The Center for Native Peoples and the Environment continues to advance its goal of becoming a national leader in education, research, and outreach that integrates indigenous and scientific knowledge in secondary and higher education. Last year’s success in obtaining more than a million dollars of funding provided us with a diverse set of opportunities to create, build, plant, teach and lead in 2016. The Center hosted a historic gathering of indigenous women this fall and made great strides in the development of a new graduate curriculum. We have sustained our high-demand ESF courses, strengthened SUNY-ESF’s relationship with Indigenous Peoples, and offered innovative educational programs on indigenous perspectives. We are thankful for all of our partners who helped make 2016 a memorable and successful year. Miigwetch. Nyaweh.

Dr. Robin Kimmerer, Founder and Director

Neil Patterson Jr, Assistant Director
Voices from Maple Nation: Indigenous Women’s Climate Change Summit.

Native American women from 24 different indigenous Nations gathered together at ESF’s Adirondack Ecological Center under a full moon this October to share knowledge and perspectives on climate change impacts.

Women were invited across the range of indigenous peoples who share territory with Sugar Maples, from New Brunswick to Wisconsin. Participants included tribal leaders, traditional knowledge holders, scientists, educators, activists and artists. The nieces and daughters of women also joined to encourage intergenerational knowledge transfer and to cultivate a new generation of indigenous environmental leaders.

For three days, over seventy women met in facilitated discussion, workshops, and traditional cultural activities. They compiled an inventory of threats posed to land and culture by climate change, identified potential adaptation strategies engaging traditional and scientific knowledge, and created a mutually supportive knowledge sharing network. Despite coming from across a range of cultures and languages, the participants found common ground in the idea of belonging to Maple Nation. The products of the gathering include full video documentation, a website, a technical report of the findings, and a public declaration written by the women of Maple Nation to communicate indigenous philosophy and practice in the face of a rapidly changing climate. (See inset). A scientific article as well as a story...
for the general public is in the near future. The gathering was deemed to be a great success by all participants and there was enthusiasm to meet on an ongoing basis.

The Voices from Maple Nation gathering is central to the mission of the Center, in engaging traditional ecological knowledge for sustainability, broadening engagement of Indigenous Nations as partners in environmental protection, fostering outreach, education and continued formation of productive partnerships. The Center was awarded two grants from the United States Forest Service Northern Research Station for a total of $71,000 in support of Voices from Maple Nation.

Link: http://www.maplenation.org/

Sowing Synergy: A new graduate curriculum

Our innovative new graduate program began to take form this year following a series of curriculum development workshops and the recruitment of indigenous graduate students to SUNY-ESF. “Sowing Synergy” is a collaborative national partnership between ESF, the Salish Kootenai College in Montana, and the non-profit consortium Hopa Mountain Science Fellows. The partnership is building, implementing and evaluating an innovative new Master’s Degree graduate program at ESF which links Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Scientific Ecological Knowledge in research and education across ecosystems and cultural landscapes in Montana and New York, the first of its kind in the US.

This year, ESF faculty traveled to the Salish Kootenai Tribal College and the Flathead Reservation in July to meet with partners and investigate potential sites, questions, and protocols for initiating upcoming graduate research projects in Montana. Our tribal college colleagues assisted with insights into program design, existing course work and interested students. The preparatory phase intensified when our Montana Center for Native Peoples and the Environment – Annual Report 2016

Maple Nation (cont)

to the sources of life -- to seed, soil, water, and plants. Our work is guided by the wisdom of our ancestors and the expectations of our children. We stand together in sisterhood with shared purpose, sharing strength and knowledge and inspired by the presence of our first women, Grandmother Moon and Mother Earth herself. Our gentle gifts of compassion and healing are paired with fierce strength to defend what we love.

Our gifts as Native women are connected to our responsibilities as culture keepers. We are caretakers of ceremony, story, and song. We nurture traditional ecological knowledge and environmental philosophies. We are charged with healing, teaching, and leadership. We carry authority for decision making on behalf of life and the female voice is law.

As inhabitants of this land since time immemorial, we know something about change. We have weathered the shifting winds of history both environmental and political. Against all odds, we are still here, carrying the message that was entrusted to us. Our traditional teachings have been key to our survival in times of change. As the world is poised on the brink of climate chaos, the time to listen to those teachings once again is upon us.

