. She holds certifications as a Swiftwater Rescue Technician and a USCG OUPV-6 Pack Captain, further enhancing her expertise in water-based rescue and operations.
In her spare time, Genny enjoys running, hiking, biking, and competing in the occasional triathlon, always seeking new ways to challenge herself in the outdoors.

NATE NADAL
University of Idaho

Nate Nadal is a Master's Student at the University of Idaho, funded by the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho to study how the diets of Mountain Whitefish have changed spatially and temporally. Nate will be presenting results from his last two years of research on changes in whitefish diets in the lower Kootenai and how those changes may alter the accrual of Selenium into fish body tissues. He is set to graduate December 2026.

MANUEL (MANU) CARBALLO
University of Idaho

Manuel (Manu) Carballo is a Master's Student at the University of Idaho, funded by and collaborating with the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho to study selenium toxicity to Burbot and White Sturgeon. He is set to graduate December 2026. Manu will be presenting preliminary results from his last two years of research on selenium in the Kootenai and how it may affect Burbot and White Sturgeon.

Waters Impacted: The Kootenai/y Watershed

NASUʔKIN CHERYL CASIMER – ʔaqƚsmaknik piɛak paƚkiy

ʔaq̓am

Nasuʔkin Cheryl Casimer is a citizen of the Ktunaxa Nation and lives in her community of ʔaq̓am, located in the southeastern corner of British Columbia near Cranbrook. She is a mother of three and a grandmother to five, which is her drive to build a better and brighter future for her family and generations to come. Cheryl is a tireless advocate for true reconciliation, human rights, treaties, agreements and other constructive arrangements, MMIWG2SLGBTQIA, and government accountability and transparency.

Early in her career, Cheryl dedicated her work to the Lands and Resources Sector of the Ktunaxa Nation, helping to advance Ktunaxa stewardship of Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis (homelands) and ʔakxaw̓is q̓api qapsin (All Living Things). Much of her work focused on mining and its impacts on the land, water, and all living things. Through this work, Cheryl helped carry forward the deep responsibilities and accountabilities of Ktunaxa people to care for, protect, and uphold the wellbeing of our homelands for generations to come. Her dedication reflected a deep love and respect for the land and for ʔakxaw̓is q̓api qapsin, and the responsibility we carry to care for it for those who come after us.

Cheryl has served as both nasuʔkin and Councillor for more than two decades, dedicating much of her life to serving ʔaq̓am and the broader Ktunaxa Nation. In 2012, she stepped away from ʔaq̓am Council to support First Nations leadership and advocacy at the provincial level. She went on to serve four consecutive terms as a Political Executive with the First Nations Summit (FNS) Task Group and as a member of the BC First Nations Leadership Council (FNLC) representing the collective interests of BC First Nations Provincially, Nationally and Internationally.

In 2024, Cheryl was awarded the King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of her dedication, service, advocacy, and leadership. The medal honours her lifelong commitment to advancing meaningful change for Indigenous families and communities through her leadership, advocacy, and contributions to emergency management, reconciliation, human rights, and child welfare.

She has played an integral role in the establishment of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act (DRIPA) and continues to advocate for the implementation of the DRIPA Action Plan. Cheryl was also appointed by the Assembly of First Nations' BC Regional Chief to the national AFN Ad-Hoc Chiefs Committee on the federal United Nations Declaration Act (UNDA), mandated to assist in the development of the legislation and Action Plan.

In 2024, Cheryl returned to ʔaq̓am and was once again elected as Nasuʔkin for ʔaq̓am. Cheryl is passionate about serving her community, protecting Ktunaxa ʔamakʔis, and ensuring that the voices, rights, and responsibilities of Ktunaxa people are recognized, respected, and upheld. Her decades of leadership, advocacy, and service have been grounded in a deep commitment to her family, her community, her Nation, and the generations who will follow. As a mother, grandmother, Nasuʔkin, and advocate, Cheryl continues to carry forward the teachings and responsibilities entrusted to her, working toward a future where ʔaq̓amnik and Ktunaxa people can live with strength, dignity, self-determination, and a strong connection to their homelands.

COUNCILMAN TOM MCDONALD

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Tom McDonald is a retired fisheries, wildlife, wilderness and wildland fire career professional and currently serves as a Council Representative At Large for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He is also a Tribal Delegate to the Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians and is appointed to the USA/Canada International Joint Commission's Elk-Kootenai/y Watershed Governance Body. Tom enjoys fishing, hunting and wildlife viewing throughout his Tribe's territory and adventures with family and friends.

VICE CHAIRMAN GARY AITKEN JR.

Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Gary Aitken Jr., Vice Chairman of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and a third-generation council representative, has served nearly four terms on council. Bolstered by extensive natural resource work, and guidance from the wisdom of the leaders and elders who helped bring KTOI through some of the Tribe's most difficult times, he carries that wisdom forward into the future for the betterment of Ktunaxa aq‡smaknik and all communities.

NASUʔKIN HEIDI GRAVELLE

Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq‡iˀit First Nation

Nasuʔkin Heidi Gravelle has served as Chief of the Yaq̓it ʔa·knuq‡iˀit First Nation for the past seven years, leading with a vision rooted in self-determination, governance, and the upholding of ʔaknumuɤti‡i‡ (natural law). Her leadership is centered on protecting and healing the land and waters, recognizing that when the land thrives, so do the people. Nasuʔkin Gravelle is a dedicated advocate for environmental stewardship, ensuring that ecosystems are safeguarded for future generations. She emphasizes that ʔakanuxuniḵ are not merely stakeholders but rightful decision-makers who never surrendered their lands or covenants with Creator. With a

commitment to increasing the quality of life for her people and leading with one heart, Chief Gravelle continues to advance the inherent rights and responsibilities of ʔakanuxunik̓ to steward their lands, waters, and resources.

