

Native Perspectives on Sustainability: Dennis Martínez (O'odham/Chicano/Anglo)

Interviewee: Dennis Martinez

Interviewer: David E. Hall

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Transcribed: Price McCloud Johnson & Michelle Emery

DH: Thank you, Mr. Martinez, for taking the time with us today. This project is about sustainability from the perspective of indigenous leaders and our aim is to hear from you on the subject today. To start, can you just share a bit about yourself, your heritage, where home is for you and the focus of your work?

DM (00:15): My heritage is mixed, Mestizo; Mexico on my dad's side and some O'odham blood and Spanish, and Portuguese. I am adopted by the Crow Tribe, the Pretty Weasel family, the Whistling Water clan, Chicano heritage, and I have Swedish blood, and so Anglo heritage too. I live in the Klamath Mountains in Northwest California; I'm up at 2000 feet elevation in a small 250 square foot home with a deck outside where we sleep four months a year. It's very wild, a very nice place. No people around, we just hear the wind. It's just starting to blow because we're expecting the mother of all storms soon, and, a lot of snow. I grew up in the San Joaquin Valley, near Fresno, on a ranch. We did subsistence hunting and fishing, including salmon, when the San Joaquin River had salmon runs, before the Friant Dam in 1949. We grew our own produce; we didn't buy a whole lot except for the staples, like coffee, tea, sugar, flour, that kind of stuff. We had a cash crop of grapes, we were cash poor but we had a good, I'd say, rich subsistence life, a kind of affluent subsistence. That's how I remember it. Of course, we took it totally for granted at the time. I grew up in a church, Jehovah's Witnesses; we had a racially and ethnically mixed congregation, mostly Latino and Anglo, a few Indians. Of course, many Latinos, if they are from Mexico or other countries in South America, are mostly Indian, but their cultural identity may not be Indian. I lived in a lot of places: Mexico, Europe, all over the United States, Canada. I travel extensively now, but I always come back to this tiny place in the Klamath Mountains. My community, I have many communities. When I was a finalist for the Buffett Award I was working with Nor-Rel-Muk which are local Indians here, the Nor-Rel-Muk Band of Wintu Indians, and I was going to turn all of the money I was awarded for first place (\$25,000, but I only got a Pendleton blanket as a finalist, one of five) over to the tribe in order to do a tribal stewardship project in the Forest Service land, and do restoration and protect sacred sites and so on. But my real community that I go to ceremonies in, I socialize with people and so on, is in Southwestern Oregon, and it could be described loosely as an inter-tribal mix of people, some Indians, some non-Indians, many tribes and some local Indian people who have registered at Siletz Confederated Tribes mostly, and some Klamath, Shasta. These are the people that I have the strongest bond with and that I work the closest with. Agnes Pilgrim and I started the Salmon Ceremony in 1994, after they were gone from Southern Oregon for over 150 years. It was the only Salmon Ceremony in Western Oregon until you get to the Warm Springs Reservation in the north of Oregon.

DH: You define then, your community primarily in terms of the people and the region of southwest Oregon?

DM (4:55): Not the whole region, mostly just the intertribal community centered around Ashland, Medford and Grant's Pass.

DH: Terrific. We'll come back to other questions regarding your community later on, when I ask you to think in terms of a sustainable vision for that community of people.

DM (5:17): I am going to have to qualify that by saying that I work all over the map, and each situation is different. So, what I would like to do is give you some general ideas, deriving from my many communities both internationally and here locally, and regionally. Because it is really the same basic issues, the same basic struggle. So what I am going to say about my, quote, community here in southwest Oregon applies a little bit to them sometimes, but often doesn't because every community is different. There is a fair degree of assimilation within that community. I work with fairly traditional and fairly assimilated people and communities, and so I am going to deal with a more generalized approach to what community and sustainability mean.

DH: Good to know. Well, "sustainability" this word, it's being used by many people nowadays who are seeking to address social, environmental and economic challenges. I am wondering, for starters, if sustainability is a term that you use or if there is other language that you prefer to use?

DM (6:30): I don't use it often, but I find it in literature frequently, because I use words that are more specific to certain contexts. Sustainability is a very high level abstraction word. When I think of sustainability, I have to break it down a bit and say what does that mean for indigenous people in this struggle? What does it mean for the land, the struggle to restore the land? Words that come to mind are *resilience*, the capacity to adapt to change, *reclamation* of our voice and vision, *identity*, *knowledge*, *places*, *names of places*, *land*, *harmony*. Harmony between people and other people, and between communities and people and the natural world. These are all important concepts with basically nature as the model, and the model of interdependence of all parts in nature, the flux of parts and whole. The law of circular interaction. "Kincentricity," a word I coined. Traditional Ecological Knowledge (TEK) and the peoples that carry that knowledge are adaptive and resilient to change, therefore are "sustainable".

DH: Can you say that term you coined again?

DM: Kincentricity. It's in the literature now, Nancy Turner has used it, Enrique Salmon has used it, and others have used it. I used it first in 1995 when I was on the Karuk tribal team going for co-management of ceded tribal lands now under the jurisdiction of the Klamath National Forest. That's on the Klamath River, north of here. What was the other part of the question?

DH: Share more about the meaning of that word that you have coined.

DM: Kincentricity is basically a word that I had to coin because it was not in the dictionary, yet. Hopefully someday it will be. Working here in the Pacific Northwest with the political gridlock

that we have been experiencing for so many years, we are constantly evaluating or describing the world in an “either/or” way. Either we are biocentric, say Deep ecology, or we’re anthropocentric, major exploitive, extractive industry, like logging. And kincentricity is that middle or gray area between, the middle way, where we have a relationship not only with our immediate biological family, our extended family, our tribe, our clan, our community, but also with plants and animals out in the natural world, so relationship is the key idea in terms of kincentricity, *Kin*.

DH: Like kinship?

DM: (9:30) Exactly, like kinship. And I view the world as eternally in change, in flux. And I view the world as energies that, unless they are renewed, they tend to go away, they get wasted away, they leave. So part of sustainability, to me, is the capacity for renewal in the face of change; adaptable or resilience to that change and to help *renew* ourselves and our environments in the face of that change. I feel that we all have an obligation as children of the creator, and of the planet earth, and of our communities, we have an obligation to participate every day in the recreation of the world. In other words, unlike Islam, and Christianity, and Judaism, and Zoroastrianism (modern Persian Parsees), God didn’t create the world in six days and rest on the seventh, we are all co creators with other forces of the universe including the planets, the animals, the fire, the wind, the water, the earth and so on. So we’re all part of this flux, and to the extent that we are in harmony with that flux, to the extent that we can participate in world renewal in practical ways and in spiritual ways. For example, we have two ceremonies on the Klamath River called the White Deer Skin Dance and the Jump Dance that are called world renewal ceremonies. The Klamath River people, the Wyot, Yurok, Hoopa, Tsungway, Karuk, Shasta, they all talk about fixing the world in ceremonies. They can go on for several days every year, the Green Corn Dance, the Deer Dance among the Yacqui (Yoeme) people, the Salmon Homecoming Ceremony I mentioned that Agnes and I put back, many other ceremonies, the Sun Dance, have to do with renewing the world, setting the world in order again (or “fixing the world” as they say here) because we used it up. And when we use it up we have to compensate by giving back. That is my basic philosophy of sustainability. The level of degradation ecologically, and culturally, socially, in terms of loss of identity, social malaise of the indigenous peoples because of many factors impacting them means that no indigenous people since the last ice age has experienced the kind of change on the scale and intensity that we are experiencing it now. Therefore, we need help from every kind of knowledge, including western science so that we can integrate where appropriate, both traditional ecological knowledge or local ecological knowledge, and western science. Indigenous people have a lot to offer western science and western science has a lot to offer indigenous people. Especially, where there is severe ecological, or recent degradation, or where knowledge has been largely lost, or some of it has been lost, or at the landscape scale, with various jurisdictions, how scientific statistical analysis, mathematical models, monitoring protocols, very quantitative stuff, can assist tribes in assessing their particular land base and the larger landscape that impinges on and influences their local ecosystem as well as establish legal rights to ancestral lands lost to government agencies through the use of, e.g. scientific mapping technologies . That’s where science can help, ideas that we need all of the help that we can get. We need many visions, not just one. We need many visions to create a complete vision. Finally, ecology influences consciousness.