Native peoples have contributed little to the causes of climate disruption, yet we are especially vulnerable to its consequences. For us, climate change is more than an inconvenient truth. For Native Peoples, reliance on the gifts of land and water for subsistence and ceremony, our material and spiritual lives, means that climate change threatens our very cultural survival.

We, the women of Maple Nation, raise our voices in response to these threats. We have lost too much already and will protect what remains. Our very identities and cultures are at stake, we will not stand idly by.

We commit ourselves to speak out on behalf of the wellbeing of Maple Nation, to take action to sustain the lands and waters that sustain us, and to support each other as we face these challenges. We will continue to lead our families, our communities and our nations in adapting to change, guided by the principles of indigenous knowledge: respect, responsibility, reciprocity, relationship, and reverence. We call upon our sisters, our brothers, all the peoples of Maple Nation and beyond to join us in this work.
Students and faculty from Salish Kootenai College, Blackfeet Community College, Syracuse University and ESF discuss the new Sowing Synergy curriculum.

collaborators traveled to Syracuse this November for an intensive 3-day curriculum design workshop that included a survey of campus and potential research topics. Listening sessions with tribal college faculty and students were a highlight of the workshop. A visit to the Onondaga Nation was an important component of the relationship-building activities for students and faculty and community members. The exchange of visits also supported recruiting of potential students to the program.

We began accepting applications for the three fully-funded fellowships and anticipate we will have more qualified applicants than we can support. The Center is currently exploring additional funding to meet the demand from Native students for this program. The Center was awarded a $642,811 award from the US Department of Agriculture's Higher Education Challenge Grant program in 2015 for Sowing Synergy.

Link:  http://www.esf.edu/nativepeoples/sowingsynergy.htm

The Center was a key participant this year in the development of “The Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address as a Pathway to Stewardship Education in the Onondaga Lake Watershed.” The Stewardship Education project is a collaboration of ESF, Syracuse University and the Skä-noñh—Great Law of Peace Center to produce and implement an environmental education curriculum for middle school, high school and college students and teachers focused on the Onondaga Lake watershed area. The goal is to teach people about the natural and cultural history and current condition of the Onondaga Lake watershed in a way that presents traditional/indigenous environmental knowledge as a complement to scientific environmental knowledge in understanding the physical world, and as an activating force toward cultivating gratitude, responsibility, and stewardship.

Stewardship Education in the Onondaga Lake Watershed

Catherine Landis presents the historical ecology of Onondaga Lake at a Professional Development Workshop for local school teachers at the Skä-noñh Great law of Peace Center this August

(Photoby Elizabeth Folta)
Center Assistant Director Neil Patterson Jr. worked with Onondaga Nation representatives, Syracuse University partners, and ESF graduate students Catherine Landis and Thomas Mackey to develop a series of Middle School and High School lesson plans using elements of the Thanksgiving Address, including subjects like water, food plants, the stars, and the four winds. In August, a Professional Development Workshop was held at the Skä-noñh Center with over seventy teachers engaged in the new lesson plans and listening to presentations from the Center, Syracuse University, and the Onondaga Nation.

Following the teacher training, mini-grants were awarded to Jordan-Elbridge, Westhill, Fowler, Solvay, and the Lafayette School districts to teach the lessons, support field trips to the Skä-noñh Center, and perform a community or service-related project in the Onondaga Lake watershed. By November, over three hundred middle and high school students and teachers from across Central New York engaged in gratitude surveys, toured the Skä-noñh Center, and completed lesson activities focused on the Thanksgiving Address and Indigenous knowledge. Some stewardship activities will continue in the coming year and beyond. The Partnership received a $91,000 Environmental Education Grant from the US Environmental Protection Agency for the Stewardship Education project.

       http://www.skanonhcenter.org/syracuse-university-suny-esf-onondaga-lake/

**Helping Forests Walk**

The Center completed a five-year project this year known as “Helping Forests Walk” in conjunction with our partners from the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force. “Helping Forests Walk: Assessing opportunities for assisted migration of culturally important species in the Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) Confederacy” is an educational outreach program designed to assess the concerns of Haudenosaunee communities in the face of climate change, and to assist with community-based pilot projects to address those threats. This year’s culminating project was to collaborate with the Onondaga Nation to research and establish a demonstration grove of plant species of cultural significance. The grove was created under the leadership of the Center’s Assistant Director Neil Patterson Jr. and ESF Undergraduate Student Intern Sarah Cruz. The species planted are designed to support revitalization of traditional plant
knowledge of food and medicinal plants, which are subject to disruption from climate change impacts.