Waters Impacted: The Taku, Stikine, Unuk, and Salmon Rivers

ANDREA CADIENTE-LAITI

Douglas Indian Association | Juneau, Alaska

Andrea is Tlingit, Eagle Moiety, Tèik̲wèidi (Brown Bear Clan), of Xootsnoowú K̲wáan. Since2009, Andrea has served as Tribal Administrator of the Douglas Indian Association, a federally recognized Tribal Government with offices located on both Juneau and Douglas, Alaska. She has 48 years of progressively responsible Tribal Government experience including 17 years with the Center; Council of Tlingit and Haida Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA), leaving there in 1996 as Director of its Human Services Department, now known as Tribal Family and Youth Services.

Andrea also commercially fished with her husband and years long President of the Douglas Indian Association, Clarence "Butch" Laiti, in the gillnet fisheries of his ancestral waters of the T'aak̲u Kwáan, Taku Inlet, near Juneau, Alaska and the waters of Lynn Canal and Haines. She She has served as elected capacities as a Juneau and Douglas Delegate to CCTHITS's Tribal Assemblies, and from 1997-2019, on the Board of Directors of Goldbelt Incorporated, the urban ANCSA corporation of the Juneau and Douglas region. Andrea is a grandmother of four and very recently became a great grandmother of four as well as recently born twins.

ESTHER AALTSEÉN REESE

Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC)

Esther Aaltséen Reese is Eagle Tsaagweidí (Killerwhale) from K̲éex̲' Kwáan (Kake), Alaska. She serves as President of the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission, a commission of 14 Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian Nations upholding sovereign rights to steward traditional lands, waterways and sacred sites. She also serves as the Chief Operating Officer of the Tlingit Haida Regional Housing Authority, supporting affordable housing development and organizational capacity across Southeast Alaska. Her work focuses on cultivating regional partnerships, securing funding opportunities, and translating community priorities into sustainable solutions that create lasting impact across the region.

From 2017 to 2025, she held the position of Tribal Administrator with the Wrangell Cooperative Association, the federally recognized tribe in Wrangell, Alaska, where she worked to protect the lands and waters of the people of the Shtax'héen Kwáan and advanced major cultural

revitalization initiatives. Earlier in her career, she worked as a Financial Advisor and Business Manager with Wachovia Securities. Esther holds a B.A. in American Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

SAJUU JUU, MIKE JONES
Organized Village of Kasaan

As a descendant of Old Kasaan, Gasa'aan, a Haida Village on the Eastern side of Prince of Wales Isalnd, I have been fishing and harvesting at Kasaan Bay for over 50 years. I am Two Fin Killer Whale from the Yakw laanaas Clan. I have been the Organized Village of Kasaan Tribal President since 2022 as well as the Historian.

LOUIE WAGNER, JR
Metlakatla Indian Community

Louie is Tsimshian and Łingít of the Wolf/Eagle moiety Teik̲wedí (Brown bear clan) Xóots K̲oowu Hít (Brown bear's den house) of Sanyaa K̲wáan (Cape Fox). Lifelong Metlakatla resident, he has learned his way of life from Elders and is passing it down to his children and grandchildren. Louie has harvested from and taken care of the Unuk River for over 60 years, and continues to do so with his children and grandchildren. He has served his community as Councilman for 16 years, 4 of those years as Acting Mayor. Louie now serves on the Southeast RAC Board.

ALI GINTER
Ketchikan Indian Community

Ali Ginter's Tlingit name is Wudi Hani Yéil, The Raven Who Stands Up. She is Tlingit, Raven-Frog of the Kaach.ádi Clan, the daughter of Trixie Bennett, Kayáani Shawaat, granddaughter of Minnie Larsen, Yéil Tláa, and great-great-granddaughter of Chief Shakes VI, George Shakes, Gush Tlein, of Wrangell, Alaska. Through her grandfather, she is also a grandchild of Elsie Vance of the Tahltan Nation from Telegraph Creek, British Columbia, along the Stikine River.

Ali was raised in Southeast Alaska, where her connection to the lands and waters that have sustained her family for generations continues to shape how she lives, raises her children, and serves her community. She is a mother of four Tlingit-Unangax̂ children and currently serves as a Tribal Councilwoman for the Ketchikan Indian Community.

New to Tribal governance, Ali approaches leadership with a commitment to learning, listening, and standing up for her people, future generations, and the lands and waters they depend upon.

Waters Impacted: Indigenous-Led Science and Knowledge – Advancing Shared Knowledge Sources and Multinational Coordination in the Northern Watersheds

JILL WEITZ
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida)

Position / Location: Government Affairs, Office of the President, Tlingit & Haida; Juneau, Alaska

EPA Project Focus: *Leveraging the Tlingit & Haida AK-B.C. Transboundary Watersheds Program to Advance Shared Knowledge Sources and Multinational Coordination;* integration of TEK / governance

Favorite Thing About Rivers: Salmon!

SKYE KEESHIN
Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida)

Position / Location: Transboundary Watershed Coordinator, Environmental Department, Tlingit & Haida; Juneau, Alaska

EPA Project focus: *Leveraging the Tlingit & Haida AK-B.C. Transboundary Watersheds Program to Advance Shared Knowledge Sources and Multinational Coordination;* all things data and natural science

Favorite Thing About Rivers: Fishing while floating!

