

Transformational Adaptation wi... 2023 San Diego Climate Summit

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SPEAKERS

Dr. Amber Pairis, Nikki Cooley, Paula Ezcurra, Richelle Ellis, Althea Walker, Doug Parsons, Laura Engeman, Amy Larson, Dr. Megan Jennings, Martha Rodriguez, Angela Mooney D±™ Arcy



Doug Parsons 00:00

Hi everyone this is America adapts the climate change podcast Hey adapters, welcome back to another exciting episode we're learning about transformational adaptation with the Climate Science Alliance. I recently attended their climate summit in California, which was hosted at the beautiful San Diego Natural History Museum. The event explored tribal approaches to adaptation and highlights the Alliance's unique and inspiring partnership approach to adaptation planning partnerships are a theme you'll hear repeatedly from the expert guests in this episode. The Summit also highlighted the intersection of art and its role in climate adaptation. It was a one day Summit. So some of the interviews were conducted on site and more soon after the event. I was too busy following the discussions to interview everyone I wanted to add the actual Summit. Join us on this insightful journey as we navigate the intricate web of climate science, tribal wisdom, and the transformative power of partnerships. But before we get started, I wanted to give you a heads up on the next Patel innovations and climate resilience conference or ICR 24 Patel is presenting their third annual innovations and climate resilience conference with the theme solutions for scaling change that captures the urgency and the growing need for innovations at scale. To meet the monumental task of addressing climate change. The conference will take place on April 22 to April 24 2024. In Washington, DC ICR 24 will gather innovators across industry, academia, and government. This is a second ICR that I'll be covering for Patel. We partnered on an episode for ICR 23 in Columbus, Ohio, and I'm excited to announce a continuation of that partnership. It was a fantastic event and one of the few adaptation conferences where there was such a corporate and industry presidents alongside academia and government. Okay, so the call for abstracts is now open. You won't want to miss this and you need to act soon. The themes of the conference are mitigation, sustainability. And yes, adaptation I see are 24 is your opportunity to join scientists and researchers from industry, government and academia working at the forefront of climate innovation. So here's your chance to share your important work. Submit your abstract today and present with leading experts around the world and responding to climate change. Visit patel.org Ford slash adapt to submit an abstract or learn more. That's patel.org Ford slash adapt. Links are in my show notes support for America. daps comes from Battelle where

science and technology are applied to help create a safer, healthier, more resilient world. Okay, let's talk transformational adaptation with the Climate Science Alliance. Joining me is my friend Dr. Amber Paris. Amber is the founder and lead advisor of the Climate Science Alliance. Hey, Amber, welcome to the podcast.

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Dr. Amber Paris 02:52

Thanks so much for having us. I'm so excited to talk with you today.

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Doug Parsons 02:55

Amber, we go way back. And so I finally get you on the podcast. And I'm excited to have you tell your story about the Alliance. We're going to the summit, you're there in San Diego. And I'm going to visit and I wanted to just do a short introductory discussion about what's it all about, then you and Althea Walker, someone there at the alliance is going to come on at the end. And we're really going to dig into the details how you guys do adaptation at the Alliance. But first off, what is the Climate Science Alliance.

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Dr. Amber Paris 03:21

So the Climate Science Alliance was an organization that I created about nine years ago after having worked in this field for almost 20 years, which is terrifying to say, Doug, because you're in that if you're in that long list of having done this for a long time, but having worked in federal and state government and academia and NGO, I just finally got to this space where I felt like I didn't have the traction that I wanted, I wasn't really being able to invest my energy and expertise the way I wanted, I wasn't seeing the change I really wanted to see. And so the idea was to create the climate science lines to be this place where we could bring two people together, whether that was researchers or managers, artists, or educators, NGOs, foundations, it was a place where we could come together to build resilience on a regional scale. And that is exactly what we're doing. It's a really special organization. We think of ourselves as boundary spanning but really we're we're bridge builders, we are connectors. And this summit is just a wonderful opportunity to celebrate those relationships and to celebrate the hard work that has taken place and the amazing things that are coming together because of our strong partnerships.

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Doug Parsons 04:25

So we're gonna get into some of the core work that you do at the end of the episode, but just a few more details, like how many staff do you have? How does that all work?

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Dr. Amber Paris 04:32

So we have around 10 staff, some folks are part time some folks are full time most of our team is really based out of San Diego. That's kind of the heart of where we work at it. But we have really wonderful programming across the southwest and in Mexico. We have some folks who

are like Althea based in Arizona, we're all over the place.

D Doug Parsons 04:52

So I'm about to head to San Diego. San Diego is a beautiful city. It's only the second time I've been there. I'm really excited to go there. Let's talk just really briefly Some of the logistics, where it's at Who are you expecting? What kind of Summit? Is it? Like, what's the design. So

D Dr. Amber Pairis 05:06

we hold this summit every other year as a way to celebrate the partnerships to spend time together. But because of COVID, we had to help that. And now this is our first time bringing this summit back together. So we are basing this here in San Diego with a longtime partner at the San Diego Natural History Museum was just given a wonderful opportunity to celebrate both the Conservation Legacy of this region and the incredible work that's happening to bring climate change into that natural and cultural resource management. We're expecting people from a wide very diverse composition of resource managers of planners, of academia, of our leadership of tribes, conservation organizations, it's really a diverse crowd, with a little bit of everything for everyone. We have artists who are coming to the event, starting a pop up show, we have really beautiful, amazing panels, led by our tribal colleagues really talking about the power of transformational adaptation. And we have really wonderful interactive exhibits on all floors of the museum and the museum is a wonderful place to be. So it's really a wonderful setting to come and celebrate together. I'm

D Doug Parsons 06:15

very excited to go and meet all the people there at the alliance and do some interviews and learn what you guys are up to. So I'll see you in San Diego. Amber.

D Dr. Amber Pairis 06:23

Sounds great. See you soon.

D Doug Parsons 06:27

Hey, adapters, we're back. And I'm with Paula Ezcurra . We're here at the summit and it's a bit of a chaotic scene. Tell us what's going on. What are you doing, I see you walking around helping people and figuring out what to do but give us some context there. My

P Paula Ezcurra 06:40

role for today is actually called What's a floater. So a floater is a person that isn't assigned to specific tasks so that they can adapt to the day's needs, and kind of be available for whoever whatever. I'm also a Spanish native speaker, so I can help with our Baja partners that are here

from Mexico that are visiting in case we need to communicate something to them or any other Spanish speaking partner. So I'm really around all hands on deck kind of whoever needs me wherever I'm there.

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Doug Parsons 07:05

This is a really amazing facility help my listeners visualize what's surrounding us. As we get things set up.

P

Paula Ezcurra 07:11

We are in the San Diego Natural History Museum, which is located in Balboa Park in San Diego. And this museum is just incredibly set up. And when you walk right in, you're in a space called the atrium. And that's sort of the core hub where people register, they grab their swag bag, and they start to mingle, there's coffee, there's a live band, there's a Tyrannosaurus Rex, right? When you walk in just facing you, if you look up, you'll see this life size Megalodon floating in the sky. So it's quite the entrance. It's a lot of fun. And it's really the entrance spaces for people to kind of walk in and grab a snack, learn about the alliance and what we do. And then as the day begins, we'll go into the theater. And that space has got this huge screen, mega screen, we'll be doing presentations in there. And then there's the exploration of the whole space. So the entire museum is close to the public, but open to attendees to really explore. So they not only get to see, you know, the museum exhibits and a unique opportunity when it's not open to the public. But throughout the museum, we've kind of hidden away all these little spaces. So there's, you know, tables from partners, sponsors, our own activities, we have a climate, kids hub, all sorts of things all the way to the very top, which is the rooftop where people can go and enjoy the view. And there'll be a climate conversation cards to kind of get people talking about different climate themes and questions. I

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Doug Parsons 08:27

got a couple selfies with that Megalodon. I really liked that thing. I just keep staring at it. How many people are you expecting today?

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Paula Ezcurra 08:33

Today, we were expecting somewhere between 200 250 attendees. So that is people from all over a lot of longtime partners, a lot of new people, young people, students, families, it's really an open event. It's open to the public. And it's not specifically for climate scientists or people with a strong climate background. It's really bringing in the community and people who really do work in climate science who want to connect, and you know, talk about adaptation on all sorts of levels.

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Doug Parsons 09:02

Thanks for coming on the podcast.

P Paula Ezcurra 09:03
Thank you so much.

D Doug Parsons 09:08
Hey, adapters, I'm back. And I'm with

M Martha Rodriguez 09:09
Anna Gloria Rodriguez, aka Martha.

D Doug Parsons 09:12
Can you tell us why you're here at this summit?

M Martha Rodriguez 09:14
Hello. Yes. So I'm founder and CEO to pay NATO Warriors is a native organization. And we work in partnership with the Climate Science Alliance. And then so we are we come to participate. And then we'll bring a group from Baja from different communities. Can

D Doug Parsons 09:32
you tell us a bit more about the region and maybe just a little bit about the tribe too.