The Sugar Maple was identified in earlier Helping Forests Walk assessment workshops and served as the subject of a Master’s Degree thesis completed and successfully defended this year by ESF student Andrew Tomes entitled “Managing Plant Communities after Anthropogenic Perturbations: Applications of Plant-Fungal Interactions and Plant Responses to Climate Change.” The thesis contains a chapter on the status and anticipated distribution of Sugar Maples in contemporary Haudenosaunee communities under various climate model scenarios.

Throughout the year, the Center facilitated several forest knowledge workshops and community outreach events as part of Helping Forests Walk. Workshops focused on the collection and propagation of native seeds, cuttings, and rootstocks, while outreach activities included several plant knowledge exchanges between Center staff, ESF students, and representatives of the Onondaga Nation. By September, students from the Onondaga Nation Youth Group helped prepare, design, and plant over 130 plants, shrubs, vines and trees protected by a 7’ deer fence on Nation territory. To ensure ongoing care and perpetual maintenance of the HFW demonstration groves, replacement supplies and tools were also purchased including a small community library for the Onondaga Nation containing general guides to forest ecology and dynamics. The Center received $144,000 from the Northern Forest Branch of the US Forest Service in support of Helping Forests Walk.

       https://toolkit.climate.gov/topics/tribal-nations/capacity-building?page=0%2C1%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C0%2C1

Learning from the Land

Our collaborative grant project with our tribal college partner The College of the Menominee Nation has reached its crescendo and is drawing to a close as funding expires in June of 2017. The lessons of the project were shared this year in a national conference at the College of the Menominee Nation attended by tribal college and university educators from around the United States. The pedagogical model for integration of scientific and indigenous knowledges we developed in our collaboration was shared with this influential audience. Dr. Robin Kimmerer, Colin Beier and our Learning from the Land graduate students, Ray Gutteriez and Sara Smith presented their findings at the conference. The gathering also provided an opportunity to strategize with our partners about next steps in what we agree will be an ongoing collaboration.

Links:  http://sustainabledevelopmentinstitute.org/2016/08/sdi-hosts-national-workshop/
Protecting Sacred Sites

Center Faculty Dr. James Gibbs continued to develop innovative ways to protect sacred and archeological sites this year in two very different areas, the southwestern United States and the Altai Mountains in Asia. Dr. Gibbs is developing anti-trespass remote detection technology to help National Park Service staff protect sites in three Parks in the US southwest and collaborating with Kazakh herders amongst four countries – Mongolia, Russia, China and Kazakhstan – to measure the validity of satellite-based indices of rangeland health as well as to understand how herders cope with rangeland dynamics. The project received $779,061 from the US National Park National Center for Preservation Technology and Training and $779,061 from NASA Science Mission Directorate / Earth Science Division.

Traditional Ecological Knowledge in Ecosystem Restoration

The role of Indigenous knowledge and practice in ecosystem restoration was a focus under the teaching and research of Center Faculty Dr. Stewart Diemont, who received the 2016 ESF College Foundation Award this year for Exceptional Achievement in Teaching. Dr. Diemont covers traditional knowledge each year with hundreds of students in the freshman course “Global Environment and the Evolution of Human Culture,” and leads students to Lacandon Mayan territory each summer as part of the course “Ecosystem Restoration Design”.

Several of Dr. Diemont’s graduate students work in a number of diverse indigenous knowledge systems. Tomasz Falkowski is a Ph.D. candidate working with Dr. Diemont to investigate the role of Lacandon Maya traditional ecological knowledge in Mesoamerica. In a long-term research site set up with National Science Foundation funding, Falkowski is comparing plant community and soil changes in Lacandon Maya TEK-based restoration and government-style forest restoration. Tomasz’s work is under a National Geographic Young Explorer’s Grant. The article “Lacandon Maya traditional ecological knowledge and rainforest restoration: Soil fertility beneath six agroforestry system trees” was published in the journal Ecological Engineering this year as result of their work.
Two new students under the tutelage of Dr. Diemont have also taken on the role of traditional knowledge in ecosystem restoration this year. Isaias Martinez is Ph.D. candidate examining nutrient cycling and traditional management in Zapotec agroforestry near Lalopa, Mexico. Isaias, who is Zapotec, is funded through a Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología (CONACYT) graduate fellowship. Jorge García Polo, Ph.D. candidate, is beginning research considering how traditional cattail use and management by Mayan groups around Lake Atitlan in Guatemala could be a part of wetland restoration. Jorge, who is Guatemalan, is funded through a Fulbright Fellowship.