DH: Ecology creates consciousness?

DM: Yeah, I think there is a definite, direct relationship between ecology and consciousness. The extent that we are in harmony with the natural world, and that we pray and spiritually feel that kinship, because there is no separation among indigenous peoples between spirit and matter. They are one and the same, so people who argue in academic journals or books that, “well, Indians have strong taboos or fears that if they do something bad that plants and animals wouldn’t come back,” (i.e. environmental ethics based solely on fear) but they forget the fact that that world view, that cosmology is tied in every day with practical land care and activities, and caring for one’s own people, and one’s relatives and kin. The academics, looking in from outside, don’t understand the love and respect accorded the relatives that bring spiritual power and contribute to their wellbeing in many ways, including their livelihoods. So there is no division then between what is in the physical world and what is in the spirit world; the two are identical. When we talk in science about energy movement, we are talking about in indigenous terms of spirit movement.

DH (15:18): There’s a number of really wonderful and rich thoughts in there. You began by listing a number of associations you have with the idea of sustainability, resilience, reclamation, identity, knowledge, land, harmony, nature as a model, and then also practical and spiritual dimensions. Are there any of those things that you would like to explain further?

DM: Well, essentially we are trying to balance two worlds now. It’s what James Youngblood Henderson--he is a Choctaw philosopher, a very important philosopher along with Leroy Little Bear who’s Blood Band, Blackfoot, from Alberta, University of Lethbridge. Youngblood talks about *jagged* world views. None of us have pure, traditional views or purely modern views, we are someplace in between, more or less, this jagged kind of world view interface. We have to learn how to balance those two worlds the best that we can. The book that I am writing with co-author Don Falk from the department of Evolutionary Ecology at the University of Arizona, Tucson, for Island press and the SER (Society for Ecological Restoration) series on restoration has to do with learning how to balance those worlds and learning how we can integrate traditional knowledge and western science, for the benefit of all people. Because we see the main crisis in the world as not only climate change, but also the rural environmental crisis and the loss of traditional knowledge crisis. The loss of ethnic knowledge, the loss of knowledge about local places, the loss of knowledge that embodies local, ecological and social information, for example, that we are losing so rapidly, is a loss to all of humanity. We need all of the options that we can get to deal with the kind of change on an unprecedented scale and intensity. Unprecedented kinds, intensities, and frequencies of change are occurring right now. Climate change is important, but to deal with climate change we first have to deal, effectively, with the rural environmental crisis of poverty, disease, loss of identity, social and personal identity crises, malaise, all of the problems, lack of land, lack of sustainable practices in agro forestry and agriculture, and so on. Those knowledge systems that are going so fast, and we figure in one generation there *will be no more*. This is a serious problem, because for traditional knowledge to be preserved it must be practiced, if there are no people to practice it can’t be preserved. Writing it down is not enough because it is adaptable (sustainable), the kind of adaptive management that indigenous people have learned over thousands of years, millennia. Therefore, indigenous cultural survival is an important requisite for the survival of that knowledge, and that knowledge

is an important requisite for the survival of Indian people. Also, the health of the land is an important requisite for the survival of the people, and the community well being of the people is an important requisite for the survival and restoration of the ecosystems. It is a totally reciprocal relationship. And the more we know about the different ways that local people have been dealing with economy and ecology, which is really the essence of sustainability; it is the harmony of making a livelihood on this earth *and* giving back to the earth in the very same breath. For example, if I were to prune the Grey Willow, *Salix exigua*, that grows around here for baskets because fire is often prohibited on public and private land, then I am not just getting good strong basket shoots for the basket, for example by burning and pruning or in the old days, before dams when spring floods from snow melt would wash out the willows part way so they re-sprouted from their partly exposed crowns and root systems, something that we don't have any more so we have to prune, we won't find any willow shoots useful for baskets (supple, strong, and straight). We are also opening that grey willow plant up to birds coming in and picking out the insects that lay eggs that become larvae that grow inside the willows stems that weaken them so that they are no longer good for baskets. That's good for birds, when they can come in it will strengthen the baskets if they pick off the insects that destroy the basket stems. The fact that we have new palatable browse for deer and elk and so on. You have sunlight for genetic diversity of seedlings that come about when there are exposed areas of sand and gravel and so on, and the wind that strengthens the stems which is good for baskets because the movement of the wind makes stronger cells within the stem and it becomes a stronger, more pliable, more useful basket material. So in the very act of using we are also restoring and conserving. That is the economic objective that involves ecology in balance with economics. And that is just as essential as spirituality and the renewal of the earth and the renewal of the people. Poor people are not going to allow restoration to happen, they are not going to allow conservation knowledge research or biosphere research or parks to happen because when they are hungry they poach, when they are hungry they do things that even violate their own traditions to save their children. That is all over the world today, and it is what we all would do if we had to. It is a matter of learning how to do that right, and we need that knowledge. There are people who know how to do it right, and there are people that made colossal mistakes and haven't survived, or they are not surviving very well. (22:03) Indigenous people are not noble savages nor are they ignoble savages; they are human like everyone else. They make mistakes like everyone else. They have made quite a few in the past, but the ones that have learned, adapted the knowledge, and the ways, they've survived. Those are the people we want to look to as models. We are not making claims either way, bad Indian, good Indian, we are just saying they are people and that some of them have learned in very practical, pragmatic ways to make a good living in pretty harsh environments. I'm just thinking about the Yucatan where I'll be going next month to work with Mayans at Calakmul Biosphere Reserve, that is one of the most resource poor ecosystems in the world, and yet it supported an incredible intensity of Mayans in prehistoric times, because they had sustainable agricultural practices. Where they lost it was when they got into empire building and wars. And then a synergistic effect, an exponential positive feedback loop, took place in which they stretched beyond their resources and the cost-benefit ratio of expensive-to-maintain infrastructure, armies, public services, etc. to benefits was skewed to the debit side. Then people lost allegiance and wars occurred and things went to hell, but even in the interim, people have learned to live, although a much smaller number of people like in Yucatan, they continue to live in a very sustainable way. Quintanaroo is a good example, but not at Calakmul, because there are a lot of Mestizos who do not have traditional ways, and

some of the Mayans have been somewhat assimilated and forced to do things that their traditions would never allow, (but in order to survive they have to cut those trees illegally). They used to practice slash-and-burn which at one time was a sustainable system of 100-year rotations. Due to restriction of the territories and land bases of the people and Mexican NAFTA policies they now are looking at you know a 12 to 14 years max fallow between the slash-and-burn. They used to have a whole succession of tropical, dry tropical, wet tropical plants coming in following the burning. They only cultivated a short time, 1 to 2 years; they fallowed a long time and used the succession plants until the next clearing and burning in 80-100 years. When people are short term cultivators and long term fallowers they tend to have a more sustainable agriculture, and increased species richness and biodiversity at the same time. Their secondary agroforests were more diverse than untouched “primary” forests. So we have those models out there that we need to look at.

DH (25:00): If you are in a conversation with someone who is unfamiliar with the concept of sustainability, are there any brief stories or analogies that you might share to help them understand that idea?