M Martha Rodriguez 09:35
So I'm Kumi I'm from San Jose de la surah. But people who are native warriors, works with other indigenous people. And then today we have people from different reservations and Baja. And we work with with all indigenous communities right now. We'll focus in Bihar right now. So we just finished a youth camp. So yeah, and today we'll come to participate in this conference.

D Doug Parsons 09:56
Tell me a little bit about some of the people that you brought here. I see some time Tables, I see some beautiful artwork and tell us a little bit about that.

M Martha Rodriguez 10:03

Yes. So were to pay who I will support in all the communities with health education, culture, in economic and social justice. And today, we'll bring a group so they can share about the arts and crafts we have, we'll be sharing some songs. And then people are having some craft for sale, like baskets, pottery, about the Narrows, and teachers, and then the typical teachers that support you know, to keep going on with the programs. And then so yeah, we're here happy to come and, and be part of this event.

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Doug Parsons 10:35

So working with the Alliance, you also work on some cross border issues. Can you elaborate on that?

M

Martha Rodriguez 10:41

Yes, we were with the Border Patrol and ticket area, so we can cross the border. So we had to request the permit, travel permit. And then they check it out. And then they give us the permit. So we have saw the people here, they don't have recessed so they they crossed with a permit. And then also the cuckmere, but also the pipe by the Cocopah. So indigenous in Baja right now. So

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Doug Parsons 11:04

tell me, I guess a bit more about your partnership with the climate science, lions, they are unique and that they're working with the tribes. And it's just I guess there's a lot of trust. And that has to go into that right?

M

Martha Rodriguez 11:13

Yes, yeah, no, we started with a partnership with them. And it's very been very, very great partners that support us with the programs we do. Like, you know, like I say, that was our first cultural youth camp and Baja. And then we have people from the climate they came and they did some activities with the kids. And they love it. Because we're so happy to, you know, other categories, we deal with them. And then one of the main theme was the collecting of the pilot in a traditional way. And then so happy to have this opportunity, you know, to have this partnership.

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Doug Parsons 11:45

So you have a role today at the beginning of the summit. Could you tell us what that is?

M

Martha Rodriguez 11:50

Yes, we would do the opening, the opening prayer to we have some of the others to come into the opening, and we have one of the others to come and cheer sometimes. The community

songs. Yeah, so we like creating opportunities for people, they really don't get out from the reservation come over here in trouble and sharing the culture and the songs and all the you know, it's been a great partnership working with the Climate Science Alliance, you know, be able to bring a group of people and especially the elders and take care of them. And you know, it's it's been a good partnership.

D Doug Parsons 12:23

Okay, that's fantastic. I'm looking forward to your opening.

M Martha Rodriguez 12:26

Oh, thank you. Thank you very much, very thankful.

D Doug Parsons 12:31

Hey, adapters joining me is Nikki Cooley. Nikki is the CO manager for the tribes and Climate Change Program at the Institute for Tribal Environmental professionals. Hi, Nikki, welcome to the podcast.

N Nikki Cooley 12:40

Yeah. Good to be here with you, Doug,

D Doug Parsons 12:43

could you tell us what nation that you are part of?

N Nikki Cooley 12:46

I am with the dinette nation or more commonly known as the Navajo Nation.

D Doug Parsons 12:52

And what you just said to me right there that I'm assuming that was kind of the same thing that sort of the greeting dinner

N Nikki Cooley 12:58

is yes, is the proper name for Navajo, which was given to us by Spaniards.

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Doug Parsons 13:05

Well, that was excellent. Just to hear that. And can you tell us a little bit before we get into what was happening at the conference? Tell us about ITEP. What do you do there?

N

Nikki Cooley 13:13

The Institute for Tribal Environmental professionals is a umbrella organization for several programs under it, which include air quality monitoring, indoor outdoor environmental education with youth. We have a waste and response program that focuses on super fun and brownfield sites. We also have several tribal working groups that work on water, air quality, pesticides, and climate change as well. And so my dual role at ITEP is not only as CO manager of the tribes and Climate Change program, but I also am the co director of the entire institute.

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Doug Parsons 13:55

So what is the scope, though? I mean, it's tribal focus. But is there a geographic region is there a number of tribes that you work with?

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Nikki Cooley 14:03

I tap is fortunate to be an organization that's been around since 1992, serving tribes across the country, including Alaska, primarily, we focus our services, which include webinars, conferences and workshops, one on one technical assistance, report, working groups, and so on with tribes across the country, primarily, we work with federally recognized tribes. But we do leave the door open to anyone who is interested in learning about taking advantage of our tools and resources.

D

Doug Parsons 14:39

Well, that's a huge scope. You must be keeping busy there. I want to jump into the conference and you were invited to be the keynote speaker at the Climate Summit that this Climate Science Alliance put on and obviously we can't go over the whole thing there. But it was a very exciting I saw it. It was an amazing keynote. There was a lot of energy there. There was stories there. And we're not gonna be able to recreate it on this podcast. But can you give us some of the key messages that you shared? And why did you want to share those messages before

N

Nikki Cooley 15:07

the climate summit began, I kind of walked around the main atrium, as well as looked at the people as they were coming into the auditorium and looked who was in the audience, because I really wanted to deliver several messages to the audience that they would be able to take home with them, and actually put it into action, or maybe even just think about how they could approach climate adaptation differently in their respective communities. And also with the communities that they work with, I understood that the audience was not only working with

communities in San Diego, but outside of San Diego area as well. So I tried to keep that in mind. And I wanted to do something different. I wanted to do a talk that would really resonate it with people about how indigenous people have been speaking about climate change and doing and implementing the actions to address climate adaptation or climate change impacts. Since time immemorial, we've been living off the land, we've been very intimate. And the knowledge that we have with our communities is very innate. To us, it comes naturally. So a couple of the key messages that I really wanted to get across was that it involves community climate adaptation involves community. And that is not exclusive. It's very inclusive. So I tried to get the message across that we needed to continue welcoming our relatives of all genders, especially focusing on the LGBTQ community members are relatives, who are really, I think, left out of conversations out of actions out of a lot of things going on around climate adaptation. They have a lot of, I think, knowledge, energy, and motivation to share. And to kind of move the process of climate adaptation, moving it forward. The second message I really wanted to get across was why we do climate adaptation work in our communities, whether it's with tribes or with, you know, these big cities and towns that have access to all types of infrastructure and emergency services, clean water, etc. But how we needed to kind of think about tribal communities and rural communities and also underserved communities who do not have the same access. And I thought about everybody in that room, having adequate access to running water, to showers to food, a warm bed and a roof over their heads, and how we need it to kind of transform our thinking back to where, you know, our everyday life of doing and living was really based around serving the whole community and not just the individuals that have money and political power.

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Doug Parsons 18:09

Well, there was a lot of buzz after your keynote dress, and it was fantastic. And so I think you did exactly what they wanted you to do is just jumpstart everything. And it gets kind of interesting. Normally, everyone has their keynote totally prepared before you get started. But you walked around, you got some inspiration. And I think that brings a nice element to a keynote. So it was fantastic. And so I want to pivot a little bit here. Just talking about you. You talked about some of the themes, though, and I haven't covered tribal issues enough on my podcasts, and I do a much better job. And I'm sure you'd have some advice on how I could do that. And it could be its own episode, but could you maybe give my listeners some brief thoughts on how there's a lot of adaptation planning going on out there and cities and governments and states? What can we learn from tribal approaches to adaptation? I think of my listeners who are doing adaptation planning at the city level, at the state level, even at the federal level, what are some basic messages that they could take how tribal people approach climate adaptation,

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Nikki Cooley 19:07

one of the approaches that they can take is to, again, be inclusive of all community members, not just those with the title of environmental director or climate change coordinator, or you know, Mayor, it has to go down to the people at the community level, who, let's face it are first in line to receive be on the receiving end of the climate impacts that will eventually come their way. And it's to be really inclusive and to engage young people, our young leaders, really wanting to just be recognized to be heard and to be involved. I can tell us many stories of how young leaders are really making an impact and are hungry for that just to be included in that

space. And secondly, again, I think one of the big themes in indigenous climate adaptation planning is involving our elders. Our elders are the libraries of our people of our culture. And they may come up also with something that we may not have thought of, or kind of confirming that we're on the right track. Because, again, they have lived for a long time longer than most of us. But also, they have more experience. And they may contribute something that we weren't thinking about. Too often, our young people in our elders get left out for whatever reason. And I feel like we have to bring that back to the table. And again, all goes back to community, family. And that dinner, the Navajo way, we have something called F, which translates to kinship, family, relatives, and that involves everyone. So if you want to create a very inclusive collaborative space, involve people that you never would think of, including the janitor, the bus driver, perhaps somebody who's retired from working in the fields, I don't know who it is, but that that person that you involve could have some major contributions to your efforts.