New partnerships and funding opportunities

Outreach and Education: The Center was invited by the Adirondack Natural History Museum and The Wild Center to collaborate on a new grant proposal designed to bring indigenous perspectives and traditional ecological knowledge into the exhibits, education and programming at The Wild Center. This proposal submitted to Institute for Museum and Library Services Museums for America program, for $245,000 would support several ESF internships, salary for the Assistant Director, and provide an opportunity for the Center to share expertise in TEK with a broad public audience of the Wild Center.

Research: Researchers at North Carolina State University initiated a collaboration with the Center for Native Peoples and the Environment for a project entitled Collaborative Research: Restoring Biotechnology’s Moral Fiber; Genetically Modified Chestnut Trees, Responsible Innovation and Environmental Justice. The NC State research team seeks to understand the perspectives of the Haudenosaunee nations on restoration of genetically modified chestnut trees in their ancestral territories. The Center will help facilitate meetings between the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force and the researchers.
Our Students

We are proud of all of our Native American students who are completing their studies at SUNY ESF. In our Indigenous Environmental Leaders for the Future program (IELF), funded by a grant from the USDA Multicultural Scholars Program, we are on track for a 100% graduation rate and the students have already made contributions to their respective fields through professional employment in the environment and internships. Their success significantly advances our goal of educating the next generation of Native American environmental professionals. This year, the IELF students all participated in the annual meeting of the American Indian Science and Engineering Society in Minneapolis where they interacted with hundreds of other Native American STEM students and professionals and attended the associated career fair. In addition to these students who are funded by our grants, the Center also serves a nexus for mentoring of additional students of native heritage on campus.

Graduate Student Sara Smith (Oneida Nation) successfully completed her Masters of Science degree in Fall 2016. Her thesis included both scientific and traditional knowledge sections and was entitled “Looking through two lenses: an ecological study on the succession of ectomycorrhizal communities in regenerating white pine stands in a tribal forest and a preliminary investigation of the ethnomycological knowledge of the Menominee Nation”. Sara secured a professional position as a Natural Resource Technician for the Stockbridge Munsee Tribe in Wisconsin.

Graduate Student Ray Gutteriez (Sierra Mono) is working as the Tribal Wildlife Education Director for the Hoopa Tribe in northern California. He is currently finishing the final report which will yield his Masters of Professional Studies.
Undergraduate Kathryn Goodwin (Blackfeet descendant) will graduate this spring with a BS in Environmental Studies with high academic achievement. Last summer she served in the coveted position of an intern to the White House Council on Environmental Quality in Washington, DC.

Undergraduate Meleimoana Suesue (Samoa) will graduate with her BS in Environmental Engineering this spring and has achieved exceptional academic credentials to support her future career as an engineer.

Undergraduate Cassi Beaulieu (Mohawk descendant) graduated with her BS in Environmental Chemistry with a strong interest in aquatic ecosystems and is currently employed as a professional by the Upstate Freshwater Institute.

Undergraduate Kim Hill (Tuscarora) graduated in Spring 2016 with her BS in Forestry and Natural Resources Management. She secured prestigious internships with the Doris Duke Conservation Fellowship and is currently employed as a research technician and studying her native language.
Outreach and Education with Native Communities

Many of the Center’s outreach and education partnerships with native communities this year were linked with existing initiatives like Voices from Maple Nation, Helping Forests Walk, and the Onondaga Lake Stewardship Education project. A number of other educational opportunities are based on requests from our partnering communities, which typically exceed the available capacity of the Center.

Tuscarora Winter Camp

The Center sponsored a Winter Camp for Native American Highs School students organized by the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force held at the Tuscarora Nation in February. The program consisted of indigenous foods, a media workshop, beadwork and a winter ecology hike led by Neil Patterson Jr and SUNY ESF student and Tuscarora citizen Kimberly Hill ('15).