IPHIGENIA "JEN" ARVANITIS
Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC)

Position / Location: Environmental Specialist, Cultural Resources Department, Ketchikan Indian Community (KIC), Ketchikan, Alaska

EPA Project Focus: *Co-stewardship of south-southeast transboundary watersheds (Unuk River, Salmon River, Chickamin River) through partnership development and cooperative sampling efforts, including water, sediment, and fish tissue sample collection and assessing yearly ooligan (eulachon) return (Unuk).*

Favorite Thing About Rivers: Ever-changing landscapes!

Waters Impacted: The Upper Columbia River

YVETTE JOSEPH

Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT)

Yvette Joseph, a Member of the Colville Confederated Tribes (CCT), presently serves as the Transboundary Manager for the CCT Environmental Trust Department providing Project Management for several contracts. In strategic communications, Yvette advocated for dental therapists to expand oral health care now enacted in 15 states, facilitated tribal consultation for the U.S. Department of Justice and consults as a Healing Practitioner to advance racial equity. Ms. Joseph served 8 years as the CEO of the National Indian Health Board, 12 years as a Vice-President and Project Manager for Kauffman and Associates, Inc., and 13 years as Project Manager for the Colville Tribes. In 1987 to 1995, Yvette was Legislative Staff to Senators Daniel K. Inouye and Daniel J. Evans at the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs.

Ms. Joseph retains a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology from Washington State University and a Masters in Social Work from the University of Denver. Ms. Joseph enjoys creating resources where none exist. Utilizing comparative economic analysis, Yvette's research and policy work amassed a $750 million increase in Indian spending in 1990.

PAUL DAYTON

Ogden Murphy Wallace P.L.L.C.

Paul Dayton litigates complex civil cases at Ogden, Murphy Wallace in Seattle. He graduated from Claremont McKenna College and the law school at the University of California, Los Angeles. Of relevance here, since 2004 he has represented the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in litigation against Teck Metals, Ltd., concerning its contamination of the upper Columbia River.

WHITNEY FRASER

Consulting Scientist for Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Whitney Fraser is a scientist and small business owner based in Seattle with expertise in environmental contamination, human and ecological risk assessment, and Tribal environmental decision-making. She has spent her career helping Tribal governments, attorneys, nonprofits, and public agencies understand complex environmental challenges. She translates technical issues for diverse audiences, including support for Indigenous leadership and consideration of opportunities for effective environmental stewardship. Drawing on a background that includes graduate study at the University of Washington, Whitney's work focuses on contaminant pathways, environmental justice, and the protection of Indigenous lands, waters, and cultural

resources. Since 2006, she has worked on a wide variety of projects related to the Upper Columbia River for the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation.

Waters Impacted: The Similkameen River

CHIEF CHARLIE ALLISON
Upper Similkameen Indian Band

way' inc'aʔ iskʷíst In'uk, ChuChuwayha

My name is Charles Allison.

I am the middle son of three, born to the late Councillor Charlene Allison. I come from a family whose roots run deep throughout the Similkameen Valley. My late grandmother, Nora Allison, was the daughter of Chief Charles Allison and Mary Allison, my great-grandparents. Before them was Nora Yakumtikum, my second great-grandmother, who travelled the Cascades with a pack train long before roads crossed our territory.

Our family has lived upon and cared for these lands since time immemorial.

I was raised in Hedley and have spent my entire life on the land in the Similkameen. The mountains, rivers, creeks, forests, grasslands, and people has been my teachers. They shaped who I am and taught me the responsibilities that come with being səlqmixʷ.

Today, I am proud to raise my family at home in our territory. My partner, Saisha, and I are raising our two sons, Boone and Twylli, on the same lands that raised me. They are my greatest motivation and a daily reminder that every decision we make today will impact the generations that follow.

My life's work has always been connected to our territory. I have worked in forestry, silviculture, mining, natural resource management, and community development. I currently serve as Chief of the Upper Similkameen Indian Band and continue to work as Logging Supervisor, overseeing forestry operations and ensuring our lands are managed responsibly, sustainably, and with respect for future generations.

I also serve as a First Nations representative on the British Columbia Health, Safety and Reclamation Mines Code Review Committee. In that role, I bring forward the voices of our people and the knowledge that comes from living and working on the land. Decisions made today will shape the future of our territory, and it is important that Indigenous voices are present where those decisions are being made.

It has been an honour to serve our people on Council since 2018. Throughout that time, I have gained valuable experience in governance, economic development, natural resources, and

community planning. More importantly, I have listened to our Elders, our members, and our youth. Their voices continue to guide my leadership.

As Chief, I carry a responsibility that extends beyond today. I carry a responsibility to our ancestors who entrusted us with these lands and to the generations who will inherit them after we are gone.

I believe strongly in protecting tmixʷ and tmxʷulaxʷ—our natural world, our lands, waters, culture, language, and way of life. Our people have always understood that everything is connected. When the water is healthy, the land is healthy. When the land is healthy, the people are healthy. Protecting one means protecting all.

The Similkameen River, our creeks, mountains, forests, and sacred places are not resources to be used and forgotten. They are gifts entrusted to our care. We all have a duty to protect them, restore them when they are harmed, and ensure they remain strong for those yet to come.

I believe our greatest strength lies in unity. When we stand together as one people—with respect, courage, and purpose—there is no challenge we cannot overcome. Together, we will continue to protect our territory, strengthen our Nation, and create opportunities for our children and grandchildren.

The work we do today is not for ourselves alone. It is for those who came before us and for those who will follow.