DM: Well, I gave you one, the one of the grey willow and Mayan agroforestry. It can be multiplied many times. When you go in and dig those underground corms (bulbs) for edible camas, etc., and many other plants that grow in the ground, the women that dug those were also cultivating the ground. They were aerating the soil, they were mixing nutrients in the surface and they burned periodically to replenish the nutrient supply. Even though some nutrients volatilize into the air following burning, in the long run this is a way intended for these ecosystems, and prairie systems, and wetland systems in maintaining the turnover in nutrients. When people hunted, they would draw a large circle of fire, like in the Willamette valley or around here, around deer or elk, they wouldn't always take the best males like people do now with trophy hunting, they would take the more fair and middling ones because they understood enough about genetics to know that they needed the strongest ones to continue the health of the herd. When they would burn for the prairie plants that they needed culturally, medicine, food, etc., tobacco, you know, all of the things they needed, and habitat as well, for the wildlife that they depended on, they would often back-burn around conifer growth, like for example Douglas Fir in the Willamette Valley. They would be burning for oak protection, acorn production, but they would also back-burn so that they wouldn't burn up the Douglas Fir forest, because that was thermal cover for the elk and deer in the hot summer days. We could go on and on. You get the idea, that people understood something about giving back and the act of using. They also were saving certain plants that were of a utilitarian value to the tribe. But they were also taught to respect all life, all plants and animals, as a gift of the creator, and that anyone that was greedy, or that anyone who damaged plants unnecessarily, or killed game unnecessarily was considered the worst kind of human being.

DH: So each of these examples you share illustrate this notion of harmony between ecology and economy (DM: Exactly), and the adaptability and resilience of people, and how that requires very intimate knowledge and connection with land and place.

DM (27:43): You've got to know the phenology or life cycle of plants and animals to be able to know when to burn, just for starters, and how much to burn, how frequently to burn, how severe the fire. All of those things are important.

DH: Can you say anymore about how identity is related to this?

DM: Identity was not a problem in the old days when people were together. You were the "people". Most Indian tribal names if they are not another tribe's had to do with their own name which usually was "the people," and it meant "the people" in English. That wasn't a problem, the problem now, because of the massive onslaught of assimilation, the boarding schools in the states, the residential schools in Canada and the efforts by governments all over the world doing the same to the present day. They consider traditional people backward, or superstitious, standing in the way of progress and so on. They are told over and over that they need to get with the modern program, the secular program, because otherwise they are stopping progress for all people, and they are backward in their ways. As one congressman put it to congress in the latter part of the 19th century, "We have to kill the Indian to save the man." We have been exposed to this for several generations. I saw this in the former Soviet Union when I was there. The people have lost two generations of knowledge because of the communist collectivization that didn't recognize indigenous collective rights at the same time. They would move people all over the map. People had lost confidence in the knowledge. The message I gave to them was, "you have been here long before the Soviet Union was here, and you will be here long after the communists and the socialists and the capitalists and the Soviet Union are gone. You have within your own culture some of the answers to what you need to do." At that time they were looking to the west, of course that was what progress was all about, was western investment in Eastern Europe and in Russia, right, and central Asia. But they were discouraged through restructuring of the Russian economy by IMF, they were depressed and they were having trouble with their identity as a certain tribal person. That's why people are really suffering. Identity loss is a major problem creating all kinds of other problems such as homicide, suicide, drug abuse, alcohol abuse, abuse of family, and so on, all of the things we see that never used to be. That is where the identity problem is, and we are strengthening that identity by saying that traditional people have knowledge that is important *today*, not just in the past. We aren't trying to go back to the past, so much as learn to adapt without throwing the baby out with the bathwater, without throwing the traditional values out. Science is a great methodological tool, but it needs to be used by tribal peoples under the guidance of their own values, and it needs to have input from traditional knowledge, because, to give you an obvious example: People that live a long time in one place, even if they are having problems now, still often have to hunt, fish and gather to make it. It's true all over the world. Those people, they need the pride, when they go to college they are told that science is where it is and that traditional knowledge is backwards and superstitious. When they hear that they lose faith, they lose confidence. Conversely, many traditional rural Indian people in the states and Canada, don't have much trust in western science at a time when we need all of the help that we can get. (31:55) It is important to look at who we are with pride, and if you have pride in your culture you will do better in school every time. I work on an area that we call bi-cultural science education, in which we start out as they do at the Institute of American Indian Art (IAIA), in Santa Fe. I'm working on a book now with Greg Cajete who has instituted a program at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque, and at Santa Fe with IAIA, to teach first the traditional knowledge and then pair it with western science in the same category, the

same topics, so you are getting both, and you can compare and contrast, and you can pick out which works for you. But you have credence given, and relevance given, and credibility given to your own tribal experience. The problem with a lot of students, not just Indian students, is that college doesn't relate to their life as they know it. Many have a hard time staying in because of that reason. There are many people who are simply not academic; they feel and they experience, the hands on people. Those people are all over and they are suffering in our school system, everywhere, not just Indians, white people too. It isn't relevant to people's lives, directly, in the way that indigenous education was very relevant to people's lives.

DH: (33:35) I may come back later to more questions about education as it is relevant to this conversation. A lot of what you have shared is very rich in imagery, and symbolism, and I am wondering if there is any singular image or symbol that comes to mind that represents the concept of sustainability in some central way?

DM: Kincentricity. The idea that we are all relatives, we are all related, and that if we really internalize that and believe it and act on it, that there will be more harmony between natural systems and human societies. I think that is a key word. Reclamation is certainly a key word, reclaiming indigenous voice and vision, pride and identity, everything, knowledge.

DH: Is there a visual that goes with kincentricity or any of those other terms?

DM: (34:40) Well, If you think of a family. The old ways, the older people took care of the younger people and as they grew up and got on to their own, and got old themselves, the old people began to decline, then they took care of them. So when you take care of the plants and animals the elders say pay attention to them, use them, use is important, respectful use is important. Don't ignore them, because to use their words, "they get sad and lonely and go away." And we've seen that's happened. And if you treat them right, they'll treat you right. Reciprocity, perhaps reciprocity and relationship is the heart of it.

DH: Any more to say on that? Or reciprocity captures a lot of what you've already said?

DM: I think it captures a lot of what I've already outlined here. And it is an outline, there is a lot more to say (laughter). How much time do you have? (laughter)

DH: Reciprocity is certainly a word that has come up and used in other interviews.

DM: (35:48): I'm sure it has.

--break--

DH: The next section of the interview is about your vision for a sustainable future. We usually ground this portion of the conversation by going back to what you identify with in terms of your community. You spoke of your intertribal relations in the area of southwest Oregon, but then also spoke more broadly, in terms of your larger range of global connections and sense of kinship with other parts of the world, yes?