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Doug Parsons 21:14

I want you to just tell us a little bit about your relationship with the climate science lions, I learned pretty quickly that they're really good at partnering. Can you tell us a bit about that?

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Nikki Cooley 21:23

In 2016, I met Amber Paris and Althea Walker at a ITEP climate adaptation training that we were hosting. And it was my first training that I did solo because my predecessor retired. And that's where I met them. From the get go, it was obvious that they were walking the talk, you know, they were in being very inclusive, they had these a big vision of how everyone would be working together. And we have not stopped talking weekly or monthly, I think since then. And that's been several years now. And because they really acknowledged the value of partnerships. instead of reinventing the wheel, they go to people like ITEP that are already doing the work of adaptation planning with tribes. And so Climate Science Alliance has always said, how can we work together? How can we help you accomplish your goals, and we have the same vision of serving tribes as best as we can. And all we want to do is good work in service of tribal nations. Fantastic.

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Doug Parsons 22:41

And just some brief thoughts about the summit itself, you were able to participate the whole day? What were your thoughts coming? It was a one day Summit. What did you think I

N

Nikki Cooley 22:50

was not sure what to expect in the beginning because I had attended a climate summit pre pandemic, I believe, like 2017, or 2018. And it was very research academic city focused with some tribal participation, small but enough, I think at that time summit was held. And I kind of expected it to be the same way. But also knowing Climate Science Alliance, having indigenous leadership, and a tribal working group, I knew it was going to be something amazing, and actually exceeded my expectations. I really, really enjoyed the people that were invited, and

they created an atmosphere that was very safe, it was comfortable, it was engaging, and respectful. It had a really nice feel to it. People were there to learn a lot of time to dedicate your day, right to a summit to listen to people, and also go around on the three or four floors visiting the different booths. It was absolutely amazing. I really, really enjoyed it. And I want to say to Doug, that the fact that the Climate Science Alliance continues to acknowledge our relatives across the so called borders and bring them into their traditional homelands is amazing. So it was really nice to have the Kumi i from across the so called borders come and sell their stuff, but also to participate. And I don't think there is another event that has done that, to that extent to give them kind of that that respect that they deserve to be acknowledged on their traditional ancestral lands. I absolutely enjoyed it.

D

Doug Parsons 24:37

Yeah, I didn't know what to expect myself. I think we're both used to go into typical conferences and panels and presentations. And this was like an interactive storytelling experience. And so they put a lot of thought into this. It was a from the heart for sure. And I think a lot of people just walked out of there energized and yeah, it was as sort of being an outsider in a lot of ways. It was just fascinating to see it all. And if people want to learn more about what you do and some of the work that you're doing, what would you recommend they do,

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Nikki Cooley 25:03

they can either go to our website, which has information, but also join us at one of our events. As I mentioned previously, our workshops, our conferences, webinars are open to the public, they're free, they never well, our conferences do have a cost to it. But I think it's pretty reasonable compared to other national conferences that, but ours is focused on elevating indigenous voices and efforts. So join us at one of those, or you can contact me directly and as you can tell, I love to talk about ITAP and our partners so I always make myself available to anyone who wants to learn more about what we do. Fantastic.

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Doug Parsons 25:45

And Nikki, congrats again, that great keynote there and they recruited a ringer in regards to how they want it to this event. Unfold. And thanks for coming on the podcast. Thank you, Doug. Yeah, got here. Hey, adapters, I'm back. And I'm with

L

Laura Engeman 26:02

Laura Engeman. I'm with California secrets. I'm a coastal resilience specialist. And so I share a position with California sea grants and Scripps Institution of Oceanography.

D

Doug Parsons 26:14

You guys have a table here at this event. What are you guys sharing?

L Laura Engeman 26:17

So today we're sharing some project collaborations. I work closely with the Climate Science Alliance. So we have a number of projects where we share staff and work together towards shared goals. One of those is called the binational Coastal Resilience Project. That's an initiative where we're looking to build knowledge sharing between San Diego and Baja Norte. And that's with both researchers, community members, tribal communities, and practitioners of climate adaptation across the coast. So we're identifying needs and opportunities where people are already collaborating and looking for ways to build capacity, leverage those and really strengthen the relationship across the border to overall build resilience for the whole entire community from San Diego down towards Ensenada. Another project that I work on with this Climate Science Alliance is a sea level rise education and awareness project. That's a recent partnership that we started that's sponsored by NASA. And that's really to build sea level rise education curriculum that is relevant to California coastal communities, and also culturally relevant to a number of diverse audiences that may not have as much access to the coasts including tribes and Spanish speaking a youth. So we're looking to build education content, we're looking to work with informal and formal educators in several communities across California to test that, and to also build out science, art and storytelling around sea level rise so that it's more of a community conversation, and not just an educational curriculum.

D Doug Parsons 28:07

All right, my bias with the Sea Grant Program is east coast, and you just don't hear much about tribal affiliations and try to build engagement. Obviously, that's a bit different on the West Coast. I guess the Science Alliance is a great pathway for you guys to be able to engage with that community though, right? Correct.

L Laura Engeman 28:24

Yeah. So California Sea Grant is typically based within universities, but then also is placed based, meaning that we as extension, we work within our communities, as well to better understand who our communities are, what their needs are. And part of that, who, for us, particularly in San Diego is a we have 18 tribes here in San Diego, they have lost their connection to ancestral lands to the coast. So it's really important that we build those bridges and reconnect them to the coasts and part of that component of their culture.

D Doug Parsons 28:59

Here we are at the summit, how's it going so far? What stood out for you?

L Laura Engeman 29:02

I always love the summits put on by the Climate Science Alliance. They're at the heart of them is people and people's passion and motivation and energy to continue to work through struggles in terms of, you know, understanding climate risks, but also really providing real ways

for people to connect and also feel supported in adapting and understanding that there's hope in the future. And there's always just such inspiration coming out of the people that come together here. So there's always an emphasis, I think, on you know, the planet and the world and our connection, but then it really does come down to the relationships between people and I have met some of the greatest colleagues that I have worked with at the Science Alliance and events and continue to do so. So this is not an exception. In that sense. This is another great event, I'm super excited that it's back on. And

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Doug Parsons 30:09

from our listeners, you're hearing planes in the background, we are on the roof of the Natural History Museum here. And we got a steady flow of airplanes coming adds to the character. So a question that was asked to all the panelists, and I'm gonna ask you is, what does transformational climate adaptation mean to you?

L

Laura Engeman 30:24

That's a great question. I actually will say, for me, one of the things I'll bring in is my own personal experience with the Climate Science Alliance. So I have been a friend and colleague of Amber Pierce's for a number of years and was sat at the table to help her vision, the establishment of the Climate Science Alliance, and I had been an advisor since the beginning. And so it to me, it does represent the transformation in our understanding of how to do climate adaptation and what climate adaptation is, I think when we started the beginning, it was about the science and bringing in what's our best understanding of how climate change is going to impact our communities at a more local regional level, because that was where we were at. And then it quickly became much more about what's important to our communities, and how is that going to be affected by climate change? And then that turned into who what community should be at the table that are not at the table? And how can we both build resilience with communities that are currently thriving in the San Diego and Southern California region? And then also, how can we build up those communities that are not currently thriving and make a future for them? So all of that, I think, has not been something that we initially started with in the vision, but it has evolved into what I would call now transformational climate adaptation. And I think the Science Alliance represents an amazing model for that.

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Doug Parsons 32:04

If people want to learn more about what you guys are doing and see grant, what do you recommend?

L

Laura Engeman 32:08

We do have a website California see grants, you're welcome to reach out to sea grant extension as well. We have an I am based here in La Jolla, but there are people like me that work up and down the sea in California, a different universities with different communities. And beyond now, you're welcome to also check out the science alliances page, we are represented as part of their partnerships on that project.

D Doug Parsons 32:33
Thanks for coming on the podcast.

L Laura Engeman 32:34
Thank you. Good to see you.

D Doug Parsons 32:40
Hey, doctors, I'm back. And

A Amy Larson 32:41
I'm with Amy Larsen. Where do you work the California Wildlife Foundation?

D Doug Parsons 32:45
All right, what do you guys do?

A Amy Larson 32:47
We serve as a fiscal sponsor for organizations like the Climate Science Alliance. We focus on habitat and California restoration projects and such to enhance and restore habitat.

D Doug Parsons 33:01
How long is your history with the Alliance?

A Amy Larson 33:03
I think it's about eight years.

D Doug Parsons 33:06
So why did you decide to partner why are they they fit in? I guess you talked about natural resources and conservation. But they're obviously you could do that with a lot of different groups. What stood out about the Alliance?