CARLEY BREWER
Natural Resources Director, Upper Similkameen Indian Band

Carley is a member of the Lower Similkameen Indian Band born and raised in Princeton BC, with deep roots in both the Similkameen and Tulameen valleys.

She first joined the USIB Natural Resources team in September of 2020 as an Administrative Assistant and is grateful for the opportunity to have spent her time since continuously learning how best to support the smelqmix Nations' efforts in protecting traditional values and ensuring responsible, sustainable environmental practices within the USIB Territory.

KATHLEEN LOUIE
Lower Similkameen Indian Band

Kathleen Louie is the Title and Rights Natural Resource Manager for the Lower Similkameen Indian Band.

KEITH JARED BARIC

Lower Similkameen Indian Band; Sage Step Consulting

As a professional land use consultant, Keith provides planning and policy support to the Lower Similkameen Indian Band. Keith holds a BSc. (with Honors) from the Faculty of Forestry (University of British Columbia) and a MSc. in Natural Resource Planning from UBC's School and Community and Regional Planning (UBC). He has over 30 years of experience working in, and with, the government sector with a specific emphasis on protected/conservation lands and natural resource planning and management. Keith is also an adventure travel writer, accomplished digital cartographer, and wilderness advocate (which emerged organically during his time as a backcountry parks ranger in the Rocky Mountains).

His current focus with the Lower Similkameen Indian Band is assisting in the management and long-term planning of the 120,000 hectare nʔaysnúlaʔxʷ (Ashnola) smelqmix Protected Area (sPA). He conducts research and develops planning strategies related to not only the sPA but also other key sites within smelqmix territory. Keith also assists the LSIB Natural Resources Department in navigating through various mining referrals and industry-driven projects such as the Copper Mountain Mine (CMM)- New Ingerbelle Push Back Expansion, CMM- End Land Use Plan, and the Nickel Plate Mine Closure Working Group.

Keith is grateful and honored to be part of the LSIB Natural Resources Department and Parks team, while utilizing his skills and knowledge towards the enhanced protection of smelqmix territory.

JULIE ALLISON

Upper Similkameen Indian Band

Julie is a member of the Upper Similkameen Indian Band. I was born in Kamloops and grew up in Merritt and Hedley. My dad is Jay Allison, and my grandparents were Mike Allison and Nancy Allison. I moved back to Hedley in 2022 after graduating high school in Merritt to work and reconnect with family and community. Since then I have spent some time in the childcare department of USIB, and currently I am assisting in the process of archiving. Julie is grateful to have grown up alongside her grandparents who shared their knowledge, love and care they had for the land, water and animals.

Film Premier: Shared Waters

VICE CHAIRMAN GARY AITKEN JR.
Kootenai Tribe of Idaho

Gary Aitken Jr., Vice Chairman of the Kootenai Tribe of Idaho, and a third-generation council representative, has served nearly four terms on council. Bolstered by extensive natural resource work, and guidance from the wisdom of the leaders and elders who helped bring KTOI through some of the Tribe's most difficult times, he carries that wisdom forward into the future for the betterment of Ktunaxa aq‡smaknik and all communities.

JENNIFER EKSTROM
Idaho Conservation League

Jennifer joined ICL in 2022 to develop and lead the North Idaho Lakes Conservation Program. Now, she serves as ICL's Kootenai River Campaign Director. Jennifer brings more than two decades of experience working on environmental campaigns. Most relevant to Jennifer's current position at ICL is her previous work as the founding executive director for Lake Pend Oreille Waterkeeper (LPOW), where she successfully campaigned to improve the State of Idaho's practices regarding the application of herbicides to waterways. With ICL taking the reins of LPOW's advocacy and water quality monitoring programs, Jennifer carries on that work and expands it to include the fight to protect more lakes in North Idaho. Her understanding of watersheds, the issues impacting them, and strategy to address those issues brings more experience to ICL's robust team.

With a bachelor's degree in Communication Studies from Eastern Washington University, Jennifer has a passion for using film and video to help conservation efforts succeed. Prior to joining ICL, she was the principal storyteller at Catalyst Communication Services, where she produced investigative films that amplify important voices on the front lines of critical environmental issues.

Wednesday, September 16th, 2026

Morning Ravens: Coffee Talk

GUY ARCHIBALD

Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission (SEITC)

Guy Archibald, Executive Director of the Southeast Alaska Indigenous Transboundary Commission, is a reformed miner and environmental chemist with 30 years experience designing and implementing environmental monitoring programs. He works to apply western science and traditional practices to protect communities, salmon and the rain forest.

Field Tour on CSKT Lands and Waters

Council Grove Speakers

VERNON S. FINLEY

Ksanka Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Vernon Finley is Director of the Ksanka Culture Committee and member of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. He was raised on the Flathead Reservation in the Ksanka cultural community. He graduated from the University of Montana, Oklahoma City University, and The University of Georgia with Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees, respectively.

SADIE PEONE-STOPS

Séliš-Qi̓lispé Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Sadie Peone-Stops- Selis name: Lakat is the Director of the Séliš-Qi̓lispé Culture Committee (SQCC, also known as the Salish-Kalispel Culture Committee), a department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT) of the Flathead Nation.

Sadie was born and raised in Snyei̓mn (Place Where You Surround Something — St. Ignatius), a proud mother of two beautiful children. Sadie had the honor to grow up nurtured by a large family who were humbly raised with Séliš values, emphasizing a deep commitment and understanding of the importance of Séliš-Qi̓lispé language, culture, and history. Mrs. Peone-Stops is a great grand-daughter of Louise McDonald, one of the principle sources of recorded oral history in the SQCC's archives and one of the three sisters whom were instrumental in establishing the Mission Mountain Wilderness.