DM: (00:44) Yeah. In a way, I am in between two worlds, constantly, and it's just an interesting place to be. The community in southwestern Oregon has been a very influential community for me, I have to say that. Certainly, spiritually especially, the kinds of ceremonies we have, the Salmon Ceremony, the gatherings we have, other ceremonies we have, sweat lodge, and so on, has had an enormous influence on me. But the people range greatly in how traditional they are. Most try to be, they are trying to get back to that place. No one knows exactly what it is, you know? So songs have come back, the dancing has come back, the ceremonies have come back, and so on, but there are still many urban Indians who just simply don't relate very well to the natural world because they are not dependant on it. They don't spend much time in it. They've been raised in the city. Thanks to termination in the 50's and 60's, many were removed to Portland, Houston, Denver, LA, Minneapolis, all over, and they were expected to make it. They didn't do very well and they are trying to come back. The ones in prison are getting the sweat lodge, the Lakota, spiritual people are teachers now all over Canada and the US. It's a great effort that all of us are making to get back that identity, a spiritual touchstone being the ceremonies. But there is still a separation, unfortunately, in many Indian communities between the jobs they have to do to make a living, their livelihoods, and their values about the environment, not to mention unemployment rates of 40-90%. And it is important for economic development, especially those tribes that have a good land base, and most don't really have a good land base, unfortunately, and that's why there are casinos, to get land back. We need to think in terms of a restoration economy. (2:49) We need to think of Indian entrepreneurship in a way that is also in harmony with the collective will, and that's a tough one, these are economic struggles that we are now involved in, ONABEN, Oregon Native American Economic Network-- I've spoken there before, in Portland. Two hundreds years of poverty has not worked, and what kinds of livelihoods can we generate? And, are they in harmony with our values? Are they in harmony with the natural world? That's a tough one. There are certainly key things in the way. If you're a reservation inhabitant, you're enroll there and live there, you have allotted land, you can't put your land up as collateral for a loan, so that is why most Indian businesses fail. Also, there are many heirs to one allotment, and so you now have hundreds of people scattered all over the United States, in some cases, that would have to come together to agree on what to do with their property. These are real practical obstacles in the way of restoring the land and earning the livelihood in the process of doing it. A lot of the work that I do in the woods, when I do thinning prescriptions, or fire, bringing back the fire, seeding the native plants into the ashes of the burns, the burn piles. All of those things that we are thinking of, in terms of, not just restoring the function, the structure and the composition, the processes, the integrity of the ecosystem, but also non-timber products, sustainable logging on a much smaller scale than it is currently being done with much longer rotations. Diversification of rural community economies--we don't have, whether you are talking about Ashland, or Medford or Billings or wherever, we don't have a rural infrastructure that is conducive to do the kinds of things that we need to do collectively to survive. For example, we don't have sort yards for different sizes of timber that is always in the supply chain, so that people don't get tired of waiting for your product and go someplace else. These are all economic issues that need to be worked on by the tribes and by rural non-Indian communities as well. We make no distinction, really, in the work that I do at least, between helping all people diversify their economies in rural areas because we have seen the boom and bust effects, and we have seen what happens to people. Here in Trinity County for example, when the mills closed down we had all kinds of problems we didn't used to have, social problems. It's because there are no jobs. People who find jobs don't make much money. The

service industry, tourism and so on is taking the place of what we did traditionally, but there is still a long way to go to address what needs to be addressed in land restoration, the thinning of trees that used to be stocked at 40 or 30 or 20 an acre, and now its 2,000 and 3,000 stems per acre. These are enormous fire hazards, they prevent certain plants from coming up because of shading and competition-we are losing our cultural plants, we are losing, in effect, everywhere I go, the herbaceous under-story of our forest because of shading out and fire suppression. And the fires that do come take everything out and sterilize the soil, in many cases. We are looking at a situation where we don't have the wherewithal yet to put together the kinds of programs, the kinds of rural infrastructure, tribal infrastructure and changes in the law so that people can go through tribal banking instead of off-reservation banking for procuring loans to start businesses. Because then the land is not lost to a private, non-Indian, but rather reverts to the tribe and things can be worked out between the allottee and the larger tribal allotment, and council. There are a zillion of these kinds of things that we work on in order to try to harmonize the ecology and economy. It's a real big issue. And on top of all of that, meth could be considered the biggest crisis of all, methamphetamine use. Alcohol has been, of course, you know "drunk Indian." But it is happening now with meth on a scale that is unbelievable, beyond belief. It is hurting our youth, and they are not listening to our elders, and the elders are passing away, and the youth go to town to find jobs, and why do they need the language, why do they need traditional ecological knowledge? It has no relevance to their new life in the modern world. These are all of the problems that we are looking at.

DH: (7:35) Allowing yourself to free your thinking from those problems for a little while, what is the alternative?

DM: (7:43) Thank you, I appreciate that, I would like to do that! (laughter)

DH: (7:52) Yea, it's hard isn't it? What is the alternative, what is a more positive, hopeful vision for how things could be?

DM: (7:56) I am glad you asked that question. I touched on it in the last few sentences I made, but the solution, the solutions are many, because the problems are many. And I mentioned, many visions are needed to make a complete vision, we know we can't just rely on our own knowledge and our own values alone, our own vision alone, we need to team up with non-Indian and western science and all of that. The first thing that needs to be done, I think, and it is something I work very hard on, I manage to get credibility from science for traditional knowledge. That is not easy, there's a few scientists, a few ecologists, for example, that are interested in TEK. And they see the value because it is about local places, and it is stuff that most scientists don't get to do very long in one place, which is the observation of natural phenomenon, species and so on, over not just a few months, once a year in the summer on the academic calendar and on the foundation funding calendar and priorities, but rather to have been there and depended on that land generation after generation, and they have something to offer science. Most western scientists don't recognize that, so I have spent a lot of my time both locally, nationally and internationally bringing people together: indigenous presenters, knowledge holders, knowledge specialists, and community leaders to science conferences, and so far we have been fairly successful in getting a toehold. We now have a TEK Section for the Ecological Society of America for four years. We are putting on all kinds of events and presentations; Society for

Ecological Restoration International, we have been doing that for seventeen years; Society for Conservation Biology is still difficult, we are starting to work on that; also, SACNAS, the Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science, I'm very active in that; I have been very active in the past in AISES, American Indian Science and Engineering Society, with Vine Deloria, Jr. We were the traditional knowledge council, and he was the chair at that time, in the nineties. So we are looking at establishing visibility, and establishing therefore hopefully some credibility, and if we can do that, the long term strategy of change in this area is that if we convince enough scientists and enough environmentalists, and the big environmental NGO's-we call them BINGOS, big environmental NGO's-who look the other way when indigenous people are relocated from their homelands, to make way for parks and reserves, and then do bad things because they are poor, and they are put on restricted land base, poorer land, almost always. I'm thinking of the Masai in Kenya, and Ngorongoro Crater National Park, where they ran cattle for three thousands years, sustainably, because they could move around, like the Navajo could once move around and not erode the soil through overgrazing, which happened in the thirties, right? They had a seven year drought, also. And the government killed ninety percent of their livestock without any prior consultation, which is a pretty amazing fact--still older Navajo's have never forgotten that. They had the means to do that in the older days, just like animals had the means to move around, e.g. so elephants didn't terrorize villages and eat up all the crops and so on. All of that has changed, and people are on restricted areas. I mentioned the Milpa agroecology rotations, in Belize, they now do 12 years, and they used to do 80 to 100 years. This is the problem: how do you survive on these poor lands when you are kicked out of your homeland? And there is not even firm legal boundaries, recognized by state governments, nation states as to where people really rightfully own the land. We have treaties here, and we have boundaries pretty well demarcated, but those treaties haven't been honored, and those land demarcations have not been honored. They have been increasingly intruded upon, and this is happening all over the world. So if we can convince western science of the value of these people, and their traditional places, carrying on their traditional land care practices, their TLPs, and their traditional knowledge, their TEK, we hope that we can make an impression on the environmental people, who are the one's who are saying keep people out of the woods, keep people away from nature because all that they do is damage it, which is patently untrue. Some have, but many have not, many have done a damn good job. We need to learn from those people. So we can do that much. Maybe they won't look the other way, Conservation International, the Nature Conservancy, World Wildlife Fund, whatever, they won't look the other way when people are forcibly removed from their homelands. That is a very important priority. That is one tack. (12:58)