A Amy Larson 33:15

Amber connected with our executive officer Janet Cobb, at a meeting at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, I believe, and we took her in with Switzer grant. She was a Switzer fellow. And from that it grew to the Climate Science Alliance as it is today, which is a staff working in Southern California and a little beyond Southern California to foster climate adaptation and understanding across a broad spectrum of individuals.

D Doug Parsons 33:47

What's your sense of this event? Why are you here? Why did you decide to come down and see what they're doing?

A Amy Larson 33:52

It's easier for me to come here than to fly 13 People in the Bay Area, which is where we're based. So I wanted to have a chance to come and connect with Amber and her team and her supporters and the people who are contributing to and benefiting from this work. All

D Doug Parsons 34:08

right, what are some of the other groups and I guess agencies that you work with?

A Amy Larson 34:11

We work with the National Park Service in Southern California here in the Bay Area. We work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Fish and Wildlife. We have been instrumental in restoration projects in wetlands helping to bring in clean fill to recreate wetlands and improve habitat for wildlife.

D Doug Parsons 34:33

So I'm a climate adaptation podcast and you find as a foundation focusing on natural resources that adaptation is becoming a bigger issue for you.

A Amy Larson 34:42

Yes, there's a lot of adaptation going on. In the area of wetland restoration for example. We are involved in scientific studies understanding how the work is affecting or benefiting the wildlife species in the area. So we go out and study birds and other animals to see how they're doing. Well, thanks



D Doug Parsons 35:03

for coming on and enjoy the summit. Thank you so much. You too. Hey, adapters joining me is Angela Mooney Darcy. Angela is the executive director and founder of secret places Institute for indigenous peoples. Hi, Angela. Welcome to the podcast.

A Angela Mooney Darcy 35:20

Hi, Doug. How are you?

D Doug Parsons 35:22

Well, it's a pleasure to have you on the podcast. Can you first start us off? Tell us what sacred places Institute is all about? And what do you do there?

A Angela Mooney Darcy 35:28

Sure. So I'm Angela mini DRC. I'm a Hashem. Our ancestral homelands are in what's also known as Orange County, California. I've been doing this work for as long as I can remember. Definitely since I graduated from college, I founded sacred places Institute for indigenous peoples in 2012. We just celebrated our 10 year anniversary last year. Our mission is to build the capacity of Native nations and indigenous peoples to protect sacred lands, waters and cultures. We have several programs designed to help us realize and fulfill our mission. And I founded the organization after teaching online distance learning courses designed for tribal community leaders working in the fields of environmental and climate justice. And I realized after teaching for so many years that even though traditionally, indigenous epistemologies are very much oriented towards sustainability practices and thinking of the future. Given the onslaught of settler colonial violence. Many of our communities had had to pivot towards more reactionary strategies, when our sacred sites and environmentally significant places were under threat, by founded sacred places Institute to be a place where indigenous communities could come together to think strategically and re embrace our indigenous epistemologies and worldviews around protecting sacred lands, waters and cultures. I want

D Doug Parsons 37:08

to talk about the summer, but I'm very curious. And so you've mentioned reactionary, could you give like one example, what does that look like? Well,

 37:15

I mean, typically, indigenous peoples aren't advertising, where sacred sites are, there's a long history of settler colonial violence and extraction and desecration of Native American sacred sites. So in general, these places are not places that native people are inclined to speak about until they come under threat. And so the first example that I personally encountered with that was our sacred site upon hate, which is located on and next to the Camp Pendleton Marine Base in what's now called San Clemente California. And you know, there was a real danger,

there was a proposal to build a six lane toll road that would have come within feet of our burial ground at that site. And so we had to mobilize our tribal community very quickly to try to fight this proposal. And so that's what I mean, like settler colonial extractive industries and development and things like that often will threaten sacred places. And, you know, people tended to not be thinking proactively about how to protect those places. It's more when a site was threatened is when the action started. Okay,

 Doug Parsons 38:30

that's very interesting that I was I wasn't aware of that. All right, let's pivot to the summit here. And so you were on a panel at the very beginning of the summit? What were some of the things that you said on the panel? And overall, what was the panel about?

 38:43

I mean, I think the panel was about reflections on, you know, what climate justice and climate resilience looks like for our communities. I think that I talked about this work being intergenerational. And what we're doing now is just an extension of what our ancestors have been doing, really, since the point of colonization, in terms of working to protect our sacred places and protect and be in right relationship with our environment and with the plant and animal relatives in our homelands.

 Doug Parsons 39:18

I think they asked the entire panel, but they were asking, what is your definition of transformational adaptation? And do you remember what you said?

 39:25

I think that I said transformational adaptation. The vision for transformational adaptation, is rooted in love that at the end of the day, the Earth will survive, regardless of whether or not humans are a part of that survival. And so really, the issue for me is whether or not our human species will survive. And I think that that ultimately comes down to building an ethic rooted in love, as opposed to extraction because at the end of the day, You know, when there's one pitcher of water remaining, whether or not you know, our species survives, I believe is going to come down to whether or not the people who have that water, share it or hoard it. And we've been living in a time of hoarding resources since colonisation. And if we as a species are to survive, I think that we need to shift dramatically away from those principles of acquisition and greed and accumulation, and move back towards principles rooted in love, of community and of place.

 Doug Parsons 40:40

The climate science lines brought everyone together for this summit. Can you describe your relationship with the Alliance,



40:46

we're a part of the Climate Science Alliance, we're involved in the tribal working group, I can't speak highly enough about that organization and its leadership, I think that they've really done an excellent job of centering the voices and the needs and projects of tribal nations, on whose homelands they live in work. And so it's a real honor to be a part of that collaborative and be a part of the positive change that's needed in order for us to survive in any sort of meaningful, unjust way from this climate crisis that we're in.



Doug Parsons 41:25

And why do you think they've been so effective in partnership building, I mean, that's just a core part of what they do. And that's part of their transformational adaptation approach.



41:34

It's relational, it's about building relationships, and they are doing that meaningfully and not as a sort of effort to just check a box. I think that, you know, they succeed because they're in it for the long haul. And not just like for the cycle of a particular grant, or academic calendar, they really are committed to and investing in building. And sustaining and strengthening relationships with tribal nations and indigenous peoples



Doug Parsons 42:06

are played a really important part of the summit. What did it mean to you, when you were there seeing all these sort of art displays?



42:13

I mean, I think art is always the mechanism in society that moves us faster and more powerfully, often, towards what's needed, then we my work is in law and policy, and that's critical, but Law and Policy follow where society's at, right, and where society is at, is shaped and informed by art and the artists that are able to push the envelope and communicate with people in an emotional and spiritual way. That is beyond and encompasses, you know, thought and, and just following the rules of law, right? I think that it's critical to have art in these spaces, because art is what leads to transformation in our society.



Doug Parsons 43:04

This has been a challenge for people just coming up with one but I'm just gonna see if you can do it. Did you have one favorite moment at the summit?



43:11

Honestly, I think my favorite moment at the summit was when an indigenous woman from Baja spoke really clearly about the importance of our own people telling our own stories. And we've been in an era where predominantly white academics have been charged with telling our stories. And that era is over, even though some people don't realize it yet. And I was really pleased to see the response from that indigenous person, really embracing and standing strong in the principle that indigenous peoples need to be in charge of telling our own stories.



Doug Parsons 43:50

Excellent. And if people want to learn more about the institute, what would you recommend they do? They can



43:54

visit our website at Sacred Places. institute.org. And we're also on social media.



Doug Parsons 44:00

Fantastic. Thank you, Angela, for the work that you're doing. And thanks for coming on the podcast. Thank you. Hey, doctors on back and I'm with Richelle Ellis, and who are you with?



Richelle Ellis 44:11

I am here at the San Diego Natural History Museum exhibiting some of my



Doug Parsons 44:16

artworks. But where do you work? This is part of what you do, right? You do science art? Yes,



Richelle Ellis 44:21

I am an artist. And I'm actually we didn't capture this. But I'm also training to be an astronaut. And so I create art that is about our planet, looking at various ecosystems and the ways that they are interconnected. My drawings that are at the museum today on display are featuring these biospheres linking different animals and plants from around the world into these dome like planet like structures.



Doug Parsons 44:47

That's a big nugget you left out so astronaut, there must be some math in your background somewhere, right a mathematician.

R

Richelle Ellis 44:54

Not exactly math, but I joined cruise with NASA Goddard as the art Artist among scientists looking at the role of creativity as we move off world, how does it help with inducing flow states and community and also beautifying different Martian and lunar habitats, as we're moving off world.

D

Doug Parsons 45:17

Art is a big part of this event. And what they're trying to do is link art as a way to communicate the issue of climate adaptation. How do you think they are doing with it? And what are your thoughts on that approach?