Onondaga Fishing Program

The Center organized a fishing program this year on the Onondaga Nation with the assistance of the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force. Several hundred trout were stocked on the Nation in Hemlock Creek by the United States Geological Service Great Lake Science Center in early June. Over one hundred participants attended the Program, which was started by Assistant Director Neil Patterson Jr. in 2008.

Over 100 people participated in this year’s fish-stocking and derby program on the Onondaga Nation through the help of the United States Geological Survey, who provide trout from the Great Lakes Science Center to generate interest in aquatic life and fisheries science. ESF has been a part of research, education, and outreach on Onondaga Creek for over a decade now.
**Shinnecock Indian Nation Visit**

SUNY ESF hosted a delegation from the Shinnecock Indian Nation this July to tour the campus and meet with representatives of the Onondaga Nation on solid waste and recycling operations there. Students were greeted by ESF President Quentin Wheeler and stayed in Centennial Hall on campus.

**Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress**

The Center participated in the second annual Inter-Tribal Youth Climate Leadership Congress held at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia this July. 87 Native American, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian students between the ages of 15 to 18 participated in a week-long program to learn about climate change issues in indigenous communities. The Congress is a partnership between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Indian Affairs and several more federal agencies. The Center has been invited back to participate again in 2017.

**Helping Forests Walk**

Outreach and education played a significant role during our final year of Helping Forests Walk. The development of educational materials and programs centered on the identification, ecology and cultural significance of forest species and the planting of a grove of culturally significant plants at the Onondaga Nation resulted in several dozen learning and service opportunities with our partners from the Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force, the Haudenosaunee Seedkeepers Society and the Onondaga Nation Youth Group.
Neil Patterson Jr. spoke about Helping Forests Walk at the Haudenosaunee Seedkeepers Society Meeting in May, and distributed several varieties of culturally-significant plants for establishment in Haudenosaunee communities. Several plant identification walks were led by Director Robin Kimmerer, Neil Patterson Jr., graduate student Catherine Landis and CNPE intern Sara Cruz at the Onondaga Nation and SUNY-ESF’s Lafayette Experiment Station. Students participating in the Project were also part of regional plant knowledge experiences, including canoe trips on Onondaga Creek and an Adirondack Park camping trip sponsored by Paul Smith’s College.

**NYSDEC Summer Camps**

The Center worked with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation to sponsor eight free camperships to DEC Summer camps for Native American youth across the State. Assistant Director Neil Patterson Jr. also provided a Traditional Plant Knowledge workshop for Camp Pack Forest in Warrensburg, NY in July in support of the partnership.
"Goodnow was the first ‘mountain’ I climbed as an ESF undergraduate working in the Huntington Forest in 1995. I have enjoyed bringing our native youth back here for their first Adirondack experience. This past October I was leading a group of young native women up the Mountain as part of the Maple Nation gathering. This particular hike proved to be one of the most memorable experiences in all my time sharing knowledge about the Natural World.

Almost everyone on this trip was new to the area, except Robyn Johnson, who climbed Goodnow Mountain the previous summer during our summer Native Earth camp at Huntington. During a well-deserved rest, Robyn was able to identify a plant we talked about the previous trip, Medeola virginiana, or Indian Cucumber. She pulled a few roots to share with the group and I have never been more proud of that moment in all my years working with the Center’s outreach activities."

-Neil Patterson Jr.
Educational Events on the ESF Campus to Broaden Understanding of Indigenous Issues and the Environment

The ESF community had a high probability of encountering issues involving indigenous cultures this year through the Center’s educational programs. The Envisioning Indigenous Alliances Workshop held last provided guidance for our events in 2016, enriching course curriculum and increasing student and faculty awareness of indigenous perspectives on the environment. Five themes identified in the Workshop—Customary Uses, Community Service, Nature and Culture Linkages, Education and Design/Landscape, were addressed in our Where We Stand, Visiting Scholars, and Indigenous Peoples programs.