We need to find ways of learning from indigenous agro-ecological systems, agro-forestry systems, agricultural crop varieties that have been tended for sometimes thousands of years. The kinds of variety, local varieties of crops, genotypes that are very well adapted to particular places, we are losing those because of globalization. We need to reverse NAFTA, and GATT (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade), and WTO (World Trade Organization), Central American Free Trade Treaty now, and so on, because all of these treaties are for the benefit of the wealthy, the benefit of the corporations. There is no free trade, there is no unregulated free trade, everything is stacked in favor of the rich, in this country in the last thirty years, particularly since Reagan. While the wealth of the world is increasing, the poverty of the people that work the land all over the world, billions of people is decreasing, they are losing. That is something that needs to be reversed because while trade is fine, so called unregulated trade, with no

protection for local economies and so on, which has been the major motif in Latin America since day one, it's still going on. It's like Russia's influence on eastern and central Europe, so the US influence on Latin America is the same. The state, in the case of Russia, got better. Corporations are getting wealthier, countries bend over backwards to attract the foreign capital, for an investment, they give them every advantage, as do cities and towns here in the United States and elsewhere in the developed world, *at the expense of their own people*. It is a matter of finding some common ground between trade that is really fair on a level playing field and people's ability to be reasonably self-sufficient, to engage in subsistence activities, as well as trade market activities. We need to bring those two things together in ways that work in individual places, or individual communities. You wouldn't believe the number of people in this world now working on these problems, David. It's all over, but we don't hear about them. We simply don't hear about it, it's not in the goddamned media, I can tell you that, not even on NPR, and not even sometimes on community radio, which we can't get here, unfortunately. It's a real problem, it's part of that rural environmental crisis that I talked about. US influence on Mexico for example, and Mexico now on its states, has centralized everything and has pushed industrialization, and people simply can't make ends meet anymore. The price of corn is going up, tortillas are going up, that is the mainstay in Mexico, the mainstay. Subsistence corn planting is far more important for most campesinos than any market because they can always have their corn to eat, if the market is bad. And then the institutional changes in the world that favor corporations, industrialization, and so on, at the expense of local farming activities and subsidies that they used to get in Mexico. And the gutting of Article 27 in the Mexican constitution that has allowed people to keep the ejido in collective hands and not in private hands. The state of Veracruz now has 100% privatized ejido, 1/3 of all of the ejidos in Mexico are privatized now, and it is beginning to effect the Yucatan and Calakmul, and other places. And the institutional supports for small farmers, for campesinos, small holders, are almost nil now. So this is a huge problem. People are suffering like you couldn't believe, and they come to the US to work. And I have only heard twice on any media, that the reason that we have 12 million illegals is because of US policies in Mexico, and because of NAFTA. This was predicted by Mexican economists in the nineties that I read; it was clear that 10 million would be displaced. Now the program of the Mexican government, with US support, is to liquidate their farmers, and they are going to go industrial. They want the hard currency and so on, but it is really for the benefit of US based multinational corporations, more than for the Mexican people, period. And that is another thing that has to be worked on.

DH: (17:20) You mentioned the phrase a "restoration economy." Is that the alternative and what might that look like?

DM: (17:28) That is one alternative, a tribe that has no land base cannot be expected to do restoration economy. But the ones that do, we really strive to get people interested in the non-timber products, the smaller diameter timber, the plants that are not in violation of their own sacred laws against commercialization. It is up to each individual to decide which plants should be commercialized and which plants are totally not be commercialized, like Osha root, and others that are really important to the people. It all depends on the community, and within each Indian community, and anywhere in the world, you will find a whole spectrum of opinion ranging from "if you don't use it, you lose it," which has some truth in it, to "I would rather see a plant or animal go extinct than have a white person find out about it, commercially." That is the

range of opinions on this, and we work within that kind of context to get some kind of economic development going. Casinos are not necessarily bad, in many ways they have been good. There have been some bad contracts made, therefore the tribe doesn't make much, and therefore doesn't share with the people. Sometimes they don't share with the people because of greed of the tribal council. And sometimes, they have everyone in school with health care, free, with a stipend every year of several thousand dollars, etc, etc, etc. The idea is that if you lose your land, you find any way you can to earn the income to bring it back, to earn the money to bring it back, to buy it back. And that is what is happening. I work with a lot of tribes, especially in California, that are buying back their land with casino money. If they happen to have the good luck it will be on a well-traveled highway. If they don't, they're fucked. And if they don't have much of a land base there is not much that they can do other than go to town to work.

DH: (19:14) What else are you hopeful in terms of the vision or your personal vision? You mentioned this idea of needing many visions, can you say more about your personal vision that you would like to contribute to the many that are needed?

DM: (19:27) You're hearing a good part of it. (laughter)

DH: (19:30) Right, and I just want to get as much out of it as I can. (laughter)

DM: (19:36) Right, right... There are so many things that you know you can look at: balancing the two worlds and gaining some credibility for traditional knowledge and revising our globalization strategies so that people and the environment are also given their fair share of the benefits of that globalization, and not at their expense. Those are the main issues; the loss of knowledge and the environmental crisis, the need to bring science and TEK together for the mutual benefit to all of humanity. It is no longer a color issue, it's not an ethnic issue, it is a humanitarian issue at this time. That's my vision: we need to share the visions that we have, what we put together, with all people. Many Indian leaders are doing just that: Thomas Banyacya, Hopi; Wallace Black Elk, Lakota; Vine Deloria, Lakota; Bill Tall Bull, Northern Cheyenne, these people are all gone, but these were the people that were my mentors, and I *really* believe that there are many more people like that coming up. Even though youth is having a terrific problem for the reasons I gave, there's some youth that are really outstanding. All the tribes have stories of when humans got greedy, when they took too much, when they hurt each other, when they didn't love their own community, and when they killed people. The Peacemaker that came to the Six Nations, the Iroquois, is an example of that. When fire came, when flood came, the devastation came and this has happened four times (and sometimes for tribes) five times in the history of human beings on this Earth. People need to come back to a peaceful life, come back to a place where they can correct some of the wrongs that have been done, but if that doesn't happen we're going to have the same problems in the future. Climate change, if you throw that in you are really talking quite a lethal mix with these two crises that I have mentioned already. They need to be tackled, not separately but collectively, because they are all interrelated. In those times when times were bad and there were calamities, there were always a few people that came through this cultural bottleneck and they became great leaders, like the Peacemaker. They taught the people, like Jesus taught the people, you know, it was the same thing. They taught the people to love one another, to care for one another, and there are many stories like this in the indigenous world. Now the Elders say that when we pray we pray

for everyone. You never used to hear that, they pray for everyone, because we are all in this together, and as my Takelma elder--Chairwoman of the "13 Indigenous Grandmothers"-- Aggie (Agnes Pilgrim) says, "We've got a pretty leaky canoe. We need to beach that canoe, build a new one, and repack our baggage, and learn to steer a little better before we go over the falls going down stream." That's how critical it is.

DH: (22:46) That's an interesting analogy, the canoe analogy. So this other canoe that we need to build; what other characteristics do you see us needing to incorporate into the design of that canoe?

DM: (23:08) We need mutual trust and respect, and in Western knowledge systems--especially in practice--that doesn't exist. Another tack to take, I mentioned that before, but I want to emphasize it; it is very important that we have mutual respect, without that mutual respect nothing can be done, believe me. People are still hung up on the ridiculous, trivial stuff that is now coming out in the presidential campaign. Outside of Kucinich, maybe Edwards, I am not too impressed. People are stuck on the wrong things; you know they are stuck on burning the flag, or gay marriage, or illegal immigration, which the US is responsible for along with the Mexican government, right? They are not talking about the issues, even Kucinich who is so good on the need for green technology for massive government programs to address climate change, and bio-fuel alternatives and so on, even he doesn't talk about what is happening to the land. It's suffering, the land is suffering, all of our relatives are suffering, the plants and animals are suffering out there, because we are not taking care of them. We are not taking care of the land. It's not some wilderness. If the old people ever came back to this land and looked at the forest they would not recognize their homelands. They would call it a wilderness, they would call it a trashy place, they do today call it a trashy place; people are not taking care of it. In the old days you would go out with the elders and they would say: "We used to be able to see 300ft this way and that way. Now we can't even see in front of us, and we are worried about cougar attacks, we are worried about bear attacks, because we don't know what is around us any more." That is another problem.

DH: (24:45) In terms of solutions, with these problems in mind, are there any good examples on the ground that you can speak to?