R

Richelle Ellis 45:28

I think it's really beautiful. Something that came up with the panels today is that perhaps the approach to some of these challenges that our world is facing is quite simple. It's acknowledging the light in ourselves and our authentic voice and our individual power, and seeing how can that inspire and connect with others. So we all have this ability to take action and make the world a better place through the efforts that we are doing here on the ground. And with a lot of these indigenous cultures and customs and this process of storytelling and other art form, we are able to dive deeper into our ancestral knowledge that's already been here since the start of how do we live symbiotically with our planet. And so I think it's incredible to begin to hear all these different voices from around the world that have different ways of cohabitating with our planet. And if we can all learn from each other have the most efficient and sustainable processes, I think we can go really far together.

D

Doug Parsons 46:34

Okay, one of the questions that was asked of the panel, we saw a panel multiple panels is What does transactional climate adaptation mean to you? How would you answer that question,

R

Richelle Ellis 46:42

I would say with transformational adaptation and climate. That means to me, a deep knowledge of our interconnectivity, realizing that our social networks, our biological networks, digital networks, everything that structures our world is interconnected. We talk a lot about our web of life. But I think we also engage with the World Wide Web in a way that that mimics and alters each other's minds and hearts. And so with these connective abilities, we have an opportunity to affect change on a global scale, using our power by numbers to make the world and the environment a better place. And so it's this collaborative action that comes from our awareness of our interconnectivity that I think has a lot of potential.



D

Doug Parsons 47:34

Great. This is a podcast, and it's all audio. But could you just describe maybe a couple of the pieces that you presented here?

R

Richelle Ellis 47:40

Absolutely. So I have two drawings that are on display. They are entitled biosphere one and biosphere two, they are giving reference to our original biosphere, our Earth, and celebrating its biodiversity and ecological interconnectivity. And so you'll see there's drawings of polar bears next to icebergs, that then are melting into ocean waves with dolphins jumping out of it. And so you might think the polar bears up in the Arctic are very far from the dolphins of the west coast of California. But actually, these earth systems, these living systems are all linked and affecting each other, no matter the placement around the world, because it changes our biosphere one our planet.

D

Doug Parsons 48:29

I'm in Tucson and I think biosphere one or two is north of us, right? Yes,

R

Richelle Ellis 48:34

that's an Oracle, Arizona, and I did an artist in residence there as part of my astronaut training as well.

D

Doug Parsons 48:40

If all goes according to plan, and you become an astronaut, and you go up in space, and however that might look whatever spaceship would you attempt to do art up there in space?

R

Richelle Ellis 48:51

Absolutely. So I am currently developing several art projects that I test in zero gravity in weightlessness on a parabolic plane to see how does our materials change and shift as we move out off Earth but also how does that affect the stories that we tell reflecting back at our home planet, I've also designed several artworks that have flown to space so launched a 16 foot sculpture called Living Light from the Kennedy Space Center in 2021. Around world's oceans day, celebrating our oceans biodiversity in this large, alien like jellyfish structure that is bioluminescent and glow in the dark, that went up to our stratosphere and really landed in our ocean. So thinking about how do we use this prospective shift of going out into space to reflect back on ourselves and our home? In an effort to build an understanding of the relationships between our human world but also the living world that exists all around us. There is no hierarchy. Humans are just a single thread of our web of life. We are not separate from it. And

as you know, that's them up quite a lot during this event that we're entangled everything is in relationship with one another. And the animals and plants that surround us all contribute to us all having a beautiful life together.

D Doug Parsons 50:13

Do you think as we adapt to climate change, we'll have to head up into space and maybe Mars?

R Richelle Ellis 50:18

I think that moving to space, and Mars gives us the potential to expedite our futures thinking. So how are we envisioning alternative futures off worlds. And what that does is it creates a vision for what Earth could look like, if we can all start to think about these impossible futures. space provides a sense of fantasy, which I think is very important tool for imagination, and for future building. And so when we can tap into that potential of what could be, and realize that the future that we want to see doesn't just happen, we actually have to create it and build it firsthand. That that is our opportunity. That's our call to action that is brought from space exploration that can contribute and help us here on Earth to help us realize how special our planet, our biosphere one truly is.

D Doug Parsons 51:10

And to my listeners, I'm not suggesting we do that we're in big trouble if we're adapting to climate change by moving to Mars. Alright, thank you so much for coming on the podcast.

R Richelle Ellis 51:18

Thank you so much.

D Doug Parsons 51:22

Hate actors. Joining me is Dr. Megan Jennings. Megan is a conservation ecologist and co director of San Diego State University's Institute for ecological monitoring and management. Hi, Megan, welcome to the podcast.

D Dr. Megan Jennings 51:34

Hi, Doug. Thank you for having me.

D Doug Parsons 51:35

All right. First off, what do you do there? It's a new state, you do a lot of cool research. But to give us kind of an overview. I

D

Dr. Megan Jennings 51:41

do. I'm super fortunate. You know, I was interested in wildlife from a young age. And I was kind of trying to figure out what do you do in a career in wildlife, and I landed on wildlife biology and eventually became a conservation ecologist. But that has really led me that exploration into ecology and conservation has really led me into a much broader range of science that is all about climate adaptation, conservation planning, working with communities to advance their science needs. And really, the way I like to sum it up is that all the science I do is about providing science and service, science and service, the decisions people need to make and the things that they want to implement to make the world a better place, and in particular, make it more resilient.

D

Doug Parsons 52:23

Excellent. And you do have a kind of a really extensive wildfire focus. Yeah,

D

Dr. Megan Jennings 52:27

we do a lot of work in wildfire. My background is actually I spent a lot of years working for the US Forest Service as a land manager. So land managers in Southern California, you end up spending a lot of time on fire, and I carry that with me into the research that I do. That's it's part of my motivation for providing science and service is I was that manager who needed the science who wanted to look to see what should we be doing to do better? And so that's part of what I try to focus on in some of the research is what are the questions that we have about how we can protect areas from having too much fire? How we can restore them after fire? And what can we do to restore areas that have had fire excluded for too long, and that involves producing a lot of different types of science, but also working with practitioners and community members to figure out what their needs and desires are for trying to manage the land better.

D

Doug Parsons 53:17

You are on the panel that kicked off the summit. We're going to talk about the summit now. Can you talk a bit about some of the things that you discussed on the panel, and I think it was very unique is that I think you were the only non tribal person on the panel. Right?

D

Dr. Megan Jennings 53:31

I was that's it's an interesting position to be in, especially when that's not the norm when you work in academia. And it's actually a pleasure to be on a stage with the folks who I was able to participate with on that panel. But I think I spent some time really talking about that perspective about how do we work with communities? And what does that look like when you're coming from a place like academia that has this history of maybe not doing such a great job of that, when the currencies that we use are things like publications or the metrics of how many people have cited or used our publications, and instead thinking about what what are the

community impacts in terms of have you made the science accessible? Have you made it something that someone can pick up and use and implement and it makes whatever they're doing better, but also that that science isn't the center of everything. It's a compliment, you know, local knowledge, traditional indigenous knowledge that has equal value. So how can we have science be that compliment be something that can be integrated coming out of the academic realm that really serves people's needs? So those are some of the things I talked

D

Doug Parsons 54:38

about that was very interesting being the only non tribal person there and you work very closely with tribes in IT people don't realize it takes a while for an im Some have even questioned my own terminology. And when I talked about tribal issues, it's just outsiders really need to earn the trust of tribes for those tribes to feel comfortable working with them, but they trust you right. You have an extensive experience working with them. And if so, how did you manage to do that?

D

Dr. Megan Jennings 55:02

Well, I think it's an investment of time introducing yourselves to people coming to people not expecting them to come to you. But also the attitude that you take in the way that you approach it coming to people with an open heart and an open mind, right? In science, we don't often talk. And in particular, in academia, we don't often talk about coming to people with an open heart, but tribal communities. This is climate adaptation and climate change. It's all very personal, because of that strong connection to the land. I feel that too, I don't articulate it all that much in my scientific job in my academic world. But I take the time to articulate that in working with tribal partners, I mean, the relationships I have, and I'm sure there are people who don't trust me, and I'm okay with that, I will continue to work to earn trust from people and keep the trust of those whose trust I've already earned. But it's happened over lots and lots of years, I met a lot of tribal partners when I worked for the Forest Service. And I just continue to nurture those relationships, make sure that I'm thinking about how to be responsible in my research, how to equally value knowledge and, and attribute it to those who are providing knowledge that may not be, again, something that comes out of the academic realm, but still has a lot of value. And also to provide that reciprocity that I want to be hopefully, for me, the balance is that I'm giving more than I'm taking when people are sharing knowledge with me. And I think that really is part of how you build trust is coming with that open heart and being willing to to give back and coming with open ears too. I think one of the things I say pretty frequently is that we should speak once and listen twice, that was part of a story that was told at one at the Southwest tribal climate summit a couple of years ago. And the moral of the story was to speak once and listen twice. I think that's really important for us in academic sciences to think about that, because we're taught to present and share our science. And we have to be the experts. I don't need to be the expert in every room. I know a lot about some things. And I know very little about other things. And I think it's better even if I do know a lot about some things, to have many people sharing their perspectives and the information that they know. So I think that's how I built trust is by being open and and just wanting to work together earnestly.

