

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Literature and Photo Contributors

*In the inaugural volume of Indigenous Stewards, a contest was used to spark the interests of Native youth in their environments through the submission of what they felt environmental health meant. In the second volume, anyone who wanted to contribute was asked to do so. Here are their submissions.*

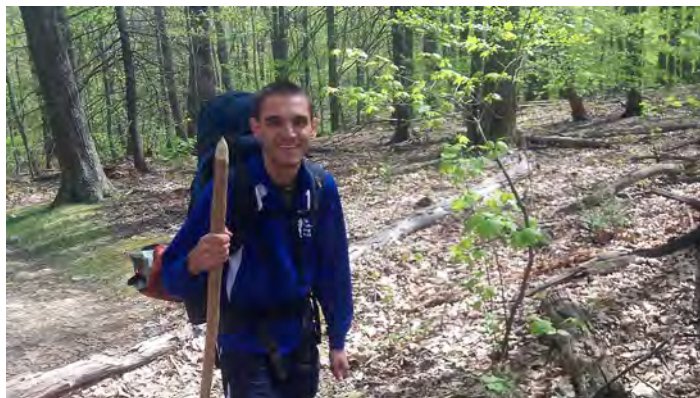
### A Human-Powered Movement Against Climate Change

By Edward Schuyler Chew, PhD Candidate

Mohawk, Six Nations of the Grand River  
Hometown: Tuscarora Nation in New York

University of Arizona Department of Soil, Water, & Environmental Sciences

Winds and rain whipped across the rugged ridgetop of the Tuscarora Mountains as we scrambled over moss-covered boulders along treacherous terrain. Thick fog distorted landmarks that had looked so obvious on the map. Trudging through this unforgiving landscape was hardly how I envisioned day one of my weeklong hiking trip. Exhausted from nine miles already backpacked, we camped not far off the trail. I collapsed and hardly noticed raindrops dancing across the nylon of my tent.



*Southern Pennsylvania hike with the Tuscarora Migration Project, 2013  
(Courtesy Of Waylon Wilson).*

Hours later, I awoke to footsteps. Warm in my sleeping bag, I laid still, imagining that they belonged to my ancestors. A group of 300 weary Tuscarora migrants

shuffled past in eerie silence, moving only as quickly as the eldest and youngest. Carrying the bones of their lost relatives, they know all too well the perils of trespassing on enemy soil. The zipping of a nearby tent brings me back to the rainy, cold dark of Appalachia.

Five weeks earlier, I'd travelled with a group of Tuscaroras to North Carolina in order to memorialize our ancestors' 1713 defeat at Neyuheruke. Following this battle, Tuscarora people had little choice but to leave their homelands and migrate to New York, where they established the community I call home. We'd gathered at the site to send off a youth group on the Tuscarora Migration Project, a 1,300-mile journey to retrace our ancestors' footsteps from south to north. I was only able to stay for that weekend because of my research at the University of Arizona, but made it my priority to rejoin the Migration Project for 80 miles of hiking.

On that second morning on the trail, the fog hung heavy as we continued northward. The Tuscarora have a saying that when somebody dies, the rain will come to wash away their footprints. With the memory of our ancestors' loss heavy on our hearts, the rain poured. The trail grew more obscured by the shattered trunks of collapsed trees, both young and old, uprooted and in disarray, though buds emerged from their broken branches. I wondered what this forest looked like hundreds of years earlier. Eventually, the rainy veil lifted and sunshine enlivened our hike to the confluence of the Susquehanna and Juniata Rivers where the group and I parted ways.

When the Tuscarora left their North Carolina homelands, they sought to protect the seventh generation of unborn faces coming up from the ground. Today, a warming climate is prompting important species like sugar maples to migrate northward away from our current homelands in New York, but we no longer have the freedom to move with them. Our challenge is to strive, just as our ancestors did, to maintain a healthy homeland for the next seven generations. What I'm trying to do as a doctoral student is to inform tribal environmental decision-makers with climate-adaptation science so they can improve their capacity to adjust to this changing world. Undoubtedly, this journey toward sustainability will require us to shift from unclean energy to the human-powered movement of our ancestors.