As SQCC Director, Mrs. Peone-Stops oversees all Culture Committee operations, from language work to the production of books, web-based content, and other educational materials; from

archiving oral histories, photos, and songs to the holding of elders meetings, ceremonial events, and wakes in the Longhouse; from ethnogeographic research and field trips to the provision of relevant cultural information for the Tribal Council and CSKT Legal Department; from administrative tasks and responsibilities to cultural guidance and direction for members of the community. Mrs. Peone-Stops speaks on behalf of the Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee and the CSKT at countless public events.

JAN GARDIPE

Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Jan Gardipe works as the Education/Outreach Technician for the Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee, a department of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT)of the Flathead Nation. She is dedicated to protecting, preserving and protecting the language and culture of the Séliš Qlispé people.

Bison Range Speakers

WHISPER CAMEL-MEANS

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Whisper Camel-Means is a Wildlife Biologist working for Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes Wildlife Management Program. She started her biology career with CSKT as a Biologist Trainee in 1997 while studying Environmental Studies at Salish Kootenai College in Pablo, MT. After receiving a Masters of Science degree in Fish and Wildlife Management, she was awarded a fellowship from The Wildlife Conservation Society (WSC) and The Western Transportation Institute (WTI) to conduct a master's project on US Highway 93 Pre-Construction wildlife movements. While in Bozeman she was employed by WTI to participate in other highway and wildlife related projects, including an animal detection system prototype project in Yellowstone National Park and a wildlife warning signing system on Bozeman Pass.

Outreach and education is an important part of her position at SKC. Along with other biologists, she strives to educate young and old about wildlife and wildlife issues for all to live more harmoniously with nature. SciNation on the Flathead Reservation is a new program that is gaining traction and an excellent reputation for bringing science and STEM/STEAM learning to children on the Reservation. With climate change looming on the horizon, CSKT has been planning for the potential effects on the Flathead Reservation. Whisper has been actively involved in the CSKT Climate Change Oversight Committee. She is an active member of The Wildlife Society, on the national and state level; with achievement of her Certified Wildlife Biologist status and past president of the Montana Chapter. She is a member of the Native

American Fish and Wildlife Society. Whisper is past Chair and current vice chair of the Flathead Reservation Fish and Wildlife Advisory Board.

STEPHANIE GILLIN

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Stephanie Gillin is a wildlife biologist with the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribal Wildlife Management Program.

River Honoring Speakers

COUNCILWOMAN DANIELLE MATT

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Danielle Matt is the CSKT Tribal Council representative for the Scilip district. She was raised along the banks of the Flathead and Jocko rivers. She has a strong commitment to ensuring clean water for generations to come.

THOMPSON SMITH

Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee, *Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes*

Thompson Smith serves as Historian / Ethnogeographer for the Séliš-Qlispé Culture Committee, where he has worked for 35 years. Before that, he and Roy Bigcrane produced *The Place of the Falling Waters*, a three-part documentary centered around the building of a large dam during the 1930s on the lower Flathead River, near the center of the Flathead Reservation (now SKQ Dam). Mr. Smith served for twelve years as a Governor appointee on the Flathead Basin Commission, and also as Executive Director of the Flathead Resource Organization. He is a Consulting Scholar for the Center for Native American and Indigenous Research at the American Philosophical Society and a Senior Fellow in the Environmental Leadership Program. He earned his B.A., M.A., and M.Phil in American Studies at Yale University.

CLAYTON MATT

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Clayton Matt is a member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT), Flathead Reservation, Montana. He retired from the CSKT as the Director of Tribal Resource Management in 2023. This position oversaw six Tribal Departments. He has participated in various boards and commissions including the Flathead Basin Commission, the Roundtable on the Crown of the Continent and (NACEPT) the National Advisory Council on Environmental Policy and Technology, an EPA commission. He served for ten years on the CSKT Appellate

Court. Prior to being appointed as the Director of Tribal Services he was the Department Head for the Natural Resource Department. He has held previous positions including, Water Administration Program Manager, Environmental Division Manager and the Water Rights Division Manager for the CSKT. He has been involved in water rights since 1982. He was the spokesperson for the Tribal water rights team. In 1995 he received a Master of Science in Water Resource Administration from the University of Arizona, Department of Hydrology. He is the former Chair of the Flathead Reservation Water Management Board.

Married for 47 years to Yolanda, who works at SKC in the IT department. They have two children and four grandchildren all who live in Pablo and Ronan.

MICHAEL JAMISON
National Parks Conservation Association

Michael Jamison is a writer and conservationist based in northwest Montana. He has been focused on U.S.-Canadian transboundary river issues for nearly three decades.

ERIN SEXTON
University of Montana, Flathead Lake Biological Station

Erin Sexton is a Senior Scientist at the University of Montana, Flathead Lake Biological Station, where she has been focusing on our transboundary rivers since 2007. All of Erin's work focuses on partnerships, collaboration and allyship with Tribes and First Nations. Erin has been working in transboundary lands and waters since 2000, where she initiated her master's work focused on the terrestrial, and aquatic impacts of coalbed gas development in the Transboundary Flathead and Elk/Kootenai Rivers, and has since continued to work on the impacts of mining in transboundary waters.

Thursday, September 17th, 2026

Elders and Youth Panel: Perspectives on the Legacy of Mines and Mining on Indigenous Lands and Waters (Past, Present, and Future)

LOUIS CAYE JR

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Louis Caye Jr is an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He serves on the Ksanka Elders Advisory Committee and advocates for protecting, preserving, and restoring the lands and resources within the Ktunaxa territory.

