From Colonialism to Collaboration: A History of U.S. Environmentalism with Indigenous Communities

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Roadmap

Indigenous environmentalism
Colonization
White/U.S. environmentalism
Conflicting beliefs
Collaborative pathway
Future research
Indigenous Environmentalism

• Dynamic practice
• Varies across communities
• Stewardship of natural resources

Examples
First Fish Ceremony

• Welcomes the first fish
• Fish is cooked and consumed
• Remains are given back to river
Prescribed Burning

• Increasingly popular in Western science
• Increases biodiversity
• Changes food source

Colonization

- Pilgrims exploring North America
- Settler colonialism
- Propaganda of genocide
- 1800s – Colonizers began to move west


White/U.S. Environmentalism

- Rooted in the colonizer mindset
- Power relations
- Disregards Indigenous lifestyle
- The white way is the only right way


Conflicting Beliefs
Makah Whaling

- Traditional practice
- “...hunted for subsistence and cultural purposes” (Khoury 297)
- Neah Bay Treaty
- Commercialization
- Makah sought permission in the 1990s

Great Bear Rainforest

- British Columbia, Canada
- Home to over a dozen First Nations
- “…much of British Columbia is still under claim by First Nations” (Low and Shaw). 

Standing Rock

• No Dakota Access Pipeline protest
• Pipeline over Sioux Tribe burial grounds
• Social media aided in protests
• Over 90 Indigenous groups participated

Collaborative Pathway

- Traditional native knowledge
- Common features
- Western science
Further Research

• Indigenous-led efforts for plant-based diets rooted in traditional knowledge
• Impacts of global frameworks on Indigenous food sovereignty and environmental governance
Thank you!