# Educate Those “Ignorant Savages”

by Ruben Cu:k Ba’ak, Tohono O’odham

Arrogance emits from words  
contaminated with apologetic letters,  
assimilating an historical plume of  
eloquent excuses to entertain the resilient.

Entitlement vindicates the violation of  
rock, soil, plant life, water life,  
and all connected to Earthly Life.

Tattered and defeated  
my degree floats helpless in the yellowish rhetoric of  
a gold mind.

Foreign intelligence dismisses any tribal knowledge of  
true balance, forging savages inferior.

Deception fills the thousandth  
generation of mirrors  
with the illusion of I, me, mine.

Cowardly  
my degree floats helpless in the yellowish rhetoric of  
a gold mine.

Hungry is all life that feed  
on the Snake,  
even now their mouths  
continue to fill  
of old metals fresh  
from our Mother Earth’s bowels.

Choking on the brilliance of greed  
the hungry clearly see  
my degree float helpless in the yellowish rhetoric of  
all gold mines.

Thirsty is all Life that live with Snake,  
today Snake cannot share the bounty of Life,  
today Snake is sick,  
today Snake and all Life upon her,  
all Life in her,  
watch all the well intended  
BA’s, MA’s, and PhD’s of the Indigenous float helpless  
in the yellowish rhetoric of one gold mine.

Imprisoned,  
Sitting there with Snake  
in the freshness of new poverty  
the hungry and thirsty can only see  
these degrees bleed out the ink of arrogance that  
solely  
serves the educated dead Indian saved man called  
I, me, mine.



Ruben Cu:k Ba’ak sitting in the SWEHSC office working on a project with outreach staff (Photograph by Dr. Lindsey)

I was raised on the Tohono O’odham Nation away from my traditions, well until I was 14 years old. I was introduced to my People’s ways at that point in my life and remain traditional in my life today. As an O’odham man I hold a responsibility to Mother Earth and my People, whom I deem “all Native People”. I got my degree in Interdisciplinary Studies (BIS) with concentrations in Economics and Sustainability. And now work for the Tohono O’odham Nation’s (my tribe) Environmental Protection Office as the Air Quality Specialist.

I wrote “Educate Those Ignorant Savages” due to the release of the acid mine drainage from the Gold King Mine that contaminated the Snake River and Animals River back in August 2015. As I watched the yellowish plume contaminate the river on CNN I felt sick and helpless. I mean here I am a Native American with a degree, an “educated Native American,” yet I could do nothing realistically but watch and fight back tears.

When I was in school I saw so many awesome Natives get their degrees, BA’s, MA’s, and PhD’s, it was a beautiful thing to witness. However none of us did anything to stop what was happening to the river and all the ecosystems it supports in every moment of those ecosystems existence, it was a tragedy.

Every year I and so many other Natives from all tribes attend ceremonies where we pray for all life and all existence here on Mother Earth, the Universe, and all of our Creator’s creations. Being from the desert, well that’s what Tohono means – desert; and Tohono O’odham means simply, Desert People. So we pray for rain so that all life including Mother Earth herself is replenished and will have the means to continue existing. Water is Our Gold in a sense, yet there is no greed involved we understand that it is an innate right as a life form. And that includes all life not just humans, the ways of this society where everything is bordered and those borders are ruled by man is purely comical. Because it frowns on sustainable ways of existence and only serves profit.

The poem depicts the cost of education thus far to Native America, where we have compromised the integrity of our traditional ways to inhabit a form of strength that these degrees suggest, we certainly attain an advantage with these degrees, economically and to a degree (pun intended) socially.

My hope is that we will keep our core values as Native Americans and incorporate our ways into higher learning, where the very things that sustain Life are what we as natural Stewarts of the land, life, and all existence hold dear to our hearts as our ancestors held dear to their hearts, think in terms of seven generations, why, because it was what was done for us.