VERNON S. FINLEY

Ksanka Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Vernon Finley is Director of the Ksanka Culture Committee and member of the Confederated Salish & Kootenai Tribes. He was raised on the Flathead Reservation in the Ksanka cultural community. He graduated from the University of Montana, Oklahoma City University, and The University of Georgia with Bachelors, Masters, and Doctoral degrees, respectively.

PAULETTE MORENO

Tkl' Un Yeik, yoo xat duwaasaakw, Yeil naxatsitee L'eeneidi aya xat, Kaagwaantaan Yadi, Yaxte Hit yax AAK'W KWAAN

Vice President, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Paulette Moreno serves as the 6th VP Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, the largest tribe in Alaska. Her professional work includes over 30 years in the fields of native and civil rights advocacy. Paulette was certified by the L.A. Law Center in ICWA, educational, and disability law advocacy. She is a traditional and customary provider in Sitka, Alaska. She works to defend our "Way of Life" She is a spoken word artist and poet.

Paulette is the mother of 2 beautiful daughters, Shaleena and Marissa, 6 grandchildren. She's teacher to many young people on her boat.

CCTHITA has been part of the conversation, advocacy and work to have indigenous perspectives honored. The Sacred Water Ways are traditional corridors to our food source, and we have joined other tribes in understanding the critical importance of protecting them.

KYLE SHOTTANANA

Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqɬiˀit First Nation

Kyle Shottanana is a Councillor for Yaq̓it ʔa·knuqɬi'it First Nation.

SHIRLEY TRAHAN

Séliš-Ql̓ispé Culture Committee, Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Shirley Trahan is a Séliš-Ql̓ispé Culture Committee elder and member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes.

PHILLIP CADIENTE-LAITI-BLATNER

Douglas Indian Association | Juneau, Alaska

Phillip Cadiente-Laiti-Blattner, Tlingit, Eagle Moiety, Teikweidi (Brown Bear Clan), and Yanyeidi dachxan (on his Grandfather's side). As a lifelong Juneau resident, enrolled tribal member of the Douglas Indian Association and base roll descendant, he has deep ties to the Tlingit "Way of Life" and traditional harvesting practices. Following his grandfather's passing this year, Phillip is now the last known living T'aaku Tlingit fisherman actively fishing Taku Inlet, carrying forward a longstanding connection between his family, his people, and these traditional fishing waters.

Phillip's experience fishing in his traditional waterways started at the age of five, when he began learning from his grandfather, Clarence "Butch" Laiti, aboard his vessel, F/V Silver Lining. Through years of hands-on experience, he developed a strong understanding of traditional harvesting methods, the importance of stewardship, and the responsibility of sharing knowledge across generations. Fishing has remained an important part of his life, from the years working alongside his grandfather to his continuing involvement in fishing the Taku. Through his work as a fisherman, cultural contributor, and traditional harvester, Phillip represents a continuing connection between generations. He is dedicated to learning, practicing, and passing on traditional knowledge while supporting the health of Southeast Alaska's lands, waters, and communities.

GABE CAYE

Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes

Gabe Caye is an enrolled member of the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. He currently works with the International Joint Commission as a Ktunaxa Scholar on transboundary Elk/Kootenai/y Watershed mining pollution.

TATUM JOHNSON

Angoon Community Association

My name is Tatum Johnson and I am from a small Tlingit village in Southeast Alaska called Angoon. My clan is Kwáashk'i K̲wáan, Raven Owl from Yakutat, Alaska. I am currently working with the Angoon Community Association to test if there are contaminants from the mine on our island coming into our village. I am also a freshman at University of Alaska Fairbanks working toward my bachelors degree in psychology.

JASMINE KNUDSON

Central Council of Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

Name: Jasmine Knudson, Thla-tee-SAK

Title / Location: Emerging Leader for Central Council, Residing in Seattle Washington

Favorite thing about rivers: How the river keeps moving. Always carving new paths yet somehow feels calm and timeless.

CACHES PARRISH

Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

Caches Parrish is a member of the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation and a Senior at Lake Roosevelt High School. For the past three years he has worked as an Assistant Wetland Specialist through the Tribes' Summer Youth Employment Program and has also served on the Colville Youth Council as Treasurer. Caches plans a career in mechanical engineering.

Legal Solutions for Addressing Mining Impacts in Indigenous Territories

JOHN GAILUS

Cascadia Legal LLP

John Gailus is the Founder of Cascadia Legal LLP and a leading practitioner in Aboriginal law, with more than 25 years of experience advising First Nations on Aboriginal and treaty rights litigation, consultation, land management, Indigenous governance, economic development, and self-government. He has appeared before all levels of court, including the Supreme Court of Canada in leading cases including *Restoule, Tsilhqot'in, Desautel,* and *Innu*. John is an Adjunct Professor at the University of Victoria Faculty of Law, where he teaches the Indigenous Lands, Rights and Governance course. He is regularly recognized by the Canadian Lexpert Directory and

Best Lawyers for his work in Aboriginal law and is a member of the Cumshewa Clan of the Haida Nation.

ANTHONY HILLAIRE
Lummi Nation

Anthony Hillaire is Chair of the Lummi Nation.

JESSICA CLOGG
West Coast Environmental Law

Jessica Clogg is the Executive Director & Senior Counsel of the non-profit law organization West Coast Environmental Law, where she in her third decade of legal practice as an environmental and Indigenous rights lawyer. Jessica is a co-founder of West Coast's RELAW (Revitalizing Indigenous Law for Land, Air and Water) program, now in its 10th year. Through stories, community dialogue and legal support, RELAW seeks to advance Indigenous-law based strategies to better care for the planet and people.