D

Doug Parsons 57:11

So the big theme of the summit was transformational adaptation and the recurring thing going

on was that what's your definition of transformational adaptation? They were asking the different panelists and just different people around. Do you remember what your answer was?

D Dr. Megan Jennings 57:26

I think the question was posed, maybe something like what words make you think of transformational adaptation or what words you'd associate with it, and I'm pretty sure that the words that I chose were partnerships and reciprocity. There's the old adage that you know, if you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far go together, maybe it's in reverse. But either way, I almost think if you want to go anywhere you should go together. In particular, when we're talking about adaptation, there is so much to do, that the more people we have to share the load, the more we're working together to work in concert, rather than work at odds, there's going to be value there. And I added the reciprocity piece, because I don't think you can work effectively together in partnership, unless everybody is giving and taking and thinking about what am I asking of other people? And what am I contributing back? Because if you feel like everything's a one way street, why would you continue to come to the table. And again, there's just too much to do to be feeling like people are allowing themselves to be an empty reservoir, right? That you that you're constantly being depleted, rather than filled up. And part of the way I talked about that is we all have our days, or our moments or the things that are working for us, and they aren't. And when you have partners that can lift you up on those days where you're having trouble figuring something out or making something happen, and then in turn, you can offer that back to them. And I think that's really how we make that transformational change

D Doug Parsons 58:49

related to these partnerships. Can you describe your relationship with the Climate Science Alliance and partnering keeps coming up with people's relationship with them, but just tell us a little bit about your experience working with them?

D Dr. Megan Jennings 59:00

Yeah, in all the years I've been working in conservation in Southern California, I always felt like there was something missing in terms of really the like, the strong connections among different organizations. And so when I heard somebody who wanted to start this Climate Science Alliance, and I sort of reached out to Amber Paris, and I said, Hey, what is this thing? What are you doing? And we ended up talking on the phone for, I don't know, two hours or so. And it was really because we shared this vision of essentially that science and service, you know, how can we come together? How can we make sure that the science is serving needs and it's informed by what people need? So I've been a member and part of the Visioning team and an advisor to the Climate Science Alliance since its inception. And the value I think I get out of being that that partner and advisor is that they helped me with fostering that engagement and not just meeting with people but the deep engagement. How do we effectively communicate ate with people in lots of different ways my currency is things like graphs and reports. But how can we translate things into forms that are more effective for people that speak to them on a personal level that make them feel connected, and that the work we're doing values, the work they're doing, and vice versa. So I think the climate science Lyons really provides that connection for

me. And in turn, I'm there ready at the ready, willing to provide whatever kind of science direction I mean, if you look at my science portfolio, it looks a little bit all over the place, but it's because it's directed by what people need. And that's been the exciting thing for me is that that partnership has really connected to what people need and want. And I think we've really been able to advance each other's ideas about how we do that together by this partnership. And so I've been really pleased to be a part of all of this, I think one of the most important things they do is provide that space, they hold that space for me to be able to come in and work with partners, right? If you're having a meeting once a month, I can show up and say, Hey, I'm not working on anything. In particular right now I want to share but I just want to listen and see what people need. And can we come up with some whatever the next thing is that you need.

D Doug Parsons 1:01:08

Last question Did you have and just looking for one favorite moment at the summit?

D Dr. Megan Jennings 1:01:15

Oh, a favorite moment. I guess it wasn't a single moment. But it was the whole experience of being on that panel that I sat on where I was the only non Indigenous person, it was an honor to be on the stage with folks who are thinking about things in a completely different way and sharing perspectives that are different than the way I was raised. And I just enjoy the the friendship and partnership of those people. Because really, that's what partnership all comes down to is. Are we making friends with people and doing good work together? Megan,

D Doug Parsons 1:01:46

it's been a pleasure talking to you. And you're doing great work out there. And thanks for coming on the podcast.

R Richelle Ellis 1:01:50

Thank you for having me.

D Doug Parsons 1:01:55

Hey, adapters, I'm back with Amber pears, who you heard from at the beginning of the episode. Also joining us is Althea Walker. Althea is the co director and community and resilience lead at the Alliance. Hey, guys, great to have you on to wrap this up.

D Dr. Amber Pairis 1:02:08

Great to connect with you again. Hi, Doug.

A Althea Walker 1:02:10
Thank you for having us. All right,

D Doug Parsons 1:02:12
I'll see ya, we're gonna dig into what happened at the summit. What a fantastic event. And we'll get into that. But first off, what do you do there at the Alliance.

A Amy Larson 1:02:19
So thank you for having us. Again, as the co director and community resilience lead, I work closely with our tribal Working Group on various projects, a range of funding sources, from fire to plant to water, that we have a lot of various projects going on, but working closely with the tribal working group, primarily across southern California, but our network is growing and expanding outwards.

D Doug Parsons 1:02:44
We're gonna talk a bit about that specific work that you're doing. But the summit's done. And what I want to do is know there's probably a ton of anecdotes that you want to share. But what are some of the first impressions that you had from the summit? Amber, let's start with you.

D Dr. Amber Pairis 1:02:58
I think I'm just incredibly excited by how much we have grown and evolved just really, in relationships with our partners. We have over 460 organizations and agencies that are part of the Alliance. And I'm always just completely enthralled and excited by everything that they're doing. So this was a wonderful time to connect and celebrate what we're doing. We had incredibly powerful panelists, really just I get goosebumps just thinking about it. And ending the night with the documentary films from our indigenous colleagues who are leading these really amazing stories telling these stories. With so much power and grace, and beauty. It was just Yeah, it was a phenomenal place. It was a phenomenal opportunity to celebrate and connect with everyone. And yeah, I'm just so happy that we could bring everyone together.

D Doug Parsons 1:03:47
elfia What about you,

A Amy Larson 1:03:48
the summit was amazing. And as Amber expressed, you know, I feel the exact same way. And I was actually able to moderate a majority of the summit and the panels. And just to hear from

all the panelists, you know, who are we consider friends and family from across the Southwest, I would just be able to hear from them their stories, their experience, and just their worldviews and how they see the world. And I think it was a great opportunity, especially for those who are non tribal, to hear from our tribal partners, their perspective and approaches to addressing climate change in their communities. But just overall powerful and great to see a diverse group of people come together. And just an experience and opportunity and a blessing for us at the Climate Science Alliance to be able to be that bridge between communities and partner is

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Doug Parsons 1:04:48

my impressions. You guys. Congratulations. What a world class event you put on there. It was just so much. It was different than your typical conference where you've got just presentations and sessions like that what you can learn earned a lot, but it was just a celebration and the art and the panels. And so you guys really put a lot of creative thought into having an event that people could come together. And it just unfolded so nicely. So congrats in that respect, I really had a great time. And as my previous guests that will, that came on before you, we got to hear a bit more about what people were talking about there. And so I want to pivot, and we're here. so my listeners can learn how you guys do adaptation there at the Alliance and the summit was a celebration of that. But Amber, I'm going to start with you, because you really do have a specific way that you're doing transformational adaptation. And so there's this alliance model that you have, can you give us some background on that?

D

Dr. Amber Pairis 1:05:39

Yes, I'd love to, I think for us, we are really always have this eye towards what we refer to as transformational adaptation. And that's really based on relationships, it's community centered approaches. And our job is really to bring to life what our community partners want and need. And so our goal is that everything that we do is our actions, our projects that they are visioned, led and implemented by our community partners. So within this broad field of folks who work on climate adaptation, you know, we have all of these terms around resilience and resistance and transformation. But for us, you know, you talk about resistance. And that's really stopping things from happening. We talk about resilience, and that's how we would, you know, kind of withstand or bounce back from things that are happening, but we really have to have this eye towards transformation, we are moving towards a different world. But we have this chance to really shape and support a more equitable, just and sustainable future. And that's really what we try to do at the alliance. And everything that we do is that we are honoring the people, the places are more than human relatives. And it's not just about sort of surviving and adapting to climate change, but really thriving in this climate change world. So with our work, we really focus around these kind of three key themes. And that's convene, invest and accelerate. And for us convening, you know, people will say, Oh, you just bring people together and you talk. But for us, it's about making a space that really honors each of those individuals for everything that they bring to the table and their ideas. So it's not enough to just look around and say you need to make space for people at the table, you have to actually make space for people to lead at the table. And that means you need a space that upholds that equal evaluation of knowledge. So whether that's local knowledge, whether it's tribal science, or traditional knowledge, or its academic knowledge, all of these things are equally valued in the space, and the people who bring them forward are equally valued and listened to, when we convene, we really always talk about that this is a place where you talk once and listen twice, this is an opportunity to really listen to really be engaged. And so we really follow that kind of core value