# Haikus About Our Environment

Ha:şañ Preparatory  
&  
Leadership School Students

## **Butterflies**

Ames  
(12th grade)

Dancing butterflies  
The light blue sky is the stage  
On and on they dance

Till the sunlight dies  
Continuing, they dance on  
Keeping the sky blue

Doing all we can  
By no longer polluting  
They can keep dancing

## **Compost**

Dakota & Kiara  
(11th grade)

Put into the earth  
Soon broken down into soil  
Now part of Mother Nature

## **Green**

Solanus  
(11th grade)

Keep this planet clean  
Reduce, reuse, recycle  
Help our trees stay green

# Ideas From Our Youth

San Carlos Secondary School Students

## Untitled

Latasha (12th)

As people around the world try to cut down on their CO2 emissions, biking walking, and public transportation have become increasingly popular choices. However, not everyone has the ability to walk or bike to their destinations, nor does public transportation get everyone where they need to be. An alternative to these options that is still better for the environment than driving is to ride-share. Ride-sharing can greatly reduce the number of cars on the road. There are many new opportunities for ride-sharing, including websites where members can sign up as drivers or passengers and find common destinations.



*Sweetwater Wetlands, Tucson, Arizona (Photograph by Taylor Wingfield).*

To be fit and healthy you need to be physically active. Regular physical activity can help protect you from serious diseases such as obesity, heart disease, cancer, mental illness, diabetes, and arthritis. Riding your bicycle regularly is one of the best ways to reduce your risk of health problems related to a sedentary lifestyle. Cycling is a healthy, low impact exercise that can be enjoyed by people of all ages. It is also fun, cheap, and good for the environment. Walking is the easiest form of exercise to stay fit. It is convenient because it can be done almost anywhere and anytime whether you're walking to class or down the street. Surprisingly, brisk walking can be almost as challenging as jogging. When you walk at speeds faster than 3.1 mph, your stride length naturally increase. Research shows that at maximal levels of effort, oxygen consumption — a key factor in cardiorespiratory fitness — is only slightly lower for race walkers than it is for runners. At moderate levels, race walkers and runners are almost equal. Walking is safe for people of all ages and increasing your daily walking is directly related to your mental and physical well-being.



*2016 Environmental Bootcamp students walk Sweet Water Wet Lands (Photographed by Taylor Wingfield)*

**For more information on future photography and literature contests,  
email [SWEHSC@email.arizona.edu](mailto:SWEHSC@email.arizona.edu).**



# Summer Rains

Nadira, Navajo  
Tucson Magnet High School, Tucson, Arizona

Waiting on summer rains to refresh and revive the desert



## San Carlos Secondary School Student Poems

### What you can do

Trinity (9th)

When you see litter in the streets  
and the air smells of pollution  
when you feel like it's all piling up  
calm down because there is a solution

There's something each of us can do  
to keep the rivers clean  
to keep fresh the air we breathe  
and keep the forest green

help clean a beach  
or recycle bottles and cans  
hear about the problems we face  
and help others understand

It doesn't have to be a lot  
if we each just do our share  
so take time out on Earth day  
to show Earth that you really truly care.

Some parts of Earth are cold and wet  
some parts of Earth are dry and hot.  
I'll do my best to keep Earth clean  
cause it's the only Earth we've got.

### Renewable Energy

Noah (11th)

Renewable energy is energy that is collected from resources which are naturally replenished on a human time scale, such as sunlight, wind, rain, tides, waves, and geothermal heat. In this essay, I'll explain how programs have been implemented in my community.

In 2014, the San Carlos Apache Tribe built new houses in the Gilson wash district to let people with a job dwell in these houses. The new housing had something unique that was rare, also new at the time.

The new housing had solar panels built into the rooftops. People were amazed as they drove by, thinking it was a shell protector from the annual home coming eggging. It is actually to help with the water heater and reduce the gas usage.

In conclusion, the San Carlos Apache Tribe made a big investment in renewable energy. The hit radio broadcast on the reservation, KYAY, also runs on solar panels. My community is open to new ideas and this Earth Day we are doing a widespread trash pick up. San Carlos is at a peak of a renaissance due to the hard working Americans who want change.