DM: (25:07) Yes, there are, there are many good examples on the ground. They're small yet, but they don't make the media. There's many examples, near you in Oregon for example: the work that Grand Ronde is doing with their watershed restoration program; the work the Umatilla is doing with theirs; the Warm Springs with their forestry program, just to give you three examples right off the top of my head in your area. Yeah, all over the world these things are happening, but the odds against success on any scale are so large that it's an uphill battle. That is why I say we need mutual respect we need to respect each other's knowledge systems and ways so that we can work together to solve these problems and an important part of that working together is the knowledge that the Indigenous people have, that have lived sustainably for so long in one place. Villages sometimes being hundreds of years in one place out in the wild--if they weren't sustainable they wouldn't be there, right? We can learn from them, and all we need is the credibility, the trust that they have something to offer too. We are talking about 99.9999% of our human heritage that has been basically disrupted and is in the process of being lost only within

the last 500 years! And on a larger scale 8,000 years for agriculture, but that is just a short time. We are loosing our collective heritage rapidly right now and I think if people realized how critical it was; if they were told just what was going on, in politics especially, that would be great. But we don't have that, we don't even have an alternative party that is any good, that has any following, there is no movement. Even within John Edwards's camp there is a semblance of a movement, but it not like it was in 60's I can tell you that. You got me going on politics (laughter). Iowa caucus today, you know?

DH: (27:05) Right, we'll see where that story goes in the near future.

DM: (27:10) Right, I am dying to find out. But those issues are not brought up that is my point, not brought up. Kucinich has done the best job, but even he is far from where we need to be. And Gore who was at Rio, and I heard him speak at Rio just beautifully about indigenous knowledge and value of indigenous ways, still underneath pushes through NAFTA with Clinton. It is unbelievable. This issue of sustainability in other words, David, is tied up with everything that we could talk about.

DH: (27:39) Say that again?

DM: (27:42) This issue with sustainability is tied up with about any subject you want to bring up. In fact, in Alaska if you, as a scientist researcher, if you talk about climate change in just biophysical terms you're not going to get very far. People will talk about every else under the Sun: the society, the culture, the economic livelihood, the situation, everything, hunting, fishing, you name it. Because we make that connection constantly, we don't separate out these different kinds of knowledge and policies, opinions and so on, we link them together constantly. That is a major difference between Indigenous thinking and Western thinking. Now they are learning: Systems theory, it's very interesting--you are in Systems somewhat. The one that started that was at UC Berkley when I was there, and I can't remember his name--I'm blanking on it--and it was so fought against by the faculty because they thought he was lowering standards in every discipline by having a systems approach, a multi-disciplinary approach. Now there is a lot of talk about, multi-disciplinary approaches, all the time; the ID team at the forest service, the BLM and all that, interdisciplinary teams. But to *do it*, to really be holistic is not easy for this society to do. By the way are you acquainted with Allan Savory and Holistic Resource Management at New Mexico?

DH: (29:04) Not intimately, but I have heard of him.

DM: (29:08) He's taken a holistic approach in sustainable range management. There is a lot that is going on but it has not yet been that effective in changing things.

DH: (29:19) Let's talk a little more about the educational system, and what you would like to see the kinds of changes in the educational system; from elementary/primary school, up through higher education. What are your thoughts and what would you like to see?

DM: (29:39) I touched on that a little bit before with Bi-Cultural Science Education. I think in terms of the language, and they've done this in Canada very well, there are 225 indigenous

schools, First Nation schools in Canada. They teach the first four years of primary school on the reserve in the Native language. The fifth year they start bringing in English or French or both because they are a bi-lingual country. First they learn their own native tongue, that's extremely important. Secondly, I mentioned Greg Cajete and IAIA University in New Mexico and Science Program where he begins with traditional values and knowledge and then expands to pair Western science and TEK and any given scientific topic; astronomy, wildlife management, well-being and health and medicine, and whatever. That way people get both at the same time. Obviously, we don't expect that to happen in the public schools--they still have textbooks that are totally inaccurate and some attempts have been made to change that and its happening slowly in some places but by and large Indians are invisible, and their culture and history is totally invisible, and there is a lot of misinformation out there. That needs to change. Thirdly, we need to go to the schools, and I've done this many times and a lot of Indian leaders have too, they've gone to public schools and talked to the white kids and talked to them about Indians. They expect you to come in with your buckskins and they expect you to live in a tepee, or they didn't expect to see you at all because Indians are supposed to be gone. This needs to change also. In the very beginning of education people need education about their own heritage. Their own heritage in North America includes Indian people, yet it seems that it all started in 1492, and everything else is a blank, except if you are a scientist and you are studying paleo-hunters or whatever (laughter). That is another problem.

DH: (31:38) So, I am wondering if we could get away from thinking in terms of the problems and thinking more in terms of...

DM: (31: 45) I just gave you three solutions. To your question, what more can I do?

DH: (31:54) Right, I know, and the idea that I am hoping to really cultivate is staying with the positive.

DM: (32:04) Staying with the positive? How can you tackle the positive without first knowing what the negative is and dealing with that?

DH: (32:12) Right, okay. I am sensing your energy, and I love how you have become energized over the course of this conversation speaking about all the problems there are and all the issues there are. One question that has been on my mind throughout this is whether or not you are hopeful?

DM: (32:36) Yes I am. I am hopeful

DH: (32:39) What makes you hopeful?

DM: (32:41) Why? Because as I said during other times when people have done bad things and had calamities befall them, there have always been people who have come through, who are spiritually wise people. And we have that in our youth today, believe me we have it. Not in most youth but in a minority of youth. But that minority, I think Margaret Mead said, "it only takes a few committed people to change the world. It always has." It doesn't take everyone. It is still true. If things get so bad people are forced to change against their will, and we are rapidly

approaching that place, and I think at some point we are going to be. As they say if you are an alcoholic, you get sober when you are sick and tired of being sick and tired. I believe that that is going to happen, not everywhere. In other words, I see the restoration work that I have been involved in for almost 40 years, the work that other have been involved in, Indian or non-Indian, Indigenous or non-indigenous, the Indigenous people are trying to preserve their knowledge, and their languages and the culture and their identity and all that. All these people are really doing good work, but what we are creating is *refugia*. A simple, example if you do ecological restoration, which is my profession, and you are looking at one project site, and you are ignoring the pre-contact landscape, it's not going to be as healthy as it was in its reference condition (what to restore back to), say pre-historical times, pre-contact time. We go back to a reference condition, then we use that as an initial guide, and then because the landscape level has changed; fragmentation, exotic species, acid rain, whatever. Then we back track a bit and do what we can in a smaller area (which is always limited in how close we can come to the reference condition by the greater landscape scale condition) knowing that it isn't up to the full optimum that it used to be when it was connected in a good way with other good parts of the landscape. That doesn't exist in most places right now, so the best we can do right now is to preserve, conserve, restore. The first imperative is to conserve because once you wreck a place you are not going to get the same place back ever, but you need to get the main features of that place back, in structure composition, processes, function and integrity with restoration. We need to get the main stuff back as best we can, given a fragmented degraded landscape. The best we can do is less than perfect but it is important. It's important that we have some places that people can go to and say this is how the forest should be, or this is how it used to be a long time ago--kind of like this. People that are committed to helping their own communities--people that are committed to working on the land and improving it and bettering it and everything, not just for themselves but for the whole world because we are truly a global village now--those people need to be encouraged because they too are refugia of love and kindness and spirituality and caring and commitment, that the world is largely losing right now because of all the problems that they are facing in day-to-day life (35:42). That is why I am hopeful, because I know that it may not happen in one or two or even three generations, but it's going to come a time when those places will be valuable, people will look back and say that is what they were trying to do, and we honor them for that. We can take a cue from their work. That is the best we can do in this generation. But this generation is critical because this generation must set the direction in that way toward the refugia idea, the restoration idea, the preservation idea. We've got to do this now because if we don't do this now, get going on those tracks and learn as much as we can as fast as we can, then it is going to be too late. I believe we are doing that now even though it is not widely visible, because I travel a lot and I see these things too.