around around listening. And it also really brings in our key tenants of respect, reciprocity, and relationships, which I know that Alfia will touch on. So when we convene, these become these spaces where we really can imagine and create and center those relationships. It's the place where we come together to dream on the future that we want to see. And it's a place where we don't just survive and adapt. We want these to be places that we thrive in communities where we want to raise and live or raise our children and create that world moving forward. So a big part of what we do is that convening, we take our lead from our partners. And so when you look at the Climate Science Alliance website, and you check out all the projects, you'll see that we have worked on so many different topics, because we are not just focused on only doing one thing, we are constantly shifting and pivoting based on what our partners need. So that really brings us to this really core pillar around investment. So when we invest, we have kind of a couple different ways that we look at that one is really directly investing in our community partners in their projects, through small grants, or through large kind of organizational re grantees. And these can be little things that help build someone's professional development. It can be seed funding a project, it can be really taking something over the top, that last little bit it needs to come into fruition. And we really use those that the small grant and larger granting opportunities through our working groups, we also directly invest in people. We have these wonderful fellowships, that we are able to invest in individuals in their community to do the work they want to see in their community. And that really started with our indigenous elders fellowship. But it's really expanded to be intergenerational, and really the opportunities to really help support people to build that capacity and build that dream and move those things forward. We also really leverage our own team to bring forward their own staff their own areas of skill and expertise to really leverage their staff time to help support individuals to help support building that capacity. We also have this amazing stewardship Pathways Training Program, which is workforce and economic development. Again, it's like how can we build these technical and skill building training opportunities? really rooted in tribal science and traditional knowledge to really push that work forward in the right way in a new way that that really lends itself. So that investment again, it's really, it's sometimes it's monetary, sometimes it's resources or time. But really, in the end of the day, it's that investment in our sustained and our commitment to sustained and meaningful relationships, and the people and places that we work. So as a team, as an organization, we don't come and go with projects or funding, we're there we are invested. And we really are, you know, not just allies in this work, but accomplices, and Frederick Joseph wrote a wonderful book, and he talks a lot about what it means to be more than an ally to be an accomplice. And I think that's really how what we embrace is to really be all in. And then when we really look at accelerating, it's really putting all those pieces into place, you know, to help our community partners realize the goals that they want to have. So to be that catalyst to be that supporter to be a good partner, to be, again, more than an ally, but an accomplice. So this really involves being, you know, directly involved, but it also being a bridge between people and groups. And, you know, Alfia mentioned that, it's really, you know, what can we do to help accelerate the relationships, the opportunities to really advance our vision for transformational adaptation? elfia,

D

Doug Parsons 1:11:18

I want you to fall up in there's a ton of stuff that you're doing, and we can't talk about it all, what Amber just described you on the ground, what does that look like? And I was hoping you could share some of the stories around the tribal working group, and then you have a Baja working group, because those are two of the really big projects that you're working on. Right?

A

Amy Larson 1:11:38

Yes, so our working groups, the binational Working Group and the tribal working group, we convene both groups on a regular basis, specifically with the tribal working group that I lead, and we convene on a monthly basis, we make sure we host each meeting in different tribal communities. So for instance, this next tribal working group meeting will be on the Paulo reservation. And then in November, we'll be at the Sukwon reservation, but we try to make sure that we visit the various communities that we work with to get to know them, where they are, what their community looks like, who are the community members, and just that have that opportunity to visit each other's communities. Sometimes we'll do site visits and learn about the work that the tribe is specifically doing around climate adaptation. That in those meetings, we discussed the various projects that we have funded through the tribal working group, tribal working group meetings, just talking about the various projects we're working on, and just the regular updates and where the projects are going. And then we also talk about different funding opportunities, but really use that time to just keep each other updated on what we're working on. spend time together, we always have a lunch afterwards, where we have additional time to catch up top with one another continue to build and invest in our relationships. And then afterwards, doing some sort of site visit, but just making sure we have that time, and spend that time together to build relationships. And Amber mentioned earlier, just the uniqueness of how we do what we do at the Climate Science Alliance is putting those relationships first and foremost, and everything else falls into place after that. All

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Doug Parsons 1:13:26

right, I'm gonna stay with you, Althea and Amber refer to this, that you shared a letter of relationality with me. And I think it just gets to the heart of the philosophy that you guys take there. Can you just briefly tell me what that letter is supposed to represent?

A

Amy Larson 1:13:40

Yeah. So that letter, when the Moller report was drafted, we were reviewing it. And just I guess I sat with it for a while. And after we hosted a panel discussion at the California adaptation forum, with our tribal partners, just was driving home and I called Amber. And I'm like, You know what I think we're missing in the model report. And we just need to make sure we make it clear to those who read it to those who want to know about our work is that relationships, like, that's the center of our work. And when we say that we put our community partners first and provide them that space to lead and lead this work that we're doing. Like that's, that's our model. That's the core of our model. And I've just let me know we need to share that somewhere. And so that's why I drafted are created and wrote that letter is to share that message of when we say we want to advance community led adaptation. It's putting our community partners first and doing this work through their lens through their eyes, and especially with our tribal partners, and our indigenous partners. We're all relational people, even as human beings. We're relational people. And our tribal partners really had made that clear to us that the relationships are the most important to this work. And as I said earlier, once those relations are put first, everything else falls into place projects are just a little dots along the timeline of our relationship with one another. So that's why I created that letter just to share that message that was made clear by our tribal partners, you can read the letter in the model report, it's at the very beginning. So yeah, please take a look at that.

D

Dr. Amber Pairis 1:15:36

I just wanted to add in, I just, I think that's such an important point, because the alliance is not the 10 people who work there, the alliance is every single partner, every single person who is part of our relationships. And so what we have created has not been created by any one person or, or any one project that has been created co created together, based on what we all need together. So just as much as we have tried to steer projects and things, our partners have also completely steered and driven, and created these vision and these efforts with us. So the alliances really is just that it is everyone together in relationships, strong relationships that have taken a long time to establish but are completely heart centered, that have really, I think, lead to sort of come together the way they have and why we have the results that we have is because of that relationship centered, that heart centered work, we bring our heart into all the work and so to our partners. All

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Doug Parsons 1:16:37

right, and we're gonna stick with you. And one of the things that I found from the materials that you shared is that this model that you've created, that it's not just about the science, translation and strategy development, so I think about my own days of those, you're gonna do the vulnerability assessment do this. And you guys purposely are integrating culture and community into this process. And I wonder what your thoughts are, because there's this huge push toward climate justice and climate equity. But so many cities and organizations, they're not quite sure what kind of model would work to actually get you there. And I, what I guess what I'm getting at is I think you guys have kind of cracked that nut, right?

D

Dr. Amber Pairis 1:17:12

Well, I think that we've been in this working on this for a really long time, we've been through this phase of having a strategy of vulnerability assessments and adaptation strategies, and then implementation strategies. But we realize those don't always or sometimes rarely can move forward. If you do not have your community with you. If these are not designed by and for the people who live and work and raise their children in these spaces, then it's not going to work, the top down, we know doesn't work. You can't tell people what to do, it has to be what the community wants. And so that is hard sometimes, because it takes time. And these things don't happen overnight. And they certainly don't happen on the timeline of a certain proposal or funding schedule. So it requires that you be embedded and you have those relationships, and that you have built that respect and that you can hold that trust, so that you can be really creative and innovative and do things that you're doing in community so that they are completely that everyone in the community is invested in that work. They are invested in what happens and being able to pivot and change when something doesn't work. So I think that's why all of this work has to be centered and come from what the people in those places need and want and the stewardship and care for the land that it's on has to be integral. So there is no magic formula. There is no way some kind of one size fits all, it is completely dependent on the place, and the people and the timing, right. Where do people have traction? Where's their opportunity? Where is there just that little bit of momentum or things coming together that will

make something really stick and work and really bring that kind of change that we need to see and that kind of long term efficacy and justice that is really centered around the people who, again, are in that space, who call that space home and how we all contribute to that.

D

Doug Parsons 1:19:09

Healthy, I'm going to come back to you. And as part of that approach, especially with this emphasis on partners, summits and events play a big role in how you do this outreach there at the Alliance. Can you tell us a bit about that? What are just if you can't say them all, but a few examples, because you guys are you're getting out there quite a bit with these events.