Jessica holds a joint Masters in Environmental Studies and law degree from Osgoode Hall, York University, and an Ashoka fellowship recognizing her work bridging between Canadian and Indigenous legal traditions. In 2020 she was voted one of the top 25 most influential lawyers in Canada by Canadian Lawyer Magazine.

Jessica is part of Gitxaala Nation's legal team in the ongoing legal challenge to BC's free entry mineral tenure system to catalyze law reform align reform to align BC's mining laws with the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

RAMIN PEJAN
Earthjustice International Program

Ramin Pejan is a staff attorney with the Earthjustice International Program and an adjunct clinical professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Law. Prior to his position at Earthjustice, Mr. Pejan worked with the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the United Nation Environment Programme on the linkages between human rights and environmental issues. From 2010–2012, he was Legal Counsel for the Association for Water and Rural Development, a non-profit working on water resource management and environmental issues in rural South Africa.

Mr. Pejan also worked for the New York City Law Department, Environmental Law Division, from 2005–2010 as an Assistant Corporation Counsel and then Senior Counsel, where he was

engaged in a wide variety of environmental litigation, advocacy, counseling and compliance work in areas of federal and state law. Highlights include being a key member of the trial team that won a $100 million judgment in City of New York v. Exxon Mobil Corporation; defending the Yankee Stadium environmental impact study; and serving as lead counsel for the City in state and federal court challenges against the City's efforts to require hybrid taxicabs. His Exxon Mobil trial team was a finalist for Trial Lawyer of the Year awarded by Public Justice in 2010.

He received his LL.M. from McGill University in International Human Rights and Environmental Law (2005), his J.D. cum laude from American University, Washington College of Law (2002), and his B.A. from Duke University (1998).

SIMON WIEBE
Wildsight

Simon holds a B.Sc. in Geology, has worked in mineral exploration across Canada and the U.S., and is the current Mining Impacts and Policy Lead for Wildsight. Growing up near Invermere, he gained an appreciation for the mountains and a love of spending time in nature, whether he is hiking, trail running, fossil hunting or cross country skiing. Always curious, he enjoys looking closely to develop understanding and is happy to be working to protect the Columbia Valley.

PATRICIA WEBER
Environmental Law Center, University of Victoria

Patricia Weber is a Staff Lawyer at the University of Victoria's Environmental Law Centre (ELC), a public-interest legal clinic that supports communities, organizations, and individuals working to protect the environment and advance environmental justice. Since joining the ELC in 2023, Patricia has supervised law students, articled students, and research assistants in work for clients including First Nations, environmental organizations, community groups, and concerned citizens seeking support on public-interest environmental-law matters.

At the ELC, some of the reports that Patricia helped author include: *Next Steps for Responsible Mining: Improving Bonding and Reclamation in BC*, prepared for Wildsight, which examines British Columbia's mine-reclamation security system and options for reform. She also helped author *Remining for BC's Energy Future: Opportunities, Risks, and the Need for Strong Legal Oversight*, prepared for the BC Mining Law Reform Network, which considers the opportunities and risks associated with recovering minerals from historic mine tailings and waste, and the legal oversight needed to manage them.

Patricia Weber is a settler originally from Tkaronto (Toronto), on the traditional territories of the Mississaugas, Haudenosaunee, and Huron-Wendat peoples, among other Nations. A graduate

of the University of Victoria Faculty of Law, she articled at Pivot Legal Society in Vancouver and then practiced for over a decade as a civil litigator in Williams Lake.

SHILOH HERNANDEZ

Earthjustice

Shiloh Hernandez is a senior attorney in the Northern Rockies Office of Earthjustice. Shiloh's work focuses on protecting the Northern Rockies, its creatures, and its communities from the harms of climate change, environmental degradation, and corporate bad actors. Shiloh actively works to empower communities to pursue sustainable development. Prior to joining Earthjustice, Shiloh practiced environmental law with the Western Environmental Law Center, worked as a public defender, and clerked at a Montana trial court and the Montana Supreme Court. He is originally from northwestern Montana and has deep affection for the Cabinet Mountains, the Clark Fork and Kootenai Rivers, and the communities that persist there.

HARLEY HARRIS

Formerly with Montana Natural Resource Damage Program

Harley Harris is a retired Montana attorney who has practiced in a variety of private and public positions throughout his career, focusing on water law, environmental law, energy regulatory law, and governmental/administrative law.

From 2016 to 2023, Mr. Harris was the Program Manager and Chief Legal Counsel of the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program. During his time at NRDP he was involved in representing the State of Montana in connection with several natural resource damage settlements, including the 2016 ExxonMobil Yellowstone Oil Spill, the 2020 Butte Priority Soils Operable Unit Consent Decree, and the 2023 Libby OU3 Consent Decree. In addition, he oversaw the continuing implementation of several prior NRD settlements, including the Upper Clark Fork River and the ASARCO Upper Blackfoot/East Helena settlements.

He currently resides in Bozeman with his wife Barbara, and when not travelling, skiing, or mountain biking, consults part time with the Gallatin Water Trust.

In his presentation Mr. Harris is using, with permission, some materials supplied by NRDP. However, his appearance here and his statements and opinions are in his personal capacity and not those of NRDP or the State of Montana.

Knowledge Exchange: Updates from Federal, State and Provincial Representatives on Their Actions to Protect Shared Waters and Discussion

KEVIN SKILLIN

U.S. Department of State

Kevin Skillin serves as Director of the Office of Canadian Affairs in Washington. Prior to this role, he was Acting Deputy Chief of Mission and Economic Counselor at the U.S. Embassy in Amman, Jordan. From 2018 to 2021 he served in Halifax as the U.S. Consul General to Atlantic Canada.