“Where We Stand” Monument Design Charrette

The Where We Stand campus protocol announced in 2015 has brought greater recognition of the issues of Native sovereignty and cultivation of productive alliances between ESF and surrounding indigenous communities. The Center worked with Dr. Emmanuel Carter in the SUNY-ESF Department of Landscape Architecture this spring to hold a Design Studio centered around the placement of a campus monument dedicated to recognizing the location of the ESF campus on the homelands of the Haudenosaunee people. The Center brought in artists Tom Huff and Michael Galban from the Ganondagan State Historic Site for presentations on Iroquoian design and aesthetic protocols. Eight students presented their designs to campus leadership and architects working on the new layout of Academic Research Building scheduled for construction in 2017.
Visiting Indigenous Scholars

Dr. Nick Reo from the Native Studies Program at Dartmouth was our distinguished visiting scholar in April 2016. Dr. Reo (Ojibwe) is a well-known scholar whose work demonstrates the ways in which indigenous knowledge is a valuable component of devising climate change adaptation strategies. During his time with us he presented guest lectures in several classes and a well-attended seminar for the ESF and broader community.

Sacred Lands Film Project

In November 2016, in recognition of Native American Heritage month, the Center sponsored a film screening and panel discussion with internationally known film maker Toby McLeod, creator of the Sacred Lands Film Project. This set of 4 award-winning documentaries highlights the intersection of biodiversity and conservation and protection of places which are sacred to indigenous peoples around the world. During McLeod’s visit he met with leaders of the Onondaga Nation, visited the Skanohh Great Law of Peace Center, met with ESF and SU students and faculty and presented the film and discussion to a diverse audience, with broad community participation in the presentation and accompanying traditional Haudenosaunee meal.

Standing Rock: Issues and Actions

In September, the Center held an educational program for the ESF and broader community, outlining the environmental, legal and cultural issues at stake in the demonstrations at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation. This well attended gathering led to a campus wide fund raiser in support of the Water Protectors and several additional student actions.
Indigenous Peoples Day

The Center and the ESF Student Diversity & Inclusion Office held a day-long series of events celebrating Indigenous Peoples’ Day this October in conjunction with the Syracuse University Office of Multicultural Affairs and Indigenous Students at Syracuse. ESF President Quentin Wheeler proposed the proclamation to rename Columbus Day as a result.

Our Courses

As part of our efforts to enhance visibility and understanding of indigenous environmental issues and to train the next generation of natural resources managers and environmental scientists equipped to work in alliance with Native peoples, we continue to offer a diverse array of courses at ESF including:

- EST 140 Native Lands, Peoples and Cultures: Dr. Elizabeth Vidon
- EFB 305/605 Indigenous Issues and the Environment: Dr. Robin Kimmerer
- EFB 496 Traditional Ecological Knowledge: Mr. Neil Patterson
- EFB 337 Field Ethnobotany: Dr. Robin Kimmerer
- EFB 306 Plants and Culture: Dr. Robin Kimmerer
- EST 390 Social Processes and the Environment: Dr. Jack Manno
- EFB 496 Ecosystem Restoration Design: Dr. Stewart Diemont

All of our courses are fully subscribed (with waiting lists) indicating a strong demand for these courses. Students have requested expansion of courses and class size, but we are already at capacity. Enrollment in the minor continues to grow with approximately 15 current students.
Visibility and Media Attention

One of the metrics for success of the CNPE was identified as enhanced visibility. The work of the Center was highlighted in over 35 presentations at universities and professional symposia around the country including University of Vermont, University of Notre Dame, University of Oklahoma, University of Wisconsin, University of Hawaii, University of Michigan, Prescott College, Trent University, National Museum of the American Indian and many others this year.

- Dr. Kimmerer and colleague Dr. Kathleen Dean Moore published an influential piece in Yes! Magazine on the issues at Standing Rock entitled “The White Horse and the Humvees”.
- Neil Patterson Jr. was featured speaker at the first annual Haudenosaunee Seedkeepers Meeting in April at the Onondaga Nation.
- Neil Patterson delivered a keynote address for the National Tribal Forum on Air Quality this May in Niagara Falls, NY;
- The Syracuse New Times featured a cover story on Dr. Kimmerer this October highlighting the accomplishments of the Center;
- Dr. Kimmerer received the Feinstone Environmental Award in October highlighting the creation of the CNPE;
- A keynote presentation was made by Neil Patterson Jr. at the Great Lakes Public Forum in Toronto, Ontario this October;
- Dr. Diemont gave a talk on his research with wild edibles at the 16th Annual Meeting of the American Ecological Engineering Society in Knoxville, Tennessee this June.
- Neil Patterson Jr. delivered a presentation for the Center for Sustainability and the Environment at Wells College this September.
- American Indian Science and Engineering Society bestowed its highest award, the Ely S. Parker Award on Dr. Kimmerer with national recognition of the work of the CNPE
- Dr. Kimmerer’s essay on Traditional Knowledge and the proposed Bears Ears National Monument was published in The Hill this December
- Dr. Kimmerer was a featured speaker at a March and Rally in Washington DC in support of Standing Rock in November
- Traditional ecological knowledge for sustainability was the topic keynote delivered by Dr. Kimmerer at the annual Hubbard Lecture at the Great Plains Center.
Future Challenges and Opportunities