A

Amy Larson 1:19:27

But one of the events that I was able to be involved in when I first joined the alliance and in 2021 was the southwestern climate change summit. It was the southwestern tribal climate change summit and such an amazing event. We hosted it with the Paul Band of Mission Indians, and it was outside and we put up this big canopy the tribe made this it's almost like a campground. We worked closely with the tribe and the tribal members in creating that space we wanted Used to be outdoors or we could be together being mindful of COVID. And it was beautiful. And again, various partners came together, it was primarily tribal partners. But we brought in other non tribal partners from universities and other nonprofit organizations and state, federal local agencies. But just the opportunity again to come together and the community members led how the summit the agenda, what they wanted to see there, who they wanted there, where they wanted to speak, it was our tribal partners who created that agenda. And those three days that we spent together the vision that and we simply just supported it and helped it come to life. But afterwards, again, reflecting with Amber and I'm just like event cannot be successful without like tribal partners or our community partners. Leading it like we need their buy in, we need their heart in that. And, and that's, I think what makes them successful is, and beautiful is because the community where we're all hosted, you know, where we all sit and gather and meet, like, it's beautiful, because those who come from that land are there and welcomed us and made sure that the entire gathering was amazing. So I think just reflecting on those, like the people make it beautiful.

D

Dr. Amber Pairis 1:21:28

It's so hard to explain that because it's a feeling, right. It's a space that you walk into, that you feel cared for, and honored and respected. And I think that that's very different, because it's that heart centered approach. And it is because of the people themselves who are leading the days who are leading the activities and how we walk into that space. So it really is hard to explain. But anybody who's been to one of our events knows that you walk you feel it when you walk in and you carry it home with you when you leave. Amber,

D

Doug Parsons 1:21:58

I want some final thoughts here on how you build off this summit and also factor in people are listening to this. They're out there in an organization out there. And then okay, this transformational adaptation model that you guys have created, how would you recommend

transformational adaptation model that you guys have created, how would you recommend that even get started on that? Well,

D Dr. Amber Pairis 1:22:13

I think we've talked quite a bit about relationships. And I think that, again, cannot be understated is just who you're working with and being really invested in them. People ask me all the time, well, what can I do this problem is too big for me, it's, we can blame it on whoever we want to blame it on why we can't make change. But really, if every single person leaned into the area that they had traction, or expertise or experience or opportunity, and we knit all those pieces together, that's when you have a huge impact. And so I think that's really coming out of this summit just reminds me of how powerful we can be when we are together how transformational we can be when we are working together. And when we bring our hearts to the table and want to work in a good way. So that for me is really it was just an amazing reminder of the power of those partnerships and relationships, the power that we have to be creative, and really hopeful about the future that's ahead of us. So that's what I'm leaving with and just encouraging everybody to find that space where they do have that traction where they do have that opportunity and really lean into and make a difference.

D Doug Parsons 1:23:18

In Althea related to that if there's groups out there, and I guess even more your geographic region that want to partner with you literally what should they do? And it sounds like you're always looking for more partners, but you guys have the capacity. And all that is that's the goal, though, right? Yes,

A Amy Larson 1:23:31

we definitely want to expand our network continue to grow, like I said earlier outwards, and continue to share how we do this, help others do this. But in regards to just getting started and wanting to connect with us, just let's make that time to meet whether it's over zoom and person over coffee, but just continue or initiate that conversation. And we can go from there. So


D Dr. Amber Pairis 1:23:57

can I just add one thing we get if it fits in just say something about like the model paper is a great way to start looking at that we really wrote that as an opportunity to just share our story so that we hope it inspires others to look at it, and then the pieces that might work for them that they can make regionally and culturally relevant in their own work. We just really hope that it inspires others to take the steps towards really pushing forward on transformational adaptation. And hopefully our model inspires that.

D Doug Parsons 1:24:27

Yeah. And I saw that and I'll have all those materials in the shownotes. I create a webpage for

this. And it was fantastic. And I just wanted to note, there's actually a timeline that you guys list there like 2015 through 2022, where you have like all the accomplishments for any given year. And my goodness, you guys did so much and I think other organizations could just even look at that and say well, what is realistic, you know, accomplishments, and it's a great for metric identification. So folks, if you're out there, those will be in my show notes for this episode. And it's just a great guide on how you successfully are sort of transforming a new organization or someone getting into adaptation. That's fantastic. Alright guys, I want to do one last question here and I'm gonna start with you. Althea. I want you just to tell me that what your favorite moment was at the summit.

 Amy Larson 1:25:11

My favorite moment was it was all amazing. But our time spent in the theater and getting to see the two documentaries that are indigenous led indigenous made about water and fire, but specifically, the fire documentary. It's called McDow, the fire within us and just being able to see the extended trailer. And it's just an amazing feeling just I think it's because we've been a part of the project. We've seen it from inception and have worked closely to support Condor visual media and creating it. And it's just amazing to see and emotional, but beautiful, but that was my favorite moment at the summit. But please be sure to check out the both documentaries. This is specifically with how you can find it online. And we can certainly provide you that link for your show notes.

 Doug Parsons 1:26:04

Excellent. And Amber, what was your favorite single

 1:26:08

Oh, my gosh, that's so hard. I don't know that there was one single moment. But I think it's a little string of moments of just throughout the day walking and looking at people's seeing people's smiling faces, saying hello just I have now knitted in my mind this like carousel of of smiling faces and reconnecting. And I think that's what I'm carrying forward with me from the summit. Fantastic.

 Doug Parsons 1:26:31

And I think my favorite moment was when I was helping you in advance. It's we're prepping, and you gave me a box of cards and you're like, you need to replace all these rubber bands on these cards. And I just didn't know I had it in me and I did it fast. And I thought I did a really good job.

 1:26:45

I guess he had that moment.



Laura Engeman 1:26:47

I needed you and you were so grateful.



Doug Parsons 1:26:51

I'm being flipped I again, I think just probably just meeting people. There was my favorite moment even those were multiple moments because just the diversity of people there and there was a lot of positive energy. And so that was my sort of spread out favorite moment. You guys really did a fantastic job. Thanks again. It was fantastic partnering with you. You guys are on to great things there at the alliance and I appreciate you coming on the podcast.



1:27:13

Thanks so much for having us. It was lovely to talk with you. Thank you



Doug Parsons 1:27:22

Okay, doctors, that is a wrap. Thanks to everyone who participated in this episode. What a fantastic event the Climate Science Alliance hosted congrats Amber and the gang. I've been to many conferences and I've never encountered such positive vibes from presenters and attendees. And the San Diego Natural History Museum was gorgeous. I love the lions its approach to adaptation through convening, investing and accelerating as Amber explained. If you are an organization looking to ramp up your adaptation approach, take the Alliance's advice and reach out to them and connect I have some resources in my show notes but also visit their website to get more detailed information about their adaptation efforts. As you heard tribal outreach plays a big part in the alliances partnership building. It was fantastic to hear from the experts doing critical planning in tribal communities. Definitely check out those websites in the show notes. And it was a joy to hear Navajo words on the podcast for the first time. I want to thank the Climate Science Alliance for partnering and sponsoring America daps to cover their event. Amber's an old friend from my Florida wildlife agency days and we've stayed in touch over the years she has done something along with their team really special with the Science Alliance. I encourage you to learn more about their efforts. And don't forget to submit an abstract for ICR 24 in Washington DC next April Patel's innovations and climate resilience conference links to this are in my show notes. Okay, so you just heard the climate science alliances story. So what's your adaptation story? Do people that you engage with understand what is climate adaptation? Are you finding that webinars and white papers really aren't resonating ways that promote your work? Well consider telling your story in a podcast. If you're interested in highlighting your adaptation story, consider sponsoring a whole episode of American app sponsoring a podcast allows you to focus on the work you're doing and sharing with climate professionals from around the world. I go on location to record the sponsored podcast which allows a wider diversity of guests to participate. You will work with me to identify these experts that represent the amazing work you're doing. Some of my previous partners in this process have been Natural Resources Defense Council, the University of Pennsylvania Warden World Wildlife Fund UCLA, Harvard and various corporate clients. Now I've been working with the Department of Defense twice, it's a chance to share your story with all my

listeners who represent the most influential people in the adaptation space. Most projects have communications written to them consider budgeting in a podcast podcast have a long shelf life, much more so than a white paper or conference presentation. Many groups work into their communication strategies if you work in a foundation and maybe you want to highlight the adaptation, resilience work of your foundation or of your grantees that you're funding. There is no better platform than this podcast to get the word out on adaptation to some of the most influential inactive adaptation professionals in the world. And if you're interested in having a keynote at your conference or corporate event, please reach out more More sectors are realizing they need to start thinking about climate adaptation for many of those fields, they have very little exposure to resilience and adaptation planning. I can speak to this issue and help you create awareness in your sector. I've been doing keynote presentations for a while I share stories from the podcast and my own experiences doing adaptation. I will talk about adaptation ways that will motivate and inspire your conference attendees You can reach me at America.daps.org All right, I say this every episode reach out send me email, tell me a favorite episode recommended guests and definitely share how the podcast benefits what you do. That's extremely helpful as I plan these podcast. It is the highlight of my week hearing from you and sometimes it actually leads partnerships. I'm at America.daps@gmail.com Send me an email. Okay, adapters Keep up the great work. I'll see you next time.