A career member of the Senior Foreign Service, Kevin served in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs as Deputy Director in the Office of Israel and Palestinian Affairs. His earlier overseas assignments include service at U.S. embassies and consulates in Iraq, Uruguay, Ecuador, Oman, and Honduras, alongside domestic tours as a Watch Officer in the State Department Operations Center and a Staff Assistant in the Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs.

Kevin earned a master's degree in strategic studies from the Marine Corps War College. He is a graduate of Princeton University and received a master's degree in public and international affairs from the University of Pittsburgh. Before joining the State Department, he was a Fulbright student in Ecuador. Kevin speaks Spanish and Arabic. He and his wife have three children.

LISA BERRIOS

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

Lisa Berrios is currently the Acting Director of the American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of International and Tribal Affairs. Prior to this position, she served as the Senior Advisor for Tribal Capacity Development in AIEO since 2019. In this role, she advised EPA Senior Leadership on all aspects of tribal environmental capacity development, represented AIEO in regional and national forums, and led the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program, EPA's largest tribal grant program. In 2024, Lisa detailed as the Acting Director of the Program Implementation and Coordination Division in EPA's Office of Children's Health Protection, where her portfolio included strengthening connections between children's health and EPA's work in Tribal communities. Lisa also previously served as the Acting Deputy Office Director of AIEO and was the EPA Region 4 Regional Indian Coordinator from 2012 – 2017. Prior to employment with EPA, Lisa worked with United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc., an intertribal consortium in Nashville, TN, as the Director, Office of Environmental Resource Management, for eight years. She has a MS in Geology from Vanderbilt University and a BS in Geology from Smith College. She enjoys traveling, staying

active in geology through volunteer work, and exploring new hobbies. Lisa is married with two children, a grandson, and two spoiled dogs.

BEN LINHOFF

U.S. Geological Survey

Ben Linhoff is a Research Hydrologist with the USGS Water Resources Mission Area. He serves as the Project Manager for the USGS Transboundary Program. Additionally, Ben leads the USGS Selenium Research Laboratory which is focused on measuring selenium concentration in water, sediment, and biota in support of bioaccumulation and biogeochemistry research around the country.

LINDSEY KRYWARUCHKA

Montana's Department of Environmental Quality

Lindsey serves as the Water Quality Division Administrator at Montana's Department of Environmental Quality, where she leads a dedicated team in their relentless pursuit of ensuring clean water across Montana from peaks to prairies. In this role, Lindsey oversees the administration of key legislative acts, including the Montana Sanitation in Subdivisions Act, the Safe Drinking Water Act, and the Clean Water Act. Raised in the community of Billings, Lindsey's commitment to environmental stewardship was instilled early on. She graduated from Montana State University. As the Water Quality Division Administrator, she plays a pivotal role in coordinating and implementing essential programs that safeguard both public health and the environment. Currently residing in Helena, Montana, Lindsey shares her home with her husband and two feline companions.

ROBERT STEED

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

Robert (Bob) Steed is the Surface Water Quality Manager for Idaho's Department of Environmental Quality, where he has spent 37 years protecting human health and the quality of Idaho's surface waters. A surface water ecologist with a geology background, he leads a team of water quality experts serving the five northern counties from the Coeur d'Alene Regional Office.

Bob's expertise includes surface water monitoring and assessment, cyanobacteria public-health risk evaluation, water quality improvement projects, Hazmat emergency response, and TMDL development. Born and raised in Idaho, he enjoys the state's outdoor resources and is honored to support the 2026 Indigenous-led Transboundary Mining Conference.

TOMINA RIOUX

Environment and Climate Change Canada

Tomina is Associate Regional Director General, West and North Region, Environment and Climate Change Canada (ECCC). She leads work on diverse range of regional files related to Indigenous affairs and rights-based negotiations, transboundary issues, Pacific aquatic ecosystems, the Salish Sea, funding programs, and advancing regional relationships. She has held various positions in the federal public service related to intergovernmental and Indigenous affairs, advancing shared priorities and fostering collaboration with counterparts. Tomina is based in B.C. and was in Ottawa for over a decade prior to moving home to bring her experience to a place-based role in the region.

NIALL CRONIN

Global Affairs Canada

Niall Cronin has held the position of acting Director General for North America since April 2026. In this capacity, he oversees Canada's bilateral and trilateral relationships with the United States and Mexico, including the management of a network of 15 missions, and is the Executive Coordinator of the North America Platform Program.

Over the course of his diplomatic career, Niall has served at the Canadian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Canadian High Commission to Pakistan and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) Mission to Bosnia Herzegovina.

Prior to his current role, Niall was the Executive Director of the U.S. transboundary division (2022-2026) and before that, he spent close to a year at Canada's Public Health Agency as Associate Director General of the Agency's Centre for Border and Travel Health.

DEB EPPS

Ministry of Environment and Parks for British Columbia

Deb Epps is the Executive Director of the Authorizations and Remediation Branch within Ministry of Environment and Parks. Deb is a biologist by trade with her Masters in Water Quality from the University of Victoria. She has been with the Ministry of Environment for 32 years in various roles, starting out as an Impact Assessment Biologist, then the Head of the provincial water quality monitoring programs for 10 years, where she developed the BC Lake monitoring program. In 2019 Deb became the Director of Mining Operations and moved into the Executive Director role 2 years ago. With her biological background, Deb brings a well-rounded perspective to authorizations and protection of the environment.