DH: (36:31) Any ideas on how to make these things more visible?

DM: (36:39) Getting in schools as I mentioned earlier. We need the true history of American Indians in the United States, which we don't have yet. Just for starters. Then we need the acceptance of scientists of traditional knowledge. Not by all scientists, but enough influential ones. We don't expect to convert the world; that has never been a realistic program for any movement. What is important is to get the right people involved in the right places doing the right things for as long as they can, and for future generations to build on that idea. I think there is a consciousness slowly seeping into the American public in which they are realizing that in

fact, “yes, we are going to have to change a few things if we are going to survive.” Of course, climate change is the main factor. The other things that I mentioned, the loss of knowledge, and the world environmental crisis (except in the sustainable agriculture and social justice movements), unfortunately aren’t on the radar at all yet, and they need to be...(37:37) And, the ceremonies; keep going to the ceremonies, keep the prayers and the ceremonies up. This is extremely important that people have that spiritual connection. We also need to expand that kind of spirituality into the natural world as well.

DH: (37:48) Say more about that, “expand spirituality into the natural world...”

DM: (37:51) Expand the spirituality that we have in our ceremonies where we bring in the plants and the animals as co-creators in the ceremony, and they are present in the ceremony. When we go out in the woods to do whatever we do, we need to retain the same spiritual appreciation and respect for the natural world, and not go for short-term economic fast track gains at the expense of long-term ecology and economy. So there is no separation between spirit and matter as I said before. None.

DH: (38:27) Right, and the ceremonies can be a touch-stone...

DM: (38:31) A vehicle for reaching that consciousness and experience of spirituality, because it is going to carry over into how you treat other people. You’re in psychology, I will give you a simple example; if you are in a good place, a really good place, say it is after a ceremony or sweat-lodge, and you walk into a room of people that you walked into the same room a few days before the ceremony, and you got some indifferent or some hostile looks, or people weren’t responding to you, and you walk in charged up with that spirit, everyone is going to be affected by that. You are going to have a different kind of response to you as a person because you have that spirit of love inside you. All world religions, *all world religions* have preached that, that’s nothing new. And it is still important, and more important than ever.

DH: (39:26) So, the cultural ceremonies are a key vehicle as you say to help cultivate that feeling...

DM: (39:34) Yes, of well being, of love, of responsibility, of commitment.

DH: (39:47) Can you talk a little more about that in terms of how our patterns of relationships with one another and with the landscape might differ if we are coming from that kind of a place?

DM: (39:58) I think we can consider kincentricity, consider kinship, home, “all our relations” in every ceremony. If we consider that as being the paramount value we have, then everything we do, everything we think about and so on, and the ways we derive our economic livelihoods, we should make every effort to include our relatives in a respectful way, and do things that promote their welfare. That is coming from a spiritual place.

DH: (40:28) And it’s not hard to imagine everything would be quite different if that was...

DM: (40:35) Jesus said: “love your neighbor as yourself.” Just think about how the world would be if people did that, eh?

DH: (40:41) You started early on explaining something of your own personal worldview in terms of seeing things as constantly changing, and us as co-creators, and so this notion seems to fit in with that quite well; appreciating the potential impact that could have by acting from a spiritual place and with a central value of kinship as participants in this ongoing process.

DM: (41:15) Right. It is an on-going and continually changing process. Here where sustainability comes in, an ability to adapt successfully to the changes, and now we have changes outside of what we say in ecology: outside the range of historical and natural variability, big time. When you have 5000 trees an acre and you had 20 in Arizona in the same spot 150 years ago you have a problem. We’ve never seen that. What we are looking at, because of extractive activities in logging and overgrazing is a gigantic experiment in secondary succession. Grazing isn’t necessarily bad in itself, but it can be. Ranching can be good, it can also be bad, like anything...The capacity to adapt to change, these are things that we are now having great difficulty doing because the rapidly growing frequency of change; and the intensity of the change is so high that we have a hard time adjusting. We are in a crisis because we no longer have a “normal” ecological situation, or normal cultural one for that matter, for the most part. So we need to look at how we can address these major crises, and we have to do it inter-generationally. We have to think seven generations, as the saying goes, we have to think: “We are not just doing this for ourselves so much as we are doing it for our children and their children, and their children.” It’s a cliché, and everyone says it but we have to really do it, really mean it. Because it is not just one generation shot, it is many. Restoration is no longer just a landscape project. In town landscaping is how I started. Landscape restoration is community based and it’s inter-generational. It has to be. I have been doing this work for almost 40 years I am active in the field internationally, I am one of the leaders in the restoration movement internationally. I work on the definitions, the policies, and so on through Society for Ecological Restoration and many other groups. That experience is teaching me...this knowledge is teaching me some patience, because I have never seen a place that has ever been truly restored to optimum ecological conditions. They don’t exist. (44:09) I will give you an example the Curtis Prairie, Tall Grass Prairie Project started in the 1930’s at the University of Wisconsin in the Arboretum, has only 65% after tender loving care for all of these decades, only 65% of the typical composition of pre-contact time tall grass prairie. As a side thought on that, I was up at Walpole Reserve Island, which is in Ontario, just opposite Detroit, there is an island called Walpole Reserve, Three Fires Reserve with Ottawa, Potawatomi, and Anishnabeg (Ojibway), and they never stopped burning-- in the spring is when they burn there, we burn in the fall here. They never stopped burning and all 60 some endangered plants in Ontario, everyone was there in quantity in this 2200 hectare site, and they have never stopped burning. The Indians didn’t think much about it because they had always done it. Like being a suburbanite mowing your grass in the summer twice a week is just what you do, right? If you didn’t you would have a problem. Botanists from all over the world were coming there because they couldn’t believe how that kind of species richness and diversity actually occurred. It is because they never abandoned the traditional burning. We need places like that, that are going to continue like that, people are going to continue doing what they did traditionally, or start doing it again.

DH: (45:30) Are there any other indicators that come to mind that might help us to see that we are on the right track?

DM: (45:36) Well, in working with indigenous communities--and I won't go into the larger society--I will say in indigenous communities the cultural indicators are the well being in the community, these are as important as the ecological indicators for the well being of the ecosystem, whether you are taking marine or terrestrial, I work in both areas. Because, if the community doesn't have their shit together, they are not going to be able to successfully conserve or restore. Having their shit together means that they have good leadership that is strong, and determined, and knowledgeable; that they have good alliances with universities and western scientist that can help them; that the children are taking some role in the work that is being done in the community in conservation and restoration; that stories are still being told; that alcohol and drugs have not taken over the community; that people have adequate income, and that people share their income and share wealth. How they do that among the ejidos, for example, especially traditional Mayan people, is that you are allotted an amount of land--it could be a hectare it could be two, three, four, depending on how many mouths you've got to feed and what your needs are--and there is a collective area that everyone contributes to, and there is the individual family area. In that land tenure system, it's a harmony between the collective and the individual that is so important, and it's something we don't have among reservations and reserves in Canada and US. Because we have too many obstacles, legal ones put by BIA and Congress preventing Indians from being successful entrepreneurs. We need that, but we also need the collective approach, and not one that can be bought off by the corporations or the government, one that is solid in their traditional values. (47:20) So land tenure may be the most important thing, the way I just described it, for the success of indigenous sustainability because everyone is responsible for the area that is theirs to take care of and they are also responsible with other people for the collective areas. When Garrett Harden wrote, "*The Tragedy of the Commons*," and by the way he corrected himself a few years later by writing another book called "*The Tragedy of the Unmanaged Commons*." People for years were saying, "Gosh, collective stuff doesn't work, look what happened to communal smallholders, referring to the UK during the enclosure movements, and the peasants were kicked out of their lands, and out of the forests, (which became hunting preserves for the nobles). And rich people, the nobles took over, the lords took over the land for sheep on peasant communal lands (and undercut the traditional regulatory structure of turf responsibility for a part of the commons) but they weren't given responsibility for the caretaking of those places and resources that they used to have--if everyone uses the resources, no one is responsible for its upkeep. You take as much as you want. Therefore, there was a tragedy: they lost their livelihoods and the ecology began collapsing and everything else (enclosures of peasant communal lands were driven by the perceived need by the rich to shorter fallows and change to "scientific farming"--like now with globalization). But if people learn to work together both collectively and individually and they take responsibility as a family or a individual or a clan of their own particular fishing spot, or hunting place, or gathering patch, there is a much better chance that that place will be sustainably managed and harvested over generations. That was the main success, or reason for the sustainability of indigenous farming (which is now facing government programs to shorten fallows and intensify cropping cycles, e.g. swidden agriculture in the 3rd world).