We are very proud of how the programs of the Center have grown exponentially since our founding, nearly ten years ago. Our success would not be possible without the generous founding support of our benefactors Lew and Dawn Allyn, which we have augmented with programmatic funds and support from external grants. In the next few months, we plan to create a publication that documents and celebrates the contributions of the Center over the last 10 years and set forth our goals for the next decade and future generations. We will be working with faculty, staff, students and community tribal partners to tell this story.

As awareness grows of the importance of indigenous perspectives in environmental research, education and outreach, the Center’s reputation has grown as well. We are increasingly called upon to collaborate with many partners. While these are exciting opportunities, we find ourselves approaching the limit of our current staffing capacity. We have made small part-time additions to our staff but recognize the need to strategize about increasing capacity and managing growth.

This fall we will welcome a cohort of new indigenous graduate students to ESF to inaugurate the Sowing Synergy graduate program funded by a major award form USDA. Our current funding supports these initial students, but the Center will need to sustain fellowships for future students as the new Master’s program gains momentum. Funding for graduate students will remain a priority.

The last two of our Indigenous Environmental Leaders for the Future undergraduates will graduate this spring. We hope to obtain funding for a new cohort. Recruitment of Native American undergraduates continues to be a challenge at ESF and we will need the support of the College Admissions Office in addressing this issue. We look forward to working with the College’s new Chief Diversity Officer on these and other initiatives.

The 2015 Envisioning Indigenous Alliances Workshop identified five strategic areas for the Center and the ESF community to build indigenous alliances: Customary Use Research, Design/Landscape, Education, Nature and Culture Linkages, and Community Service. While some of these themes are currently addressed by Center programs, such as our Campus Events and the Minor in Native Peoples and the Environment, others will require additional planning and communication with native communities in the region.
Community service, outreach, and research-based requests from our indigenous partners exceeded our staffing ability to address the overall need this year. Native Earth youth environmental education programs are a critical part of our mission, and we will need to further collaborate with partners like the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation in the coming year to be able to offer important learning and service experiences to Native American youth. An Indigenous Education Outreach Coordinator would be of great value to our work.

We are fortunate to have a lively and engaged group of associated faculty. Dr. Jack Manno, a founding faculty member of the Center and a pioneer in the advancement of ESFs indigenous alliances will retire in 2017. As other faculty approach retirement, sustainability of the Center and its valuable programs require transition planning for continued growth to meet increasing needs. We hope to engage with the ESF Development Office to discuss possibilities of an endowed professorship of Indigenous Issues and the Environment in order to permanently sustain and advance the mission of the Center and ensure that these important ideas remain vital at the College in perpetuity.
Who we are

Robin Kimmerer, Director
website

Colin Beier, Associated Faculty
website

Jack Manno, Associated Faculty
website

Stewart Diemont, Associated Faculty
website

Neil Patterson Jr., Assistant Director

Elizabeth Vidon, Associated Faculty
website

James Gibbs, Associated Faculty
website

Sharon Moran, Associated Faculty
website

The Center is guided by an advisory board consisting of ESF environmental scientists, environmental leaders from Haudenosaunee communities and indigenous educators from around the country. Members include:

Henry Lickers, Director, Environment Division, Mohawk Council of Akwesasne
David Arquette, Director, Haudenosaunee Environmental Task Force
Jeanne Shenandoah, environmental leader, Onondaga Nation
Wendy Gonyea, environmental leader, Onondaga Nation
Richard Hill, Indigenous Knowledge Center, Six Nations Polytechnic
Irving Powless Jr., environmental leader, Onondaga Nation

http://www.esf.edu/nativepeoples/