DH: (49:03) Any other cultural indicators?

DM: (49:07) Well, I named quite a few. I would say where the elders still have a voice and they are not neglected, or spit upon as they are in this country. There is a lot of ageism. I am 66 and I am beginning to see that; I wasn't as aware of it until recently. Respect for the elders is very important. Respect for the women is very important. That is extremely important because women are so important in true traditional indigenous society. Respect for the children.

DH: (49:45) You also mentioned earlier the importance of learning Native Language...

DM: (49:55) Yes. The reason is that the language expresses things that other foreign languages can't. When the language goes you lose so much knowledge, besides the pride that people have with having their own language and their own sovereignty as a Native people. They lose the knowledge from their own place. There are a lot of things you can't say in English, or a foreign language, in indigenous languages. I don't speak an indigenous language, I know a lot of words from several times being around Indian people a lot, but I really respect the people that still have their own language because I wasn't brought up that way. I was in a de-tribalized, non-reservation type of situation. People who still have that knowledge, and there are so few left, in Oregon and California there are almost none, two or three or four max, maybe in each community. That is a sad thing. An example is the English word "management". It can never capture the full spiritual reciprocity of kincentricity that Native words can.

DH: (50:35) We've talked a couple times about identity, there is an exercise from psychology that draws out characteristics of identity through "I am" statements. I am wondering if you can imagine yourself as member of a community that has really made great strides towards achieving a restoration economy, or achieving some of these core principles of sustainability as you've discussed. How might their identity be expressed through some I am statements, what might some of those be?

DM: (51:28) You mean me personally? (Better "We are", not "I am"--a more Western ideology)

DH: (51:30) Not necessarily you personally, but the people of a community that have achieved some of these cultural indicators you just outlined: how might they expressed their identity through some "I am" statements?

DM (51:45). Okay...can we hold right there for a minute, I need to adjust the fire...

--break--

DM: (0:17) I will express it like this: the things that are important to me are the connections that we make between ourselves and other people and ourselves and the land, the relationship. To the extent that I have been able to learn about ecology, to learn the cultures, which has been just a wonderful experience and I treasure that and the people that I have come to know, the elders that I've learn from, my mentors and so on. I have come to a much greater understanding of what needs to be done in this world, and I think when people learn what is going on that they are better able to take action. That is important and it gives them confidence, and without

confidence, and trust, and hope, and courage, you can't make change happen. Many people, Indian people especially have simply given up, and that is too bad. They said, "this is it, this is the way of the world, the modern secular way is where it is. If we are going to survive then the kids need to know English or French or Spanish, and they need to get with the program." I think people need confidence that there are other ways, and those alternative ways are going to help the larger society because we are unfortunately linked up with them; what they do effects us. I remember a time when I was talking at a conference back east and came back to the reservation where I was living at the time in California, the Pomo Indian Reservation called Coyote Valley. The lady in the family that I always stayed with, they appreciated what we were doing--we were doing a lot of good things locally, but when I went out there and talked to scientists about the Indian plants and animals, she said, "Why are you telling these people, white people about our plants?" And I said, "Because remember when they widened Highway 101 out there, there used to be Indian Clover and Mugwort all over the place." Indian Clover is very rare and it was very treasured at one time, several generations ago. People used to get out on hands and knees and eat it first thing in the spring because everything else was stale and old or non-existent. I said, "*they*" meaning the state of California, "decided to do something that effected your plants and if *they* don't understand the importance of those plants both ecologically and culturally they are going to continue to impact you negatively." I think that the woman I was talking to got the point. The reservation is like a barrio, it's like a ghetto; it had the advantage of conserving a lot of the culture, sometimes it was only one or two families that conserved it--in the case of Siletz that was true, just very few people. Those same people are teaching other people now, so it's coming back, including the language. Like Lawrence Bomylen from Smith River, Tolowa Indian--there is a person that needs to be honored. Anyhow, I was on the subject of holding onto that knowledge. The reservation as a barrio has been good in one way, which is the preserving of the culture, and the ceremonies and the language to some extent, because it all would have been gone a lot sooner if there hadn't been the reservation system, I tell you, because there was support. But, it has also fostered a sense of distrust to the wider world and an inability to work even with other tribes often, and it is terribly divided within the reservation community with even real hostility happening many times. There are also a lot of good things happening and great people, but there are also some real problems, because people don't trust the outer world at all, and it is for good reason that they don't trust the outer world at all. But people have got to learn to do that; they have got to learn to trust the outer world because otherwise they will remain in the ghetto mentality and they're not going to lead to any real improvement. You can't blame the white man anymore. Something Malcolm X told black people, he was so right on: "You are going to have to do it yourself, freedom is not given, freedom is won." (5:10) We take the initiative, but we still have to learn to work with the dominant culture.

DH: (5:18) My last question was just whether there was any points from our conversation that you'd like to emphasize or any final thoughts to add before we close?

--break in recording--

DM: (0:12) One thing that is really important is enforcement of reserve treaty rights. With treaty rights you guarantee an access to hunting, fishing and gathering. Even public lands, owned and operated by BLM, and Forest Service, and Parks, that if they just honored the treaties, believe me it would have enormous legal significance in three ways that are very important. One is equity.

We are talking about environmental justice issues, social justice issues. Equity meaning co-management where lands have been ceded to public land agencies, nation states, or where they have been stolen, or whatever, outside of private land holdings which you can't do much about without permission from the land owner in the US--you can in Europe but not here--I think people could work as equals with the agencies--and that is another part of the work that I do, as a liaison between traditional peoples and communities and the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management and so on--to co-manage their ancestral lands that have been taken by the government. Number two, if they had *access* to those places, meaning they can go hunt, fish and gather, and not be stopped. And the capacity, three, to use traditional management tools--the word "management" sucks but traditional land care employs the tools to take better care of that environment, such as burning. If those three things came out of enforcement of reserve treaty rights, we would have enormous benefit to tribes' economic situation in addition cultural and spiritual. Because subsistence hunting and fishing, which I have experienced as a young person, was the main way of our eating food, and we ate well. The unemployment on many rez's it is up to 50%--in San Carlos, Apache, where I worked once it is 90%. If people have some access to supplement their meager earnings they get in border towns, or whatever, with subsistence hunting and fishing and gathering on public lands that are ceded to the government, but were formally ancestral lands, this would be a tremendous boon to their livelihood success, and taking care of the land at the same time. The land connection reinforces traditional values. Those are some things that I should have mentioned but I didn't. I think that it is extremely important.

DH: Great. Any other final thoughts or points to emphasize in closing?

DM: No, I've said what I needed to say, and you've got it recorded, and that's the main thing.

DH: Thank you so much for your time today, Mr. Martinez, I appreciate it

DM: You are welcome and good luck with your project and your Ph.D. Go out there and change the world! (laughter)

DH: With confidence, right?

DM: With confidence, and hope, you better believe it! And love.

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